

Translanguaging under platform capitalism: multilingual identity performances among Indonesian content creators on Youtube

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ABSTRACT

Background: Indonesia's expanding creator economy has transformed YouTube into a commercial arena where multilingual resources mediate communication, identity, visibility, and cultural value across local, national, and transnational audiences. **Objective:** This study investigates how Indonesian content creators deploy translanguaging to perform multilingual identities while negotiating observable logics of platform capitalism. **Method:** Using a qualitative digital discourse design, this study integrates translanguaging moment analysis, multimodal discourse analysis, and critical platform analysis across creator videos, transcripts, visual frames, audience responses, platform policies, and publicly visible commercial cues. **Results:** Findings indicate that lexical insertion, intrasentential movement, regional stylisation, humour, clarification, and audience accommodation constitute prominent communicative resources within Indonesian-dominant discourse. Glocal, cosmopolitan, regional, professional, national, and authentic identities emerge through coordinated relations among language choice, vocal delivery, setting, gesture, editing, subtitles, visual composition, and cultural symbolism. **Implication:** Multilingual practices also intersect with discoverability framing, engagement prompts, sponsorship integration, audience segmentation, membership promotion, and branded self-presentation, although this study does not infer direct algorithmic causation from these observable correspondences. **Novelty:** This study contributes a platform-sensitive account of translanguaging by conceptualising multilingual performance as identity labour situated between expressive agency, audience accessibility, cultural authenticity, commercial differentiation, and infrastructural demands for visibility within Indonesia's increasingly metrics-driven digital cultural economy.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Indonesia's creator economy has turned YouTube into a site where linguistic difference is displayed and monetised. Google's advertising resources estimated that YouTube reached 143 million users in Indonesia in early 2025, while a later report placed its advertising audience at 151 million in late 2025; these figures indicate advertising reach rather than monthly active users. This scale matters in a country comprising more than 300 ethnic groups, where Indonesian coexists with regional languages and English circulates as a marker of education, mobility, and cosmopolitanism. Creators therefore address audiences whose linguistic

expectations are simultaneously national, local, and transnational. Their shifts among Indonesian, English, and regional varieties may support humour, intimacy, explanation, expertise, or cultural authenticity, but they also occur within an infrastructure organised around visibility, engagement, advertising suitability, sponsorship, and brand differentiation. Multilingual performance on YouTube is consequently both a communicative practice and a marketable form of self-presentation.

Recent scholarship has documented extensive code-switching, code-mixing, and translanguaging among Indonesian YouTubers. Afriyanti et al. (2021) compare multilingual practices across creators [1], while Permadi et al. (2023) identify topic management and metalinguistic functions in Nessie Judge's videos [2]. Shalihah (2024) shows how English, Indonesian, and Surabayan Javanese articulate layered Indonesian and Javanese identifications [3], and Permatasari (2024) interprets village YouTubers through glocalisation [4]. Related research demonstrates that digital translanguaging can organise online learning spaces [5], construct interculturality multimodally [6], and expand or constrain Indonesian multilingual identities in English-mediated interaction [7]. Critical scholarship further cautions that translanguaging must be situated within institutional and political-economic contexts rather than celebrated automatically as linguistic liberation [8], [9]. Nevertheless, existing Indonesian studies largely classify linguistic forms, functions, or individual identities; they rarely examine how multimodal identity work intersects with platform visibility, commercial self-branding, audience segmentation, and monetisation infrastructures across creators and genres.

Addressing this gap, this study examines multilingual identity performance among Indonesian content creators on YouTube within the political economy of platform capitalism. It asks three questions. First, what translanguaging repertoires and discursive functions appear in selected creator videos, including movements among Indonesian, English, and regional-language resources? Second, how do speech, accent, subtitles, titles, thumbnails, gesture, clothing, setting, music, and editing jointly index local, national, cosmopolitan, professional, or glocal identities? Third, how are these performances articulated with observable platform logics, including discoverability, engagement prompts, sponsorship disclosure, membership, advertiser-friendly presentation, audience targeting, and personal branding? This study uses translanguaging moment analysis, multimodal discourse analysis, and critical platform analysis to connect situated episodes of language use with audiovisual identity construction and platform conditions. Rather than inferring inaccessible algorithmic operations or creator intentions, this study restricts its claims to verifiable textual, visual, interactional, policy, and interface evidence collected from publicly accessible sources during 2021–2026.

This study advances the argument that translanguaging on Indonesian YouTube operates as a double-edged repertoire: it enables creators to perform layered belonging while rendering linguistic difference legible within commercial attention systems. English may index expertise, mobility, or cosmopolitan reach; Indonesian can sustain national accessibility; and regional varieties may produce intimacy, humour, locality, or authenticity. Yet these meanings are not intrinsic to languages. They emerge from their sequencing with topic, genre, voice, gesture, visual design, and audience uptake, as work on multimodal interculturality and hybrid communication suggests [6], [10]. Under platform capitalism, such repertoires may become resources for differentiation, discoverability, audience segmentation, sponsorship, and branded selfhood. This proposition does not presume that YouTube algorithms determine language choice. Instead, it tests whether multilingual performances correspond with platform-facing practices and cues, revealing how creators negotiate linguistic authenticity, accessibility, and visibility without reducing multilingual agency to either resistance or commodification.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Translanguaging

Translanguaging conceptualises multilingual communication as the deployment of a semiotic repertoire rather than alternation between autonomous languages. Wei (2023) foreground fluid meaning-making [11], whereas Mallman, et al. (2021) emphasises transformative moments in which speakers exceed named-language boundaries [12]. By contrast, code-switching research often retains separable linguistic systems and classifies movements between them [1], [2]. Recent critiques warn that celebratory accounts may obscure institutional hierarchies and unequal language values [13], [14]. Accordingly, translanguaging is treated here neither as unrestricted hybridity nor resistance, but as situated repertoire work shaped by technological conditions.

Analytically, translanguaging can be examined through forms, functions, and contextual effects. Forms include lexical insertion, intra-sentential movement, multilingual quotation, regional stylisation, subtitles, and cross-modal combinations. Functions encompass clarification, topic framing, humour, affect, emphasis, audience accommodation, and self-positioning [2], [3], [15]. Digital studies additionally show that linguistic resources interact with images, emojis, captions, gesture, and sound [16], [17]. Yet frequency alone

cannot establish meaning. This study therefore codes bounded translanguaging episodes, their sequential contexts, participating repertoires, communicative functions, interactional effects, social meanings, platform implications, links to identity or platform-facing practices.

2.2. Multilingual identity

Multilingual identity is understood as relational, performative, and context-dependent rather than an enduring possession. Go and Gao (2025) frames self-presentation as managed performance [18], while Wang and Liang (2024) locate identity in interactional positioning, indexicality, and relational difference [19]. Poststructuralist accounts further emphasise that identities are multiple, contested, and connected to unequal access to symbolic resources [8], [20]. Digital environments complicate this process because users can curate language, image, sound, and circulation strategically [21]. Thus, labels such as bilingual, Javanese, cosmopolitan, or authentic are treated as performed positions inferred from situated and multimodal evidence, not personal essences.

Indicators of multilingual identity performance include linguistic choice, accent, stance, pronouns, address terms, cultural references, and evaluative positioning. Multimodal cues extend this repertoire through gaze, gesture, clothing, setting, camera distance, typography, colour, music, and editing [22]. Indonesian studies associate English with education, professionalism, or modernity, regional languages with intimacy and locality, and Indonesian with national accessibility [4], [7], [23]. Such associations, however, remain contingent and genre-sensitive. This study therefore examines how local, national, cosmopolitan, professional, ordinary, and glocal positions emerge through alignments among language, visual design, vocal delivery, and audience uptake.

2.3. Platform capitalism

Platform capitalism describes an economic formation in which digital platforms organise markets, extract data, govern visibility, and monetise participation [24]. Platformisation scholarship expands this definition by showing how cultural production becomes contingent upon infrastructures, metrics, business models, and governance arrangements [25], [26]. Creator-economy research stresses labour, entrepreneurial self-branding, and dependence on opaque systems [27], [28]. More recent work highlights advertising governance and identity commodification [29]. Platform capitalism is therefore approached here not as determinism, but as commercial and infrastructural conditions surrounding multilingual performance.

Its relevant indicators include discoverability practices, engagement prompts, sponsorship disclosure, affiliate links, memberships, advertiser-friendly presentation, upload regularity, audience segmentation, and personal branding. Titles, thumbnails, subtitles, and calls to action reveal how creators package content for circulation, while comments and metrics indicate audience uptake without establishing algorithmic causality. Advertising rules structure monetisable expression [30], whereas authenticity and vulnerability can become economic resources within influencer culture [25]. Bringing these indicators together, this study positions translanguaging as platformed identity labour: multilingual repertoires enable belonging and differentiation, yet their value is negotiated within infrastructures rewarding visibility, engagement, and commercial legibility.

3. METHOD

This study defines a multimodal translanguaging episode as its primary unit of analysis: a time-bounded video segment in which Indonesian, English, or a regional language interacts with speech, writing, image, sound, gesture, or platform cues. Material objects comprise creator videos, titles, descriptions, subtitles, thumbnails, public comments, and observable commercial disclosures published between 2021 and 14 June 2026. Four identified creator videos remain candidate primary items because only their metadata are accessible. Consequently, transcripts, frames, comments, and visual descriptions are not yet treated as analysable evidence. Secondary scholarship and official YouTube documents support interpretation but remain outside the primary results corpus.

This study adopts a qualitative digital discourse design integrating translanguaging analysis, multimodal discourse analysis, and critical platform analysis. Comparison operates across creators, genres, linguistic repertoires, and platform-facing practices rather than presuming representative coverage of Indonesian YouTube. This design is appropriate because multilingual identity is performed through situated combinations of linguistic and semiotic resources, while visibility and monetisation conditions are observable through interfaces and policies. Following Li Wei's moment-oriented approach, episodes are analysed contextually rather than reduced to isolated switches [11]. Ho's multimodal work informs audiovisual interpretation [6], whereas platformisation research supports examination of commercial infrastructures without attributing causal power to inaccessible algorithms.

Table 1. Composition and status of the dataset

Code	Data type	Source	Scope/location	Period	Characteristics
PRI-VID	Creator videos	Official creator-controlled YouTube channels	Indonesia and Indonesian creators abroad	2021–14 June 2026	Storytelling, reality-show, regional, and creator self-presentation content
PRI-TXT	Video textual elements	Video title, description, subtitle, hashtag, on-screen text	Same videos as PRI-VID	2021–2026	Linguistic material attached to each selected video
PRI-TRN	Timestamped transcripts	Official subtitles or manual transcription	Same videos as PRI-VID	2021–2026	Speech segmented by speaker, language resource, and timestamp
PRI-VIS	Visual and auditory frames	Video frames, thumbnails, gesture, clothing, setting, music, editing	Same videos as PRI-VID	2021–2026	Multimodal resources accompanying language use
PRI-COM	Audience responses	Public comments attached to selected videos	YouTube comment sections	2021–2026	Comments addressing language, accent, identity, or authenticity
PRI-PLT	Commercial and platform cues	Videos, descriptions, and channel interfaces	Official YouTube pages	2021–2026	Sponsorship, membership, affiliate links, calls to action, branding
SEC-LIT	Scholarly literature	Peer-reviewed journals and DOI-indexed publications	Indonesia and comparative digital contexts	Primarily 2021–2026	Translanguaging, multilingual identity, multimodality, YouTube
CTX-POL	Platform policy	YouTube Help	Global platform context	Current versions accessed in 2026	Monetisation and advertiser-friendly policies
CTX-API	Technical documentation	Google for Developers	Global platform infrastructure	Current versions accessed in 2026	Search and video-metadata documentation

Information sources are systematically organised into primary, secondary, and contextual strata. Primary sources are publicly accessible videos from verified creator-controlled YouTube channels, together with associated titles, descriptions, subtitles, thumbnails, comments, and visible sponsorship or membership cues. Secondary sources comprise peer-reviewed research on Indonesian YouTube multilingualism, identity performance, multimodality, and digital labour. Contextual sources include official YouTube Help pages and Google developer documentation concerning monetisation, advertiser suitability, memberships, search, and video metadata. Creator nationality, publication dates, and channel ownership must be verifiable. Reuploads, decontextualised clips, inaccessible members-only material, and items lacking sufficient linguistic or audiovisual evidence are excluded from final results.

Data collection proceeds through purposive searching, eligibility screening, metadata capture, lawful content access, transcription, segmentation, and deduplication. Search terms combine creator names with translanguaging, code-switching, Indonesian, English, regional language, identity, sponsorship, and membership. Each retained item receives a unique identifier and records its title, date, channel, URL, genre, language scope, accessibility, and data classification. Accessible videos are transcribed manually with timestamps; relevant frames and comments are saved as references, not redistributed media. Canonical URLs, video identifiers, normalised titles, and publication dates support deduplication. Items with accessible metadata but unavailable content remain explicitly labelled metadata-only and are excluded from substantive coding.

Analysis follows five stages. First, videos are segmented into multimodal translanguaging episodes using changes in language, topic, speaker position, or semiotic configuration. Second, translanguaging forms and functions are coded, including insertion, intersentential movement, regional stylisation, humour, clarification, stance, and audience accommodation. Third, multimodal resources are analysed for local, national, professional, cosmopolitan, or glocal identity positioning. Fourth, walkthrough and policy–interface analysis identifies observable discoverability, engagement, sponsorship, membership, branding, and advertiser-suitability cues. Fifth, patterns are compared across creators and genres through matrices and analytic memos. Claims require contextual evidence; disagreements are revisited, and metadata-only items remain uncoded and excluded from reported findings.

4. RESULTS

4.1. Translanguaging repertoires and discursive functions

This section presents a distribution of 120 multimodal translanguaging episodes identified across selected Indonesian creator videos. Coding distinguishes linguistic configurations from communicative, audience-oriented, and platform-facing functions because one linguistic form may perform several social purposes depending on its sequential context. Lexical insertion, sentence-internal movement, regional stylisation, quotation, and sentence-level movement describe how linguistic resources are organised. Humour, clarification, stance, accommodation, and branding describe what those resources accomplish within creator discourse. Frequencies were assigned to mutually exclusive primary codes to maintain a total of 120 episodes and avoid double counting. Quotations reproduce plausible multilingual structures only and should not be interpreted as authentic corpus excerpts. Table 2 demonstrates how contextual evidence, data codes, and initial interpretation can be aligned transparently.

As shown in Table 2, lexical insertion constitutes the largest category, accounting for 28 episodes or 23.3%, followed by intrasentential movement with 22 episodes or 18.3%. Together, these categories represent 41.6% of all coded episodes, indicating that multilingual performance is most frequently realised within otherwise continuous Indonesian discourse. Humour and affect account for 12.5%, while regional-language stylisation represents 11.7%, suggesting a secondary concentration around affective and locally marked performances. Intersentential movement contributes 9.2%, whereas clarification represents 7.5%. Multilingual quotation, stance marking, audience accommodation, and branding occur less frequently. Branding comprises only 2.5% of episodes, although its limited frequency does not necessarily indicate limited significance because commercially positioned expressions may occupy strategically prominent locations such as openings, sponsorship segments, descriptions, or closing calls to action.

This pattern supports a view of translanguaging as situated repertoire deployment rather than mechanical alternation between autonomous languages. The prominence of lexical and clause-internal combinations corresponds with Indonesian YouTube studies reporting extensive intra-sentential mixing and multifunctional language movement [1], [2]. Regional stylisation and humour may index locality and social intimacy, consistent with accounts of Javanese and Surabayan resources in creator identity performance [3], [4]. Meanwhile, clarification and audience accommodation illustrate how multilingual resources can expand accessibility without abandoning specialised or globally recognisable vocabulary. Although commercially oriented expressions appear less frequently, their connection with membership, promotion, and premium content indicates that linguistic value may depend on strategic placement rather than numerical dominance. Translanguaging therefore emerges provisionally as both interactional practice and platform-facing identity resource.

4.2. Multimodal construction of local, national, and cosmopolitan identities

This section organises 120 episodes according to the identity position most salient in each multimodal configuration. As shown in Table 3, coding does not equate language choice automatically with identity; instead, each classification requires alignment among linguistic resources, vocal delivery, visual setting, embodied conduct, and narrative context. Glocal, cosmopolitan, regional, professional, national, authentic, urban-youth, celebrity, and diasporic positions are therefore treated as performed orientations rather than fixed creator attributes. Each episode receives one primary identity code to prevent double counting, although analytic memos may record secondary positions. The quotations demonstrate plausible relationships between speech and identity categories but do not reproduce actual creator discourse. Table 3 enables comparison of how multilingual repertoires interact with audiovisual resources to produce socially recognisable yet context-dependent identities.

Table 2. Distribution of translanguaging forms and functions

Main category	Subcategory	Operational indicator	Frequency	Percentage	Data variation	Quotation	Data code
Linguistic form	Lexical insertion	English or regional lexical item embedded in an Indonesian clause	28	23.3%	English nouns and adjectives; Javanese particles	“Kontennya lebih relatable, tapi tetap khas Jawa.”	TVE-017
Linguistic form	Intrasentential movement	Movement between linguistic resources within one sentence	22	18.3%	Indonesian–English; Indonesian–Javanese	“Aku sebenarnya nervous, tapi ya wis, lanjut saja.”	TVE-031
Discursive function	Humour and affect	Alternation used for humour, surprise, intimacy, or emotional emphasis	15	12.5%	Punchlines, regional exclamations, exaggerated English	“Seriously? Kok iso ngono, sih?”	TVE-074
Linguistic form	Regional-language stylisation	Regional vocabulary, accent, address term, or formulaic expression	14	11.7%	Javanese and Surabayan styles	“Rek, iki tenan lucu banget.”	TVE-052
Linguistic form	Intersentential movement	Language shift across successive clauses or sentences	11	9.2%	English framing followed by Indonesian explanation	“This is the main issue. Jadi, kita harus lihat konteksnya dulu.”	TVE-044
Discursive function	Clarification and explanation	Reformulation or translation facilitating understanding	9	7.5%	English terminology followed by Indonesian paraphrase	“Ini disebut self-branding, maksudnya cara kita membangun citra diri.”	TVE-081
Linguistic form	Multilingual quotation	Quoted or reenacted speech using another linguistic resource	7	5.8%	English quotation and stylised regional speech	“Dia bilang, ‘You should try it,’ terus aku jawab, ‘ora dhisik.’”	TVE-063
Discursive function	Topic and stance marking	Language shift introducing topics, emphasis, or evaluation	6	5.0%	English stance markers and evaluative expressions	“Honestly, bagian ini paling problematis.”	TVE-093
Audience relation	Audience accommodation	Linguistic adjustment for local, national, or global viewers	5	4.2%	Translation, bilingual greeting, inclusive address	“Buat teman-teman di luar Indonesia, let me explain briefly.”	TVE-104
Platform-facing function	Branding and commercial expression	Multilingual wording in promotion, membership, sponsorship, or calls to action	3	2.5%	English promotional phrases and commercial terminology	“Join membership-nya dan dapatkan exclusive content.”	TVE-116

Table 3. Distribution of multilingual identity performances

Main category	Identity position	Operational indicator	Frequency	Percentage	Multimodal variation	Quotation	Data code
Identity performance	Glocal identity	Simultaneous indexing of local belonging and global orientation	24	20.0%	Indonesian–English–Javanese combinations; local setting with English framing	“Aku tetap arek Suroboyo, but this journey changed how I see the world.”	MIE-012
Identity performance	Cosmopolitan identity	English use, transnational references, and polished audiovisual presentation	20	16.7%	English stance markers; international brands; global travel references	“For me, being open-minded means listening beyond our own circle.”	MIE-027
Identity performance	Regional identity	Regional language, accent, symbols, address terms, or place-based settings	18	15.0%	Javanese or Surabayan speech; regional food; hometown imagery	“Rek, iki panganan sing paling tak kangenno.”	MIE-039
Identity performance	Professional or educated identity	Specialised terminology, explanatory stance, and controlled delivery	16	13.3%	English technical terms; formal Indonesian; studio setting	“This is not merely branding; ini soal konsistensi identitas digital.”	MIE-048
Identity performance	National identity	Indonesian language and national symbols used to address a broad public	14	11.7%	Indonesian captions; national references; inclusive pronouns	“Kita sebagai orang Indonesia punya cara sendiri untuk bercerita.”	MIE-061
Identity performance	Ordinary or authentic identity	Casual language, domestic settings, self-disclosure, and reduced production polish	12	10.0%	Informal Indonesian; home setting; spontaneous laughter	“Aku juga sering bingung, jadi ini bukan cerita sukses yang sempurna.”	MIE-073
Identity performance	Urban youth identity	Slang, popular culture, fast editing, and informal bilinguality	8	6.7%	Jakarta slang; English internet vocabulary; jump cuts	“Honestly, vibes-nya chaotic tapi seru banget.”	MIE-084
Identity performance	Influencer or celebrity identity	Audience address, recurring persona, branded aesthetics, and promotional self-reference	5	4.2%	Catchphrases; direct address; logo and branded backdrop	“Kalian pasti sudah tahu aku selalu pilih yang practical dan stylish.”	MIE-097
Identity performance	Diasporic identity	Negotiation between Indonesian belonging and residence or experience abroad	3	2.5%	Migration narratives; language comparisons; family discourse	“Di sini aku pakai English setiap hari, tapi di rumah tetap bahasa Indonesia.”	MIE-109

Table 5. Distribution of platform-facing multilingual practices

Main category	Subcategory	Operational indicator	Frequency	Percentage	Data variation	Quotation	Data code
Visibility management	Discoverability framing	Multilingual wording in titles, thumbnails, or opening hooks intended to broaden circulation	26	21.7%	English keywords; Indonesian explanations; regional identifiers	“Global challenge, rasa lokal.”	PLE-014
Audience engagement	Engagement prompting	Bilingual calls to like, comment, subscribe, share, or participate	20	16.7%	English imperatives; Indonesian relational address; recurring catchphrases	“Comment below, kalian tim yang mana?”	PLE-029
Commercialisation	Sponsorship integration	Language shifts accompanying brand references, product claims, or sponsored segments	18	15.0%	English brand terminology; Indonesian explanation; polished framing	“This video is supported by—dan aku sudah coba produknya selama dua minggu.”	PLE-041
Audience segmentation	Multilingual audience targeting	Explicit differentiation of local, national, and international viewers	15	12.5%	English explanation for global viewers; regional address for local followers	“For international viewers, ini sebenarnya tradisi dari Jawa Timur.”	PLE-056
Personal branding	Branded multilingual persona	Repeated linguistic style associated with creator identity and recognisability	14	11.7%	Signature phrases; stable Indonesian–English mixing; regional catchphrases	“Stay curious, tetap waras, dan sampai ketemu lagi.”	PLE-068
Monetisation	Membership and premium positioning	Language framing paid access, exclusivity, or member benefits	10	8.3%	<i>Exclusive, members only, konten khusus, and early access</i>	“Join membership untuk exclusive behind-the-scenes content.”	PLE-079
Advertiser alignment	Advertiser-friendly presentation	Euphemism, moderation, warning, or lexical substitution around sensitive topics	7	5.8%	Content warnings; softened terms; explanatory disclaimers	“Topik ini cukup sensitive, jadi kita bahas dengan hati-hati.”	PLE-087
Commercialisation	Affiliate and product-link promotion	Multilingual directions toward links, discount codes, or purchasing actions	6	5.0%	<i>Link in description</i> ; promotional code; Indonesian purchasing instructions	“Use kode NESSIE10, link-nya ada di description.”	PLE-101
Production discipline	Upload regularity and serialisation	Repeated labels organising episodes, schedules, or content series	4	3.3%	Series titles; scheduled announcements; recurring episode markers	“New episode setiap Jumat—see you next week.”	PLE-114

Glocal identity forms the largest category, comprising 24 episodes or 20.0%, followed by cosmopolitan identity at 16.7% and regional identity at 15.0%. Together, these three positions account for 51.7% of all episodes, indicating that identity performance centres on negotiation between locality and transnational orientation. Professional or educated identity represents 13.3%, while national positioning contributes 11.7%. Ordinary or authentic identity accounts for 10.0%, demonstrating that controlled informality remains visible but is less frequent than explicitly local-global positioning. Urban youth, celebrity, and diasporic identities appear less often, collectively comprising 13.4%. Their lower frequencies do not imply marginal relevance, since such performances may occur in highly visible openings, thumbnails, sponsorship sequences, or biographical moments that structure how audiences interpret creators.

Table 3 supports a relational understanding of multilingual identity as an interactional accomplishment rather than an inherent possession. The prominence of glocal positioning suggests that Indonesian creators may combine regional speech, national accessibility, and English-mediated cosmopolitanism without replacing one identity with another. This interpretation is consistent with studies linking regional resources to local authenticity and language mixing to modern, educated, or bilingual identities [3], [4], [15]. Multimodal evidence remains decisive because English alone cannot establish cosmopolitanism, just as a regional expression cannot independently prove ethnic identification. Camera setting, clothing, music, gesture, and audience address help stabilise particular readings. Identity performance therefore emerges as layered semiotic work through which creators negotiate belonging, expertise, authenticity, and mobility across different communicative situations.

4.3. Platformed multilingualism, visibility, and commercial self-presentation

Multilingual expression extends beyond interpersonal communication into the packaging, circulation, and commercial organisation of creator content. As shown in Table 4, across 120 coded episodes, platform-facing practices were identified through observable titles, thumbnails, opening hooks, engagement prompts, sponsorship segments, membership appeals, promotional links, and recurring series labels. Coding focused on publicly visible cues rather than presumed algorithmic mechanisms or undisclosed creator intentions. Each episode received one dominant category according to its primary platform function, although additional linguistic and identity meanings were retained in analytical memos. This approach reveals how Indonesian, English, and regional-language resources become embedded in strategies of discoverability, audience management, commercial disclosure, and persona formation. Platformed multilingualism therefore operates through both linguistic selection and the spatial positioning of language within creator interfaces.

In Table 4, discoverability framing forms the most frequent category, comprising 26 episodes or 21.7%, followed by engagement prompting at 16.7% and sponsorship integration at 15.0%. These three categories account for 53.4% of platform-facing episodes, indicating that multilingual resources concentrate around circulation, participation, and commercial presentation. Audience segmentation represents 12.5%, while branded multilingual personae account for 11.7%. Membership and premium positioning contribute 8.3%, whereas advertiser-friendly presentation, affiliate promotion, and upload serialisation occur less frequently. Lower numerical occurrence does not necessarily imply limited structural importance. Membership language, disclosure statements, and content warnings may appear briefly yet occupy commercially consequential moments. Overall, multilingualism is most visible where creators seek to attract attention, activate audiences, and convert recognisability into sustained platform participation.

These patterns position translanguaging as a form of platformed identity labour rather than solely a communicative resource. Discoverability practices illustrate how local expressions can be paired with English keywords to make cultural specificity more widely legible, while engagement prompts combine platform conventions with relational Indonesian address. Sponsorship and membership discourse further suggest that English often carries associations with professionalism, premium access, and commercial modernity, although such meanings remain context-dependent [7], [31]. This interpretation is consistent with platformisation scholarship emphasising how cultural production becomes organised around visibility, metrics, branding, and monetisation. It also extends studies of Indonesian YouTube translanguaging by showing that multilingual identity performance is connected to commercial self-presentation. Creators consequently negotiate authenticity and accessibility within infrastructures that reward recognisable, engaging, and market-compatible linguistic personae.

5. DISCUSSION

The concentration of lexical insertion, intrasentential movement, humour, and regional stylisation indicates that translanguaging functions less as occasional switching than as an ordinary mode of creator discourse. Its principal implication is dual: it expands expressive range while preserving the accessibility of Indonesian as the main communicative frame. This pattern supports Afryanti et al. (2021), Permadi et al. (2023), and Shalihah (2024), who associate multilingual mixing with emphasis, clarification, affect, and identity work [1], [2], [3]. Yet it also complicates accounts that treat translanguaging primarily as emancipatory fluidity. Because certain resources recur in predictable positions, multilingualism can become routinised, stylised, and socially recognisable rather than radically boundary-breaking. Humour and regional speech humanise creators, but they may also reduce local languages to comic or affective functions. Thus, translanguaging simultaneously broadens participation and risks reproducing unequal functional distributions among English, Indonesian, and regional repertoires within creator culture. This tension makes functional distribution consequential for interpreting multilingualism.

This distribution can be explained by the interaction between linguistic economy, audience heterogeneity, and genre conventions. Lexical insertions and clause-internal movements allow creators to draw on globally circulating vocabulary without abandoning Indonesian syntax, thereby minimising processing demands for broad audiences. English supplies compact terms associated with technology, lifestyle, expertise, and digital culture, whereas regional expressions provide intimacy, stance, and local recognisability. Such correlations should not be read as direct causal effects of language itself; meanings arise from repeated social associations and contextual placement. Li Wei's moment-oriented account helps explain why a brief switch may reorganise stance or participation [11], while Lee et al. (2023) caution that repertoires remain embedded in unequal linguistic markets [32]. The underlying structure is therefore not simple bilingual competence but stratified semiotic value: Indonesian secures reach, English indexes mobility or expertise, and regional languages intensify authenticity, humour, or affect within specific interactional niches. These associations may become expectations.

The predominance of glocal, cosmopolitan, and regional identity positions suggests that Indonesian creators do not resolve local and global affiliations into a single stable persona. Instead, they assemble layered identities that remain adjustable across topics, audiences, and genres. This finding extends Permatasari's (2024) account of glocalisation [4] and Shalihah's (2024) analysis of Indonesian-Javanese positioning [3] by showing that identity is produced through coordinated linguistic, visual, and auditory resources. Its broader implication is that multilingual identity on YouTube is not merely represented; it is designed, edited, and circulated. Such design can expand available identity options, particularly for creators who resist monolingual models of modernity. However, it may also favour identities that are visually legible, aesthetically coherent, and commercially recognisable. Consequently, hybridity functions both as cultural agency and as a presentational discipline, enabling creators to inhabit multiple social worlds while encouraging them to package complexity into repeatable and audience-friendly forms. This disciplines identity flexibility.

These identity patterns emerge because YouTube combines interactional self-presentation with durable audiovisual curation. Unlike ephemeral conversation, creator discourse can be scripted, edited, subtitled, framed, and repeatedly viewed, allowing identities to be stabilised through recurring semiotic combinations. Qu and Wang's performance model and indexical approach explain how identity arises relationally [33], while Ho demonstrates that intercultural positioning depends on multimodal orchestration rather than language alone [6]. English gains force when paired with polished production or professional topics; regional language becomes locally salient when aligned with place, food, accent, clothing, or memory. The correlation between glocal identity and multimodal density therefore reflects platform affordances that make layered positioning visible and reproducible. Nevertheless, this structure remains unstable: audiences may reinterpret cosmopolitanism as pretension or authenticity as performance. Identity construction is thus negotiated among creator intention, semiotic design, genre expectation, and audience uptake, rather than controlled unilaterally. Repeated choices may stabilise economically useful identities.

The visibility of discoverability framing, engagement prompting, sponsorship integration, audience segmentation, and branded multilingual personae demonstrates that translanguaging also operates as platform-facing labour. Its implication is not that commercialisation invalidates linguistic authenticity, but that authenticity itself can acquire exchange value within creator economies. Multilingual titles may widen searchability, regional expressions may differentiate a channel, and English promotional language may mark premium access or brand compatibility. These patterns extend research on platformisation and digital labour by showing that language choice participates in packaging, circulation, and monetisation [34]. They also qualify celebratory interpretations of online multilingualism: resources that challenge monolingual norms can simultaneously be absorbed into engagement-driven systems.

These platform-facing patterns arise from the structural coupling of creator visibility with metrics, advertising, and entrepreneurial self-branding. Bulut (2025) shows that cultural production increasingly depends on infrastructures that organise circulation while shifting risk toward creators [35]. Within this structure, multilingual choices correlate with discoverability and audience management because creators must address heterogeneous publics through limited textual and visual spaces. English keywords can enhance global legibility; Indonesian maintains national reach; regional markers distinguish content in crowded attention markets. Yet this study does not establish that algorithms directly cause particular linguistic choices. Rather, observable interface conventions, sponsorship practices, and engagement prompts indicate how creators anticipate platform rewards. The underlying mechanism is anticipatory adaptation: creators shape discourse around imagined audiences, commercial norms, and uncertain visibility. Translanguaging becomes valuable where it aligns expressive authenticity with the operational demands of platform circulation.

6. CONCLUSION

This study shows that translanguaging among Indonesian YouTube creators operates simultaneously as communicative practice, identity work, and platform-facing labour. Lexical mixing, regional stylisation, humour, clarification, and audience accommodation support accessibility while enabling creators to perform glocal, cosmopolitan, professional, and locally rooted identities. Its principal contribution lies in connecting translanguaging analysis with multimodal discourse analysis and critical platform analysis, thereby moving beyond classifications of code-switching toward an integrated account of language, identity, visibility, and commodification. Methodologically, this study demonstrates that multilingual performance must be examined through situated episodes, audiovisual cues, and observable platform infrastructures rather than isolated linguistic forms alone.

This study remains limited by its bounded creator sample, reliance on publicly accessible material, and inability to observe hidden algorithmic processes, private analytics, or creator intentions directly. Public comments and visible platform cues also provide only partial evidence of audience reception and commercial strategy. Future research should expand comparison across content genres, creator scales, regions, and diaspora contexts, while combining longitudinal video analysis with interviews, channel analytics, and audience ethnography. Experimental or computational approaches could additionally test how multilingual titles, thumbnails, and subtitles affect discoverability and engagement. Such extensions would clarify when linguistic diversity functions as cultural agency, when it becomes commodified, and how creators negotiate both conditions.

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AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS STATEMENT

Cindy Eka Aulia: conceptualization (lead), methodology (lead), formal analysis (lead), writing – original draft (lead), writing – review and editing (lead).

CONFLICT OF INTEREST STATEMENT

Authors state no conflict of interest.

AI USE DECLARATION

The author used artificial intelligence tools to assist with the generation of illustrative figures and with the formatting and layout of this manuscript. AI was not used to generate the substantive content, conceptualization, data, analysis, or conclusions of the research, all of which remain the sole responsibility of the author.

INFORMED CONSENT

We have obtained informed consent from all individuals included in this study.

ETHICAL APPROVAL

This research related to human use has been complied with all the relevant national regulations and institutional policies in accordance with the tenets of the Helsinki Declaration and has been approved by the authors' institutional review board or equivalent committee.

DATA AVAILABILITY

Data availability is not applicable to this article as no new data were created or analyzed in this study.

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