

An analysis of code-switching between Kapampangan and English language

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Abstract - In an asynchronous setting, people inevitably switch languages, which is a process known as linguistic code-switching (LCS). The researcher analyzed code-switching found in the Facebook page WE THE LOKAL, which frequently uses code-switching between Kapampangan and the English language in its video captions. This study analyzed code-switching between the languages mentioned above, which tends to categorize and discuss the types and the integration of functions and reasons for code-switching. In total, 44 video captions were analyzed and categorized using the framework, all the video captions were selected following the criteria of the study. In addition, the categorization of the corpus is not limited to only one type and reason, thus, multiple variations in one video caption were expected. The result of the study found that intra-sentential switching is the most common type used on the page. Also, to address different audiences, habitual expression, to show identity with the group, and to attract attention are the reasons categorized under the phatic function. Each function categorizes reasons. The implications revealed cultural and linguistic contexts, including identity constructions, colonialism, the history of cultural symbols of Kapampangan, pop cultures, expressing belonging and cultural values, and language as a living entity.

Keywords: linguistic code-switching, asynchronous discourse, Kapampangan, English language

1. Introduction

The Philippines is a linguistically diverse archipelago, home to more than 120 native languages. This diversity reflects the country's rich cultural and ethnic composition (Rubrico, 2014). Among these languages, Kapampangan stands out as a regional language with historical, cultural, and linguistic significance. Kapampangan, also referred to as Amanung Sisuan, meaning "mother tongue," is predominantly spoken in Pampanga, Tarlac, and nearby provinces, with an estimated 2.3 million speakers (Cruz, 2020). The language belongs to the Austronesian family, under the Malayo-Polynesian subgroup, which includes other Philippine languages like Tagalog, Cebuano, and Ilocano. Simultaneously, English occupies a prominent role in the Philippines as a result of American colonization in the early 20th century. It was institutionalized as a medium of instruction and as an official language alongside Filipino (Tagalog-based), enabling the country to become one of the largest English-speaking populations in the world (Santos, 2022). English is widely used in formal communication, media, education, business, and government affairs (Gonzalez, 1998). However, in everyday interaction, especially online and in regional contexts, Filipino speakers—including Kapampangan—often switch between their native language and English, a phenomenon known as code-switching.

The rise of digital platforms, particularly social media, has significantly transformed communication patterns in the Philippines. With more than 80% of Filipinos active online, particularly on platforms like Facebook, TikTok, and YouTube, language usage in digital communication is dynamic, often featuring creative combinations of English and local languages (Cabigon, 2015). One such example is We The Lokal, a Facebook page created by Kapampangan groups that features videos related to Kapampangan culture, language, and society. The content is presented in a way that resonates with modern audiences through the strategic use of Kapampangan-English code-switching.

This study is significant for several reasons. First, it adds to the body of sociolinguistic literature



that explores the function and implications of code-switching in regional contexts. While much of the research on code-switching in the Philippines focuses on Taglish (Tagalog-English), there is limited attention paid to other regional languages like Kapampangan. By focusing on Kapampangan-English code-switching, this study fills a gap in the literature and offers insight into the linguistic behaviour of minority language speakers in the digital age.

Second, the study highlights the cultural and identity functions of language mixing. Code-switching is not merely a linguistic habit but a marker of social identity, cultural affiliation, and communicative intention (Myers-Scotton, 2006). In the case of *We The Lokal*, language use serves to engage audiences, promote local pride, and ensure cultural continuity while appealing to digital-native generations. Third, this research can contribute to language policy and education, particularly in understanding how multilingual competencies are developed and expressed. It emphasizes the need for an inclusive and contextual understanding of language use, particularly in multilingual societies such as the Philippines.

The central theoretical concept underpinning this research is code-switching (CS), defined as the alternation between two or more languages or dialects within a conversation or discourse (Bullock & Toribio, 2009). The term was popularized by Einar Haugen (1956) and later expanded by sociolinguists such as John Gumperz (1982) and Carol Myers-Scotton (1993). Code-switching can occur at various linguistic levels: intersentential (between sentences), intrasentential (within a sentence), and tag-switching (insertion of a tag or discourse marker).

Two primary perspectives dominate the study of CS: (a) Sociolinguistic approach: This views code-switching as a social act, governed by context, identity, and relationships. It is used for emphasis, clarification, or solidarity (Gumperz, 1982; Blom & Gumperz, 1972). (b) Psycholinguistic or structural approach: This sees code-switching as influenced by grammatical constraints and cognitive processes, emphasizing the structural compatibility of the two languages (Poplack, 1980).

This study adopts the sociolinguistic framework, particularly drawing on Myers-Scotton's (1993) Markedness Model, which posits that speakers use CS to make marked or unmarked choices depending on their communicative goals. For example, using English may index modernity or education, while Kapampangan signifies local pride and cultural intimacy.

Studies on code-switching in the Philippines have predominantly focused on Taglish or Ceblish (Tagalog-English or Cebuano-English mixing). Bautista (2004) observed that bilinguals in the Philippines code-switch to bridge linguistic gaps, express identity, and enhance understanding, particularly in informal and academic discourse. Rubrico (2014) also pointed out that bilingualism in the Philippines is a norm rather than an exception, especially among young speakers exposed to digital media.

However, only a few studies have tackled Kapampangan-English code-switching. Manapsal et al. (2019) explored how Kapampangan youth use English for academic and aspirational purposes while maintaining Kapampangan for familial and cultural domains. Cruz (2020) documented the shift in language preference among younger Kapampangan speakers, especially in urbanized areas, noting the influence of media, education, and peer interaction on their decreasing use of Kapampangan.

In the context of social media, Cook (2018) emphasized the prevalence of code-switching in online interactions, particularly among Filipino youth. She noted that switching languages online allows users to perform multiple identities and engage diverse audiences. However, specific case studies like *We The Lokal* are not well-documented in academic research. Other studies such as David (2003) and Martin (2014) analysed the socio-political implications of language choice in multilingual contexts, showing how code-switching reflects issues of power, identity, and resistance.

Given the gaps in current literature, especially on regional code-switching practices online, this study proposes to investigate the following research problems: (1) What are the patterns and types of code-switching used in *We The Lokal*'s social media content? (Intersentential, intrasentential, tag-switching, etc.) (2) What are the communicative functions of code-switching between Kapampangan and English in this digital space? (E.g., to entertain, to clarify, to create humour, to educate). (3) How does code-switching contribute to the construction of cultural identity among Kapampangan speakers online? (4) What sociolinguistic factors influence the code-switching behaviour of the page creators and their audience? (Audience design, topic, medium, language proficiency, etc.) (5) What implications does this phenomenon have for the preservation or transformation of the Kapampangan language?



By addressing these questions, this study aims to illuminate the complex linguistic landscape of Kapampangan-English bilingualism and its implications for language development, digital communication, and cultural identity in contemporary Philippine society.

2. Method

2.1 Method of Providing Data

This study adopted a mixed-methods approach, combining both qualitative and quantitative techniques to examine the phenomenon of code-switching between Kapampangan and English on the Facebook page *We The Lokal*. This method was chosen to provide a comprehensive understanding of both the patterns (quantitative) and communicative functions (qualitative) of code-switching. According to Creswell and Plano Clark (2018), mixed-methods research integrates numerical trends with narrative insights, allowing researchers to gain a fuller perspective of complex linguistic behaviour, particularly in digitally mediated communication.

Data were collected from a purposive sample of video captions and comment sections from the official Facebook page “*We The Lokal*,” managed by Kevin Montalbo, Bruno Tiotuico, and their associates. The page is widely known for producing culturally engaging content about Kapampangan traditions, language, and heritage. A total of 30 publicly accessible posts with captions that contained code-switching between Kapampangan and English were collected over a three-month period (April to June 2025). The data were retrieved using Facebook’s search and filtering features, focusing on posts that exhibited frequent switching between the two languages.

In alignment with the work of Choi Wang Fong (2011), who investigated asynchronous written discourse on Facebook, this study considers the role of written text (captions and replies) as a reflection of user interaction and language negotiation in digital spaces. The collected data were documented, transcribed, and coded for linguistic analysis, with special attention to intersentential, intrasentential, and tag-switching types.

Ethical considerations were observed by ensuring that all data were publicly available and no private or sensitive information from individual users was used. No direct contact was made with the page administrators, as the study focused solely on public and observable digital content.

2.2 Research Hypothesis

The central hypothesis of this study is that code-switching between Kapampangan and English in the captions of “*We The Lokal*” follows identifiable patterns and fulfills specific communicative functions. This hypothesis is guided by previous research which highlights the purposeful use of code-switching in digital media to signal identity, emotion, and audience engagement (Bullock & Toribio, 2009; Myers-Scotton, 2006).

Specifically, the study tests the following hypotheses: (1) Intra-sentential code-switching is the most frequently used type in the captions due to its fluid and natural integration of both languages. (2) Expressive and referential functions dominate the communicative purposes of code-switching, as they align with the platform’s goals of representing local culture and fostering emotional connections. (3) Motivations such as audience targeting, habitual usage, and emphasis or attention-drawing are significant in shaping the code-switching patterns observed.

These hypotheses aim to confirm that code-switching in this context is not random but strategic and culturally meaningful.

2.3 Analysis Technique

The data analysis was conducted in two stages:

First, a quantitative content analysis was used to identify and categorize the types of code-switching found in the captions based on Poplack’s (1980) typology: (a) *Intersentential switching* (switching at clause or sentence boundaries), (b) *Intrasentential switching* (switching within a sentence), and (c) *Tag-switching* (use of discourse markers or tags in the other language).

The frequency and distribution of each type were recorded and statistically described. Second, a qualitative discourse analysis was carried out to examine the functions and motivations behind the code-switching. The framework of Appel and Muysken (2005) was used, which includes six functions of code-switching: referential, directive, expressive, phatic, metalinguistic, and poetic. Each caption was analysed contextually to determine the intended function and communicative effect.

To strengthen reliability, intercoder agreement was achieved by involving two other language experts in reviewing the categorizations. Triangulation of results was also conducted by comparing quantitative trends with qualitative interpretations to ensure thematic coherence and data validity.



3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Types of code-switching in We The Lokal page on Facebook

Linguistic code-switching is the practice of alternating between languages. The languages in the current study are Kapampangan and English, which are frequently observed on We The Lokal's Facebook page. The code-switching among the characters in Charlotte Hoffman (1999) is categorized into three distinct types: intra-sentential, intersentential, and emblematic. Below illustrates the distribution of different types of code-switching among the selected video captions. There is a total of 50 classified types of code-switching.

Table 1. The frequencies and percentages of classified types of code-switching

Types of Code-Switching	Frequency	Percentage
Intra-sentential switching	29	58%
Intersentential switching	14	28%
Emblematic switching	7	14%
Total	50	100%

The findings presented in Table 1 reveal that intra-sentential code-switching is the most prevalent type of code-switching observed in the Facebook captions of the “We The Lokal” page. Specifically, 58% of the total instances analysed fell into this category. This suggests that the administrators of the page frequently blend Kapampangan and English within a single sentence, rather than switching between sentences or using tag elements.

This high frequency of intra-sentential switching reflects a fluid and dynamic bilingual competence among the content creators, indicating that they are comfortable weaving two languages into a seamless communicative thread. According to Poplack (1980), intra-sentential code-switching is the most grammatically complex form of switching, requiring a high level of proficiency in both languages and an intuitive understanding of their syntactic compatibilities. In this case, the prevalence of intra-sentential switching implies that the creators and their intended audience share a bilingual or multilingual linguistic repertoire, which allows them to comprehend hybrid sentences with ease.

Furthermore, this pattern aligns with findings from Myers-Scotton (1993) and Bullock and Toribio (2009), who noted that intra-sentential switching is often favoured in informal or conversational settings, especially on digital platforms where users strive for expressive efficiency and authenticity. Social media, being an inherently interactive and expressive space, encourages linguistic creativity and spontaneity, both of which are evident in the way “We The Lokal” constructs its messages.

However, while intra-sentential switching offers communicative advantages, it also presents certain linguistic challenges. The primary concern lies in the syntactic divergence between Kapampangan and English. Each language possesses distinct grammatical rules and sentence structures. For instance, English follows a Subject-Verb-Object (SVO) pattern, whereas Kapampangan syntax can be more flexible and context-dependent. The merging of clauses from two structurally different languages can lead to syntactic inconsistencies or even confusion if not managed carefully (Muysken, 2000).

Moreover, such integration can sometimes result in code-mixing errors, where elements of both languages are combined in ways that violate the rules of one or both grammars. For example, verb inflections or function words may not align correctly, leading to potential misunderstandings or perceptions of language deterioration, especially among traditional language purists. As Bautista (2004) emphasizes, while code-switching is a norm in Philippine multilingual contexts, it must be consciously regulated to prevent erosion of grammatical standards and ensure clarity, especially in educational or formal domains.

In addition, from a sociolinguistic perspective, the prevalence of intra-sentential code-switching on “We The Lokal” signals an identity performance that blends modernity and tradition. The use of English reflects cosmopolitan, tech-savvy identities, while the incorporation of Kapampangan grounds the message in local pride and cultural continuity. This linguistic hybridity not only enhances audience engagement but also reaffirms the role of social media as a site of language evolution and negotiation (Androutsopoulos, 2015).

While intra-sentential code-switching dominates the linguistic practices on “We The Lokal,” reflecting linguistic competence and social adaptability, it also raises concerns about syntactic coherence and the potential pitfalls of grammatical inconsistencies. Thus, creators must balance fluency with structural



accuracy to ensure that their code-switched content remains both effective and respectful of linguistic norms.

3.2 Integration of the functions and reasons for code-switching in the We The Lokal page on Facebook

The theory of the six functions of the code-switching framework proposed by Rene Appel and Pieter Muysken (2006), integrated with the theory of ten reasons for code-switching of Malik's concept (1994), is often seen on the page of We The Lokal on Facebook. The integrated theories are based on Choy Wai Fong's (2011) study, which will be utilized as the basis in this study. As stated above, the data collection procedure revealed that specific data samples displayed a blend of different code-switching categories, hence necessitating a more extensive data collection for the analysis. Below illustrates the distribution of different functions and reasons for code-switching.

Table 2. The frequencies and percentages of classified functions of code-switching

Functions of Code-Switching	Frequency	Percentage
Expressive	12	27.3%
Referential	11	25%
Phatic	9	20.5%
Directives	8	18.2%
Metalinguistics	2	4.5%
Poetic	2	4.5%
TOTAL	44	100%

Table 3. The frequencies and percentages of classified reasons for code-switching

Reasons For Code-Switching	Frequency	Percentage
To address different audiences	10	20.4%
Lack of register competence	9	18.4%
Habitual expression	7	14.3%
To show identity with a group	6	12.2%
To amplify and emphasize a point	5	10.2%
Pragmatic reason	4	8.2%
To attract attention	3	6.1%
Semantic significance	3	6.1%
Lack of facility	1	2%
Mood of the speaker	1	2%
TOTAL	49	100%

Tables 2 and 3 reveal that the primary reasons for code-switching in the Facebook page “We The Lokal” are closely aligned with the phatic function of language. According to Appel and Muysken (2005), the phatic function serves to establish, maintain, or reinforce social relationships and communication channels between speakers and their audience. In this study, the reasons behind the observed code-switching patterns—such as addressing diverse audiences, habitual expressions, expressing group identity, and drawing attention—fall within this category.

One key reason for switching languages is the intention to address different audiences. As the content is delivered through a public social media platform, the creators are aware of their bilingual or even multilingual followers. By using both Kapampangan and English, they ensure that their messages are inclusive and accessible, fostering community engagement (Bullock & Toribio, 2009). Code-switching in this context becomes a strategic tool for audience design, a concept proposed by Bell (1984), in which speakers tailor their speech based on the anticipated audience's linguistic preferences.

Habitual expressions, another observed reason, highlight how certain phrases or idiomatic expressions are more naturally expressed in one language over another. Often, users switch to English to express modern concepts or to sound humorous, while Kapampangan is used to evoke familiarity and intimacy. These habitual switches serve a cultural function, reinforcing the shared linguistic repertoire of the group and promoting solidarity.



Moreover, expressing group identity through code-switching is a significant aspect of the phatic function. Using Kapampangan alongside English allows the page to represent a hybrid identity—rooted in local culture yet engaged in global discourse. As Myers-Scotton (2006) argues, language choice in bilingual contexts is deeply tied to social identity and cultural belonging.

Finally, the use of code-switching to attract attention, particularly through stylistic and humorous combinations, demonstrates its performative role in online media. It helps content stand out in a crowded digital space, increasing audience interest and interaction (Androutsopoulos, 2015).

3.3 Cultural and Linguistic Implications of Code-Switching

3.3.1 Identity Construction

The practice of code-switching between Kapampangan and English on the “We The Lokal” Facebook page reveals deeper cultural and linguistic implications, particularly related to the construction of multilingual identity. Through this form of communication, the content creators express not only linguistic competence but also a cultural hybridity that reflects the reality of Kapampangan speakers in today’s digital and globalized society.

The primary form of code-switching observed was intra-sentential, in which words, phrases, or entire clauses in English are inserted into sentences constructed in Kapampangan. This mirrors the findings of Mohamad Khalil (2018), who studied intra-sentential code-switching in Malaysian parliamentary discourse and concluded that individuals from multiracial or multicultural backgrounds use such linguistic strategies as a reflection of their multilingual identity. Similarly, Padilla (2021) emphasizes that Kapampangans are officially multilingual, commonly speaking Kapampangan (L1), Filipino (Tagalog as L2), and English (L3). Although the “We The Lokal” page primarily features only Kapampangan and English, this dual-language representation is sufficient to indicate multilingual competence, especially in informal or semi-formal digital communication.

The intentional use of code-switching in their captions is a performative act of identity construction. Through their linguistic choices, the page creators signal a dual affiliation: one that is grounded in the local Kapampangan identity, and another that aligns with the modern, global digital culture symbolized by English. As noted by Joseph et al. (2012), language is the most visible and immediate symbol of identity, capable of expressing social group membership and emotional attachment to a community.

Moreover, the integration of English words such as “culture,” “pride,” “culinary capital,” and “heritage” in captions serves to reinforce local identity while making the content accessible to non-Kapampangan or younger audiences. These expressions highlight the significance of Kapampangan’s unique cultural contributions—particularly in the culinary domain—as Pampanga is nationally recognized as the culinary capital of the Philippines. In doing so, the page uses bilingualism to assert cultural pride while also engaging a broader, potentially international audience.

The identity constructed through code-switching in “We The Lokal” also reflects digital citizenship among young Filipinos. According to Androutsopoulos (2015), social media platforms are performative spaces where individuals and groups negotiate identity through stylistic and linguistic choices. In such spaces, code-switching becomes a tool for cultural narration and community building. For “We The Lokal,” code-switching allows them to frame the Kapampangan experience in a way that is both authentic and relatable, thereby strengthening cultural awareness and social solidarity.

Further, the use of Kapampangan-English code-switching serves to resist linguistic homogenization. In a country where English and Tagalog dominate national discourse, using Kapampangan is a form of cultural preservation and assertion. It reminds viewers of the richness and relevance of regional languages in expressing identity and heritage. As Canagarajah (2006) explains, multilingual speakers strategically use code-switching to negotiate power, representation, and cultural visibility in multilingual societies.

In summary, the code-switching patterns on “We The Lokal” reveal how language functions not only as a medium of communication but also as a symbolic resource for constructing and performing identity. By combining English and Kapampangan in their posts, the creators demonstrate that multilingual identity is not merely a reflection of linguistic ability, but an intentional expression of belonging, pride, and cultural engagement. This reinforces the notion that culture and language are deeply interwoven, and that in digital media, language choice becomes a visible marker of who we are and what we represent.

3.3.2. Colonialism

Cultural identity is also rooted in physical spaces and geographical markers, which serve as symbols of shared history and collective memory. In the case of the Kapampangans, landmarks such as Angeles City, Abacan Bridge, Nepo Mart, SM Clark, and local checkpoints are not merely place names; they are cultural references deeply embedded in the daily lives and narratives of the people.



The “We The Lokal” page often uses these place names in their bilingual captions, illustrating how these spaces serve as semiotic resources in constructing meaning. According to Scollon and Scollon (2003), place names are part of a discursive landscape—they are used in narratives to signal identity, belonging, and continuity. The page’s frequent use of English when referring to these places may be influenced by urban signage, commercial naming conventions, **and** government labels, many of which are standardized in English.

For example, “Angeles City” is not translated into Kapampangan or Filipino, nor is “Nepo Mart” (a market centre), “SM Clark” (a commercial mall), or “checkpoint” (used in the context of Jeepney transportation routes). These terms appear in English even when the rest of the caption is in Kapampangan. This selective code-switching reflects a lack of linguistic alternatives in the local language or the symbolic capital that English holds in modern urban discourse (Bourdieu, 1991).

These place-based references also serve to situate the cultural content within a specific geographical and historical context, reinforcing the sense of regional pride among Kapampangans. By mentioning well-known landmarks in their bilingual captions, “We The Lokal” bridges local culture and global language, making the content more relatable to both local and diasporic audiences.

Moreover, many of these places hold colonial or post-colonial significance. For instance, Clark was once a U.S. air base and now houses modern infrastructures, making it a symbol of the transition from colonial dependency to modern economic development. Referring to it in English retains the historical and functional meaning while acknowledging its symbolic status in Kapampangan society.

The use of code-switching in referring to these cultural and spatial symbols is not merely linguistic convenience but rather a multilayered discourse strategy. It functions to maintain cultural heritage, acknowledge modern influences, and foster audience engagement across different linguistic backgrounds.

As Heller (2007) argues, language choice in public discourse reflects not only linguistic preference but also power dynamics, historical memory, and cultural ideologies. Therefore, the interplay of Kapampangan and English in the naming of places and events demonstrates the ongoing negotiation of identity within a post-colonial, globalized Filipino society.

3.3.4. Pop-cultures

The influence of popular culture on language use, particularly in multilingual societies like the Philippines, is increasingly evident in digital media platforms. In the context of the “We The Lokal” Facebook page, code-switching between Kapampangan and English reflects not only bilingual competence but also the interplay between local linguistic identity and global cultural influence. This is especially clear when the page references elements from global pop culture—such as foreign films, food trends, memes, K-pop, fashion, or technology—integrated into localized contexts.

Pop culture, according to Peña (2023), is composed of “popular things, technology, images, symbols, signs, and commodities” that interact with people’s everyday experiences and consciousness. It is shaped by mass media and the accelerating pace of globalization, and it plays a critical role in shaping cultural norms, youth behavior, and language usage. As new cultural artifacts emerge, so does the vocabulary needed to describe them. In multilingual societies, this vocabulary is often borrowed from global languages—especially English—and mixed with the local language, thus giving rise to code-switching as a communicative and cultural strategy.

The study finds that code-switching on “We The Lokal” frequently serves a referential function, especially when discussing topics or concepts associated with global trends. According to Appel and Muysken (2005), the referential function of code-switching is used to convey precise information, especially when a term in another language better captures a specific concept or object. For example, the creators may use English terms such as “influencer,” “selfie,” “content creator,” or “vlog” because these words are deeply embedded in digital pop culture and often lack exact Kapampangan or Filipino equivalents. Their inclusion facilitates communication and helps maintain cultural relevance, especially among younger audiences.

Moreover, this practice reflects what Pennycook (2007) calls “global Englishes,” where English is not just used as a colonial remnant but reappropriated creatively by local users to express evolving identities. In this sense, code-switching into English in references to pop culture is not simply linguistic borrowing; it is a strategic appropriation that allows the creators to engage with global discourses while situating them within the local Kapampangan experience. It offers familiarity to audiences who consume both local and international media, making the content more relatable and appealing.

Additionally, the constant use of English in pop-cultural references demonstrates the commodification of language—where linguistic choices are shaped by market forces, media consumption, and branding (Heller, 2010). For example, names of popular products, brands, or streaming platforms like



“Netflix,” “TikTok,” or “Spotify” are typically left untranslated, and their inclusion in Kapampangan-English captions illustrates how pop culture permeates language practices.

The presence of code-switching in pop-cultural content on “We The Lokal” reflects linguistic innovation, cultural adaptation, and audience awareness. It aligns with the referential function of code-switching, as global cultural terms are more readily understood and relevant in their original form. This trend not only mirrors the increasing hybridization of Filipino linguistic practices but also highlights the evolving cultural literacy of contemporary Kapampangan youth navigating between local tradition and global influence.

3.3.5. Expressing belonging and cultural values

In multilingual settings such as the Philippines, code-switching not only serves communicative efficiency but also performs deeper socio-cultural functions, particularly in expressing belonging, emotional resonance, and shared cultural values. On the “We The Lokal” Facebook page, code-switching between Kapampangan and English demonstrates a strong expressive function, wherein the creators convey not only linguistic content but also attitudes, feelings, and social alignment with their audience.

According to Kelkoura et al. (2018), the expressive function of code-switching allows speakers to convey emotion and identity more vividly, which can help foster a sense of community and solidarity. In the context of “We The Lokal,” this is evident when captions express gratitude, praise, humor, or nostalgia in either English or Kapampangan, depending on the emotional tone or cultural relevance. For instance, the creators frequently use English to thank their followers (e.g., “Thank you for the support, Kapampangan!”), while employing Kapampangan to reflect pride or to reference traditional elements (e.g., “Masayang Aldo” meaning “Happy Day”). This fluid alternation of language is not random but strategic and relational, fostering interpersonal warmth and inclusivity.

This emotional engagement is central to the concept of digital belonging—a sense of being part of a community within digital spaces. As Blommaert and Varis (2013) argue, digital communication is performative and indexical; the choice of language, tone, and cultural reference points to specific social groups and affiliations. By incorporating elements from both languages, “We The Lokal” affirms its alignment with Kapampangan culture while remaining accessible to non-Kapampangan speakers who may be part of a broader Filipino or global audience.

Additionally, the expressive use of code-switching is closely tied to the phatic function of language, which seeks to establish and maintain social rapport (Appel & Muysken, 2005). A particularly salient example in Kapampangan communication is the word “pu,” a polite particle used to show respect and deference, especially toward elders. This is equivalent to “po” or “opo” in Tagalog and functions as a marker of socio-cultural politeness. The “We The Lokal” page often integrates “pu” into captions, regardless of whether the sentence is constructed in English or Kapampangan. This code-switching strategy is not merely linguistic but cultural, signaling adherence to deeply ingrained norms of respect and humility, which are core Filipino values (Miranda & Santiago, 2020).

By preserving and showcasing this kind of linguistic politeness, the page reflects a broader cultural value system within the Kapampangan community. Expressions of politeness, gratitude, and formality are not lost in digital spaces but are amplified through language use. In this way, code-switching serves not only to inform but to reinforce communal values, further cementing the creators’ authenticity and credibility.

Furthermore, the page’s use of expressive code-switching functions to include wider audiences and create a shared sense of cultural identity. While Kapampangan is central to the page’s mission, the strategic use of English serves as a bridge, inviting viewers from outside the Kapampangan-speaking community to engage with and appreciate local culture. As Canagarajah (2013) emphasizes, code-switching in globalized settings is a resource for inclusion, especially when speakers aim to create multilayered discourse communities.

This inclusive function is crucial for platforms like “We The Lokal,” which seek to represent regional identities in a national or even international context. For instance, in captions referring to food, festivities, or traditions, the creators often blend Kapampangan terms with English explanations, such as “Manyaman! (Delicious!) You should try this next time you visit Pampanga!” Such examples do more than just translate—they contextualize and humanize Kapampangan culture for diverse audiences.

The asynchronous nature of Facebook communication further supports this code-switching strategy. Since messages are not delivered in real-time, users have more control over their linguistic choices, allowing them to craft messages that are emotionally expressive, culturally accurate, and socially engaging (Androutsopoulos, 2015). In analyzing the video captions posted by “We The Lokal,” the present study



confirms that language use is intentional and curated, serving not only the goal of representation but also the function of building cultural affinity.

The expressive function of code-switching on the “We The Lokal” page plays a vital role in shaping belonging and cultural values. It allows the creators to share not only content but emotion, identity, and connection. This form of expression is culturally loaded—utilizing words like “pu,” terms of gratitude, and markers of politeness to signify values such as respect, inclusion, and appreciation for heritage. By doing so, the page exemplifies how multilingual communication in digital media becomes a cultural tool for affirming identity, promoting values, and fostering digital solidarity among diverse audiences.

3.3.6. Language as a living entity

Intra-sentential code-switching, the phenomenon of switching languages within a single sentence, was evident on the analyzed social media page, and notably, it occurred without hesitation or disruption to communication flow. This ease and naturalness suggest that the speakers or writers are highly proficient in both languages—Kapampangan and English—and that code-switching has become an intrinsic part of their linguistic repertoire. The fluid use of both languages indicates not only bilingual or multilingual proficiency but also highlights the role of evolving linguistic practices in digital communication spaces. It also supports the notion that language is not static but dynamic, continuously adapting to cultural, social, and technological influences (Myers-Scotton, 1993).

The presence of intra-sentential switching in this context may be interpreted as a byproduct of language evolution. Over time, bilingual speakers often develop hybrid languages, slang, or linguistic trends that reflect their environment and communicative needs. In the case of the Kapampangan-English switching, this form of code-mixing appears to have evolved organically, shaped by both the speakers’ desire for expressiveness and the influence of global communication trends. As Crystal (2001) notes, the internet has significantly accelerated language change by enabling instant communication and the rapid spread of new language forms, particularly among young people and bilingual users.

In the digital era, social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter (now X) have become linguistic laboratories where code-switching is not only tolerated but often celebrated as a marker of cultural identity and modernity. These platforms provide a space where users can experiment with language, blend codes, and create new expressions that resonate with their communities. The analyzed Kapampangan page demonstrates this trend, where intra-sentential switching includes terms and phrases borrowed from English, interwoven into Kapampangan grammar without any indication of awkwardness or translation difficulties.

One significant observation is the emergence of hybrid lexical items. These are instances where English words are incorporated into Kapampangan syntax, resulting in sentences that display both linguistic structures simultaneously. This phenomenon reflects what Poplack (1980) identifies as a hallmark of intra-sentential switching: the integration of elements from two languages within a single clause or sentence, while still observing the grammatical constraints of both. In this sense, code-switching in the Kapampangan-English context not only functions as a communicative strategy but also as a stylistic and identity-marking device.

Furthermore, the use of English in Kapampangan sentences, particularly in online environments, demonstrates an expanding trend of lexical borrowing. According to Khalil et al. (2018), in their study of code-switching in Pakistani parliamentary discourse, intra-sentential switching often takes the form of borrowing, where words or phrases from one language are integrated into another. The borrowed words are not used in isolation; rather, they are adapted to fit the grammatical structure and phonological norms of the host language. This is precisely what was observed on the social media page under study. Words of English origin were incorporated seamlessly into Kapampangan sentences, indicating that these items have become nativized or localized through frequent use.

This process of borrowing is closely tied to what linguists call transliteration. Transliteration refers to the adaptation of a word from one language into another based on pronunciation, but with spelling adjusted according to the orthographic rules of the target language. In multilingual communities like those in the Philippines, transliteration and borrowing often go hand in hand. For instance, English words may be pronounced with a Kapampangan accent or be spelled differently to reflect local usage. These borrowed and transliterated forms are not arbitrary; they follow the morphological and syntactic rules of Kapampangan, which ensures that the sentences remain grammatically correct and intelligible.

Moreover, this linguistic fluidity reflects a broader pattern common in multilingual societies. Code-switching, especially intra-sentential, is often employed not because of linguistic deficiency but because it offers greater expressive range and cultural resonance. Zentella (1997) and García and Wei (2014) both argue that bilingual speakers use code-switching to navigate social roles, convey emotions, and



negotiate cultural identities. In the Kapampangan context, switching between English and Kapampangan may serve to reinforce local identity while simultaneously signaling cosmopolitanism or educational background.

The intra-sentential code-switching observed on the Kapampangan social media page exemplifies how language use in digital domains mirrors broader linguistic and cultural transformations. The natural integration of English terms, the use of borrowing and transliteration, and the grammatical adherence to Kapampangan syntax all point to a sophisticated bilingual competence. This hybrid linguistic style is not merely a product of linguistic mixing but a strategic, expressive, and identity-affirming form of communication. As digital communication continues to shape how languages are used and perceived, such forms of code-switching will likely become even more prevalent and linguistically significant in understanding the evolution of regional languages in globalized settings.

3.4. Discussion

The phenomenon of code-switching has increasingly drawn attention from linguists, sociologists, and anthropologists for its complexity and cultural significance, especially in multilingual societies like the Philippines. Code-switching, particularly between Kapampangan and English, plays a pivotal role in expressing and negotiating cultural identity. The present study reveals that code-switching is deeply embedded in the cultural fabric of Kapampangan speakers, as language forms a fundamental component of cultural identity. In communication, individuals often switch between languages to align with cultural norms, express specific social meanings, or address different audiences more effectively.

According to Holmes (2013), code-switching can occur for a variety of reasons—ranging from expressing solidarity to demonstrating social distance, from filling lexical gaps to conveying cultural affiliations. In the case of Kapampangans, switching between English and Kapampangan does not signify linguistic deficiency but rather serves as a resourceful communicative strategy that reflects linguistic dexterity, social awareness, and cultural rootedness.

In recent years, sociolinguists and identity researchers have emphasized that language is not just a tool for communication but also a vehicle for identity construction. According to Bucholtz and Hall (2005), identity is performed through language, and code-switching is one of the clearest linguistic indicators of complex identity negotiation. In multilingual contexts such as the Philippines—where people are exposed to diverse languages such as Filipino, English, regional dialects, and colonial languages—code-switching allows speakers to switch roles, display allegiances, or mark boundaries between insider and outsider groups.

This is particularly evident on social media platforms, which provide an asynchronous communication environment. Filipino users, including Kapampangans, often engage in code-switching due to their multilingual background. The Philippines is known for its linguistic diversity, with over 180 languages spoken across the archipelago (Gonzalez, 1998). Kapampangan, spoken primarily in Central Luzon, represents one of the major regional languages and has a robust oral and written tradition.

The "We The Lokal" Page: A Linguistic Landscape of Kapampangan-English

This study investigated a Facebook page titled We The Lokal, which posts multimedia content in both Kapampangan and English. Specifically, the researcher analyzed video captions to identify patterns of code-switching and their implications. The presence of intra-sentential switching—where speakers shift from one language to another within a single sentence—was particularly notable. This mirrors Poplack's (1980) typology of code-switching, which includes intra-sentential, inter-sentential, and tag-switching, and emphasizes grammatical cohesion and syntactic compatibility between codes.

Applying these theoretical frameworks, the researcher found that the video captions frequently employed transliterations and hybrid forms. For instance, English loanwords were adapted phonetically into Kapampangan, preserving the original sound while modifying the spelling to fit local norms. This reflects the process of phonological assimilation, whereby borrowed words are adapted to the phonetic system of the recipient language (Haugen, 1950). Such transliterations allow speakers to maintain semantic clarity while retaining their linguistic and cultural heritage.

Additionally, instances of hybridization—blending two linguistic elements into a new lexical item—were common in the content analyzed. Hybrid words such as "Kapa-English" (Kapampangan-English) exemplify how speakers innovate to accommodate the communicative demands of their environment. This practice enriches both languages and reflects a broader cultural synthesis. As Garcia and Wei (2014) note in their concept of translanguaging, multilingual individuals do not simply switch between languages but draw from an integrated linguistic repertoire to construct meaning fluidly.

The researcher also observed references to pop culture and contemporary slang in the video captions. These elements underscore the dynamic nature of code-switching as it intersects with media



consumption and global trends. As Kellner (1995) argues, media culture plays a significant role in shaping individual and collective identities. In this sense, the incorporation of global pop culture references into Kapampangan-English code-switching demonstrates how local speakers navigate their dual identity—simultaneously local and global.

Such linguistic practices do more than communicate information; they perform identity. For many Kapampangans, code-switching becomes a way of asserting local pride while engaging with global narratives. This duality reflects Bhabha's (1994) concept of the third space, where cultural hybridity allows for the negotiation of identity in postcolonial societies. The coexistence of English and Kapampangan in social media is not a sign of cultural erosion but rather a manifestation of cultural adaptation and resilience.

One important finding in the study was the phenomenon of cultural untranslatability. Some Kapampangan terms—especially those related to food, traditions, and festivals—were retained even in otherwise English-dominant sentences. These include specific nouns such as *sisig*, *kakanin*, or *lubenas*, which have no direct English equivalents and are thus preserved in their original form. This supports the view of Venuti (1995) that translation always involves a degree of loss, and in certain cases, retaining the source term preserves the cultural essence better than substituting it with an approximate translation.

Furthermore, the presence of these culturally-bound words in English sentences can be seen as an assertion of identity. By integrating Kapampangan words into global discourse, speakers resist the homogenizing forces of globalization and preserve the distinctiveness of their heritage. As Anzaldúa (1987) explains in her notion of linguistic borderlands, code-switching can empower minority language speakers to articulate a voice that is both authentic and resistant.

The use of English in Kapampangan code-switching is also a product of the Philippines' colonial history. The American colonization introduced English as a language of instruction and government, while the earlier Spanish colonization brought Catholicism, Hispanic surnames, and elements of Spanish vocabulary. In Pampanga, which played a significant role during colonial rule, these influences are particularly strong.

However, despite centuries of external influence, Kapampangans have maintained a strong cultural identity. The persistence of the Kapampangan language, cuisine, religious festivals, and place-based symbols like the Parul Samperandu (San Fernando Lantern) are testaments to this resilience. As Anderson (1991) notes, language is central to the imagination of community, and for Kapampangans, using their language—even in hybrid or transliterated forms—reinforces their sense of belonging.

An interesting cultural element highlighted by the Facebook page is Kapampangan cuisine. Pampanga is often referred to as the Culinary Capital of the Philippines, and food-related content forms a significant portion of the analyzed captions. The mention of dishes such as *sisig*, *burong isda*, or *tocino* connects language to tangible cultural practices. According to Appadurai (1988), food is not just a biological necessity but a cultural artifact that conveys identity, memory, and tradition. Using code-switching in food descriptions allows for broader comprehension while retaining cultural specificity.

Finally, the study found that code-switching in the analyzed social media page fosters a sense of belonging—not just among Kapampangans but among other ethnolinguistic groups as well. Through its multilingual content, the page serves as a digital space for cultural exchange and solidarity. It simultaneously addresses local audiences with culturally resonant language and reaches global audiences through English accessibility.

This dual address is emblematic of the layered identities many Filipinos embody. As Norton (2013) suggests, language learners and users construct multiple identities based on context, interaction, and ideology. In social media, where audience reach is global, code-switching becomes a powerful tool to maintain authenticity while engaging diverse viewership.

The findings of this study underscore the role of code-switching in preserving, expressing, and reshaping Kapampangan cultural identity. By analyzing content from the We The Lokal Facebook page, it is evident that code-switching serves multiple functions: from maintaining grammatical cohesion to navigating cultural untranslatability, from asserting local pride to participating in global pop culture. The use of transliterations, hybrid forms, and culturally specific vocabulary reflects a complex, adaptive, and creative use of language. It also confirms that linguistic practices in digital spaces are deeply tied to cultural dynamics, historical legacies, and identity construction. Far from signaling language dilution, Kapampangan-English code-switching represents a vibrant mode of cultural expression, enabling speakers to traverse boundaries while honoring their roots.



4. Conclusion

Most other LCS studies explore the types, functions, and reasons for academic settings, such as classroom discourse, likewise in an asynchronous discourse online. The current study supported by the study of Choi Wang Fong (2011), investigated code-switching in asynchronous discourse, a written discourse in media such as Facebook.

This study explores code-switching between Kapampangan and English language in an asynchronous setting. People nowadays use the Kapampangan language online, which might be the way to explore the language and its development since language is dynamic, adapting to other languages through generations. The growth of the English language in the Philippines has been closely connected to the nation's political, economic, educational, and cultural developments. (Chureson, 2013). Therefore, the English language in the media is flourishing in the Philippines' media. The study found that intra-sentential switching is the most used on the page. Also, to address different audiences, habitual expression, to show identity with the group, and to attract attention to reasons categorized under the phatic function. Each function categorized reasons. The implications revealed cultural and linguistic contexts, including identity constructions, colonialism, the history of cultural symbols of Kapampangan, pop cultures, expressing belonging and cultural values, and Language as a living entity.

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