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An Analysis of Code-Switching and Code-Mixing as Expressions of Social Identity in the Song Tabola Bale by Silet Open Up

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ABSTRACT

This study addresses the limited understanding of how code-switching and code-mixing involving different regional languages contribute to social identity representation in Indonesian popular music. Previous studies have predominantly examined language contact between a regional language and Indonesian, leaving cross-regional linguistic combinations insufficiently explored. This study examines code-switching and code-mixing in Tabola Bale by Silet Open Up and collaborators, focusing on their forms, communicative functions, and potential relationship to social identity. Employing a descriptive qualitative approach and content analysis, the study analyzes the song's 35-line lyrics transcribed from its official music video. The data are examined using Poplack's (1980) typology of code-switching, Muysken's (2000) framework of code-mixing, Tajfel's (1981) Social Identity Theory, and Bhabha's (1994) concept of cultural hybridity. The findings identify linguistic elements associated with Minangkabau and Eastern Indonesian varieties, alongside Indonesian colloquial expressions and English vocabulary. Examples include denai, Uda, ko pu, and mood. These patterns demonstrate linguistic variation and provide a basis for examining regional identity representation, stylistic variation, and emotional expression. However, the analysis also highlights the difficulty of classifying certain expressions without sufficient grammatical and contextual evidence. The findings suggest that combining regional linguistic resources can represent multiple cultural affiliations within a single musical work. Nevertheless, claims about collective solidarity, audience responses, and cultural resistance require further investigation.

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1. Introduction

The twenty-first century is characterized by rapid globalization and digital interconnectedness, which have fostered unprecedented levels of contact between different cultures. This dynamic environment has significantly influenced traditional linguistic boundaries, accelerating what Coupland (2018) describes as the "mediatization" of language in public life. Consequently, popular music and digital media platforms have become important spaces for social interaction and self-expression, particularly among younger generations. Within this artistic context, linguistic variation serves not only as a reflection of language contact but also as a means of achieving specific social and communicative purposes. Linguistic variations are not random occurrences but function as conscious strategies for communication and social expression.

Indonesia provides an ideal context for investigating linguistic contact because of its rich linguistic diversity, with more than 700 active regional languages interacting with Bahasa Indonesia. Within this complex linguistic ecology, language choice carries social and symbolic significance, reflecting both national identity and regional belonging. Contemporary local artists increasingly incorporate regional languages into their musical works to express local identities and preserve cultural heritage. By integrating regional linguistic elements into widely accessible media, these artists contribute to cultural preservation while fostering ethnic solidarity at the national level. Popular music, therefore, provides a relevant context for examining how linguistic choices represent cultural affiliations and communicate social identities across regional boundaries.

From a sociolinguistic perspective, these linguistic contact phenomena can be examined through code-switching (CS) and code-mixing (CM), both of which can function as markers of social identity (Rosyidah & Ma'rifah, 2022; Maulidana et al., 2025). Poplack (2018) and Muysken (2000) provide structural perspectives for examining these phenomena, conceptualizing code-switching and code-mixing as systematic communicative practices rather than indicators of linguistic deficiency. Previous studies have investigated the use of code-mixing in Indonesian popular music and demonstrated its artistic, social, and commercial significance. Fathurohman et al. (2023) found that code-mixing in Javanese songs creates artistic nuances while maintaining accessibility for national audiences. Similarly, Levinia and Najla (2022) demonstrated that code-mixing in Balinese–Indonesian songs responds to market demands while contributing to the development of local musical identity. Maulidana et al. (2025) further showed that code-mixing in contemporary songs can serve as an expression of youth identity and prestige. Collectively, these studies demonstrate that code-mixing in popular music extends beyond linguistic variation to encompass artistic expression, cultural representation, and social positioning.

Despite these contributions, previous studies have primarily focused on language contact involving a single regional language and Indonesian. The deliberate combination of linguistic elements from different regional backgrounds within a single musical work remains an area that warrants further investigation. In particular, limited attention has

been given to how cross-regional linguistic hybridization contributes to the construction and expression of collective cultural identity in contemporary Indonesian popular music. Addressing this gap requires examining not only the structural forms of code-switching and code-mixing but also their communicative functions and significance in representing social identities.

In this regard, the song "Tabola Bale" by Silet Open Up presents a compelling case for investigating code-switching and code-mixing as sociolinguistic phenomena. The song combines elements of the Minangkabau language and Eastern Malay dialects within a single musical work, creating an opportunity to examine linguistic interaction across regional boundaries. Unlike studies focusing primarily on the relationship between a regional language and Indonesian, this study investigates cross-regional linguistic hybridization and its potential role in constructing a collective hybrid cultural identity. The combination of these linguistic varieties provides a context for exploring how language choices convey messages, establish artistic styles, and represent the social identities of collaborating artists within a nationally accessible musical platform.

Accordingly, this study aims to identify and describe the forms and types of code-switching and code-mixing between Minangkabau and Eastern Malay/Indonesian in the lyrics of "Tabola Bale". It also seeks to analyze the communicative functions of these linguistic practices in conveying messages and establishing artistic styles. Furthermore, this study aims to examine how the combination of linguistic elements from different regional varieties represents and constructs the social identities of the collaborating artists. Through these objectives, the study seeks to contribute to sociolinguistic research on language contact, identity construction, and cultural hybridization in Indonesian popular music.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Code-Switching and Code-Mixing

Code-switching (CS) refers to the alternation between two or more linguistic codes within a discourse. Muysken (2000) describes alternation as a pattern involving shifts between linguistic systems, while Poplack (1980) distinguishes three types of code-switching: inter-sentential switching, which occurs between sentences; intra-sentential switching, which occurs within a sentence; and tag-switching, which involves inserting tags or interjections from another language. Poplack (1980) also proposes two syntactic constraints: the Free Morpheme Constraint, which restricts switching between free and bound morphemes, and the Equivalence Constraint, which suggests that switching occurs at points where the surface constituent orders of the languages are compatible.

Code-mixing (CM) involves incorporating words, phrases, or morphemes from one language into the grammatical structure of another. Muysken (2000) identifies insertion as one pattern of code-mixing, in which linguistic elements are integrated into the grammatical framework of the Matrix Language (ML), while the source language is referred to as the Embedded Language (EL). Myers-Scotton's (1993) Matrix Language Frame model further explains that EL elements are inserted into a syntactic frame

primarily determined by the ML. Such choices may reflect the semantic specificity or cultural significance of particular expressions within a communicative context.

Together, Poplack (1980), Muysken (2000), and Myers-Scotton (1993) provide complementary frameworks for identifying and analyzing code-switching and code-mixing in "Tabola Bale" by Silet Open Up, particularly the linguistic patterns involving Minangkabau and Eastern Malay/Indonesian and their potential significance in expressing social identity.

2.2 Social Identity Theory and Language

Tajfel's (1981) Social Identity Theory explains how individuals categorize themselves into social groups to establish social identities and maintain self-esteem. In sociolinguistic contexts, language choice functions as a marker of group membership, cultural affiliation, and social positioning. Recent research further demonstrates that code-switching can serve as a resource for constructing social meanings, negotiating identities, and expressing group affiliations in mediated communication (Fernández-Lizárraga, 2025). By incorporating regional dialects into national music, artists can reinforce ethnic identity and challenge cultural homogenization (Myers-Scotton, 1993). Similarly, Bourdieu's concept of symbolic capital highlights how linguistic and cultural resources can generate social recognition and influence. In the music industry, cultural producers may convert market success into symbolic capital (Varriale, 2015), while digital platforms reshape how professional recognition and career success are established through existing forms of capital (Tan, 2025). Accordingly, the strategic use of regional linguistic varieties in popular music may contribute to artists' professional identities, cultural visibility, and competitiveness in the digital music market. Analyzing these choices through Social Identity Theory therefore helps explain how linguistic practices may represent group membership and negotiate social identities in contemporary popular music.

2.3 Hybrid Identity and the Third Space

Bhabha's (1994) concept of the Third Space describes an intercultural space in which established cultural boundaries are negotiated and new meanings emerge through cultural interaction. This perspective challenges the assumption that cultural identities are fixed, homogeneous, or mutually exclusive. Contemporary scholarship similarly emphasizes hybridity as an ongoing process of cultural negotiation that challenges essentialist understandings of identity (Hybridity and National Identity in Post-Colonial Schools, 2021). Collaboration between artists from different regional backgrounds can therefore produce a collective hybrid identity that transcends individual ethnic affiliations (Karanja, 2010). Hall (1996) further conceptualizes identity as an ongoing process of production rather than a fixed inheritance. From this perspective, the linguistic combination in "Tabola Bale" can be examined as a process of identity construction through which the collaborating artists negotiate regional authenticity, cultural affiliation, and national marketability.

3. Method

This study employed a descriptive qualitative approach using qualitative content analysis to examine code-switching and code-mixing in *Tabola Bale* by Silet Open Up and collaborating artists. The primary data consisted of 35 lines of lyrics transcribed from the song's official music video on YouTube through repeated listening. The analysis focused on identifying linguistic expressions associated with Minangkabau, Eastern Indonesian varieties, Indonesian, and English. Lexical references, including the Glosbe Indonesian–Minangkabau dictionary, were consulted to support the identification and interpretation of selected expressions. The data were analyzed using Poplack's (1980) typology of code-switching and Muysken's (2000) framework of code-mixing. The analysis involved identifying relevant linguistic expressions, classifying their structural patterns, interpreting their potential communicative functions, and examining their relationship to social identity representation. Tajfel's (1981) Social Identity Theory and Bhabha's (1994) concept of cultural hybridity informed the interpretation of regional affiliations and the coexistence of linguistic resources from different cultural backgrounds. The analysis considered the grammatical structure and immediate context of each expression to avoid misclassification. Interpretations of identity, solidarity, prestige, and cultural resistance were limited to what the lyrical data could support, while claims concerning artists' intentions and audience responses were acknowledged as requiring further investigation.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Forms and Types of Code-Switching and Code-Mixing

The analysis of Tabola Bale by Silet Open Up reveals the use of regional languages, Indonesian, and English to construct a linguistically diverse musical text. The selected lyrics illustrate several forms of language alternation and mixing, including the use of regional-language expressions, lexical insertion, and discourse particles. To classify these phenomena, the analysis draws on Poplack's (1980) framework of code-switching and Muysken's (2000) typology of code-mixing. Poplack distinguishes inter-sentential switching, intra-sentential switching, and tag-switching, whereas Muysken identifies insertion, alternation, and congruent lexicalization as three principal patterns of code-mixing. These frameworks provide complementary perspectives for examining the structural characteristics of multilingual lyrics.

Table 1. Lyric Language Analysis of *Tabola Bale*

Line	Singer	Original Lyric	Type	Analysis
1	Diva Aurel	*Dulu denai lah suko mancaliak Uda bakawan.*	CS (Inter-sentential)	Full shift to Minangkabau; marks the singer's ethnic origin and opens the song in her mother tongue.
2	Silet/Juan	*Lia Ade Nona makin gaga, bikin kaka jadi suka.*	CS (Inter-sentential)	Complete shift to Eastern Malay (Kupang Malay); lexemes gaga, kaka, Lia signal Eastern identity.

6	Silet/Juan	*Kaka jadi jatoh e.*	CM (Tag-switching)	Insertion of Eastern emphatic particle ‘e’ into Indonesian structure; functions as in-group solidarity marker.
10	Jacson Zeran	*Kaka jadi salting sampe mood berubah.*	CM (Insertion)	Slang salting and English mood inserted into Indonesian frame; projects modern youth identity.
13	Jacson Zeran	*Kaka lacak ko pu nama.*	CM (Insertion)	Papuan Malay possessive phrase ko pu inserted into Indonesian sentence; expresses Eastern cultural ownership.
20	Diva Aurel	*Ondeh, Uda, jan lah baitu bana.*	CS + Tag-switching	Full shift to Minangkabau with interjection Ondeh; marks emotional transition and authenticity.
35	Silet/Juan	*Sumpah ni ja’o sodho, iwa mbodho.*	CS (Inter-sentential)	Full use of Ende regional language (NTT); asserts highly specific local identity and cultural resistance.

Source: Primary Data Analysis (2026)

The lyrics of *Tabola Bale* demonstrate multilingual practices at different linguistic levels, including regional-language use, lexical insertion, and potentially meaningful discourse particles. However, regional expressions do not automatically constitute inter-sentential code-switching, nor should particles be classified as tag-switching without examining their grammatical and pragmatic functions. Muysken (2000) distinguishes structural processes such as insertion and alternation, while Kadir (2021) and Picone (2024) discuss the potential relationships between multilingual lyrics, identity, emotional expression, and cultural affiliation.

The opening lyric performed by Diva Aurel, “Dulu *denai lah suko mancaliak Uda bakawan*,” contains Minangkabau expressions, including *denai* (I), *mancaliak* (seeing or looking), and *Uda* (a form of address). These forms establish a recognizable regional linguistic context but do not independently demonstrate inter-sentential code-switching. Following Poplack (1980), this classification requires evidence of a language change between sentences or independent clauses in the surrounding lyrics.

Similarly, “*Sumpah ni ja’o sodho, iwa mbodho*,” identified in the dataset as Ende, requires verification of its language identification and translation through reliable documentation or competent speakers. If confirmed, it illustrates the inclusion of a geographically specific linguistic resource in popular music. Although such inclusion may increase regional-language visibility, claims about cultural resistance or challenges to linguistic marginalization require additional evidence concerning artists’ intentions, production contexts, or audience responses.

The lyric "*Kaka jadi salting sampe* mood berubah," performed by Jacson Zeran, combines Indonesian grammatical material with *salting*, a colloquial abbreviation of *salah tingkah*, and the English noun mood. Under Muysken's (2000) typology, mood may be analyzed as an English lexical item inserted into an Indonesian clause, whereas *salting* is better treated as established Indonesian slang. This combination may contribute to a contemporary lyrical style, although interpretations involving youth identity or modernity remain tentative. Kadir (2021) and Picone (2024) provide broader perspectives on the relationships between language choices, identity, and musical expression.

Another example, "*Kaka lacak ko pu nama*," contains *ko pu*, a possessive construction associated with Papuan Malay and related eastern Indonesian varieties. Myers-Scotton's (1993) Matrix Language Frame model can help analyze the grammatical relationship between linguistic elements, but identifying the matrix language requires evidence from word order, grammatical relations, and morpheme distribution rather than assumptions based on vocabulary alone.

In "*Kaka jadi jatoh e*," the final particle *e* may perform a pragmatic or discourse function, although its precise meaning requires contextual investigation. Although Poplack (1980) identifies tag-switching as a structural category, *e* should be classified accordingly only if its linguistic status and relationship to the surrounding utterance support that interpretation. Otherwise, describing it provisionally as a regional particle is more appropriate.

Likewise, "*Ondeh, Uda, jan lah baitu bana*," performed by Diva Aurel, predominantly uses Minangkabau resources. The interjection *ondeh*, alongside *Uda*, *jan*, and *baitu bana*, contributes to the expressive character of the utterance without necessarily indicating a switch between languages. Myers-Scotton's (1993) Markedness Model offers a framework for examining how language choices may communicate social relationships and expectations, but applying it requires evidence that particular forms carry socially meaningful contrasts in context.

Overall, *Tabola Bale* combines regional-language resources, Indonesian colloquial expressions, English vocabulary, and potentially meaningful discourse particles. These patterns are consistent with research linking multilingual practices in music to identity representation and emotional expression (Kadir, 2021; Picone, 2024). Nevertheless, structural classification alone cannot establish specific social or ideological functions. Reliable interpretation requires accurate language identification, contextual analysis, and evidence of the social meanings associated with the linguistic forms.

4.2 Communicative Functions of Code-Switching and Code-Mixing

The analysis of Tabola Bale identifies several potential communicative functions of code-switching and code-mixing, including regional identity representation, stylistic variation, narrative organization, and emotional expression. These functions are examined through the linguistic forms in the lyrics and their immediate contexts. Poplack (1980) and Muysken (2000) provide frameworks for classifying language alternation and mixing, while Tajfel (1981), Bourdieu (1991), and Bhabha (1994) offer perspectives for

interpreting the possible social and cultural meanings of language use. The analysis distinguishes observable linguistic features from interpretations that require additional evidence.

Table 2. Taxonomy of Communicative Functions in *Tabola Bale*

Function	Communicative Goal	Lyric Example	Theoretical Basis
Identity Marker & Solidarity	Affirming ethnic affiliation; building targeted audience bonds	*denai (M), gaga (T), ko pu (T), iwa mbodho (T-Ende)*	Indexing Identity; Tajfel (1981)
Performative Styling & Prestige	Projecting modern, culturally rooted image	*salting, mood (English)*	Styling (Agha, 2007); Bourdieu (1991)
Discourse Shift & Quotation	Marking character role shift from narrator to dialogue	*Ondeh, Uda, jan lah baitu bana (full Minangkabau)*	Poplack (1980); Alternation
Emotive Emphasis	Adding emotional intensity without grammatical disruption	*Emphatic particle 'e'; tabola-bale*	Tag-switching; Myers-Scotton (1993)
Cultural Hybridity	Creating new collective persona through regional fusion	*Systematic combination of Minang & Eastern Malay*	Third Space (Bhabha, 1994)

Source: Primary Data Analysis (2026)

One identifiable feature of *Tabola Bale* is its use of regional expressions, including *denai*, associated with Minangkabau, and *ko pu*, associated with Papuan Malay and related eastern Indonesian varieties. These forms distinguish the lyrics from standard Indonesian. Tajfel's (1981) social identity theory provides a framework for understanding group affiliation and identity, although the lyrics alone cannot establish whether these expressions strengthen regional belonging or solidarity.

The song also combines colloquial Indonesian and English, as illustrated by *salting* (an abbreviation of *salah tingkah*) and *mood* in "*Kaka jadi salting sampe mood berubah*." Bourdieu (1991) explains how language choices acquire social value, while Agha (2007) examines how linguistic forms become associated with recognizable social personae. However, the available data do not establish that *mood* deliberately signals prestige, modernity, or youth identity.

Language choice may also shape the song's narrative. The line "*Ondeh, Uda, jan lah baitu bana*," performed by Diva Aurel, contains several Minangkabau expressions. Its distribution among performers may differentiate voices or perspectives. Poplack (1980) provides a framework for analyzing structural language alternation, while Muysken (2000) distinguishes forms of language mixing. Nevertheless, the line's narrative function requires evidence from the lyrical sequence and performance context.

The lyrics may also convey emotional meanings. In "*Kaka jadi jatoh e*," the particle *e* may serve a pragmatic function, while *ondeh* functions as an interjection in the Minangkabau passage. Myers-Scotton (1993) discusses the social motivations underlying language choices, and Agha (2007) explains how linguistic forms acquire social

meanings. However, the specific emotional functions of *e* and *ondeh* require further contextual or speaker-based evidence. The particle *e* should not automatically be classified as tag-switching without establishing its linguistic status and function.

The coexistence of Minangkabau and eastern Indonesian linguistic resources also provides a basis for examining cultural diversity. Bhabha's (1994) concept of cultural hybridity helps explain cultural forms emerging through interaction across cultural boundaries, while Picone (2024) examines code-switching in popular music in relation to identity and cultural orientations. Although *Tabola Bale* brings together linguistic resources associated with different regional backgrounds, the lyrics alone cannot demonstrate that the song creates a new collective identity or deliberately challenges cultural marginalization. Such claims require additional evidence, including artist interviews and audience reception.

Overall, *Tabola Bale* combines regional expressions, colloquial Indonesian, and English lexical items, creating observable linguistic variation that can be examined in relation to regional affiliation, stylistic organization, narrative presentation, and emotional expression. Although the theoretical frameworks help contextualize these patterns, stronger claims about their social meanings and effects require further research involving performer interviews, contextual analysis, and audience responses.

4.3 Social Identity Expression

The linguistic patterns in Tabola Bale illustrate how regional languages, Indonesian slang, and English vocabulary may contribute to the representation of social identities. Tajfel's (1981) Social Identity Theory provides a framework for examining how linguistic choices signal potential group affiliations. However, the lyrics alone cannot establish the artists' intentions or audience responses.

a. Construction of Ethnic Identity

The use of Minangkabau expressions in "*Dulu denai lah suko mancaliak Uda bakawan*" makes regional identity linguistically recognizable. Similarly, expressions such as *gaga* and *kaka*, as well as the possessive construction *ko pu*, represent linguistic resources associated with Eastern Indonesian varieties. These examples demonstrate the inclusion of regional linguistic elements in a commercially distributed song.

From the perspective of Tajfel (1981), these expressions may function as markers of regional affiliation. Picone (2024) likewise discusses how language choices in popular music can represent local identities within broader musical contexts. Nevertheless, the lyrics do not establish whether these choices generate ethnic pride or strengthen listeners' sense of belonging. The findings therefore indicate the representation of regional identities rather than measurable changes in their social status.

b. Modern Identity and Social Prestige

The line "*Kaka jadi salting sampe mood berubah*" combines Indonesian with colloquial slang and English vocabulary. The use of *salting* and mood demonstrates

stylistic variation within the lyrics. Similar combinations have been examined in popular music research, including Picone (2024) and Ruanglertsilp (2024), who discuss code-switching in relation to linguistic identity and local-global influences.

Norton (2013) highlights the relationship between identity, social relations, and language investment, particularly in language-learning contexts. Although this perspective provides a broader understanding of language and identity, the present data do not establish that the artists use English to demonstrate education, modernity, or social prestige. The evidence supports the more limited conclusion that the song combines regional and contemporary linguistic resources to create a varied stylistic repertoire.

c. Solidarity and Collective Hybrid Identity

The combination of Minangkabau and Eastern Indonesian linguistic elements brings different regional resources into a shared musical text. Bhabha's (1994) concept of cultural hybridity and the Third Space provides a framework for interpreting this linguistic combination as an encounter between distinct cultural affiliations. Picone (2024) similarly demonstrates the relevance of multilingual choices to identity representation in popular music.

However, the coexistence of regional languages does not necessarily prove that the artists deliberately construct a collective hybrid identity or that listeners experience cross-regional solidarity. Likewise, the available lyrics alone cannot establish that the song constitutes resistance to standard Indonesian or dominant regional cultures in national media. Such claims would require further evidence concerning the music industry, artists' intentions, and audience reception.

Overall, Tabola Bale represents multiple regional and stylistic affiliations through its combination of regional languages, Indonesian slang, and English vocabulary. Tajfel's (1981) theory helps explain the potential relationship between language and group identity, while Bhabha's (1994) framework offers a perspective on cultural hybridity. The findings support the representation of linguistic plurality, but claims concerning collective pride, social prestige, solidarity, or cultural resistance require further investigation.

5. Conclusion

This study examined the forms and types of code-switching and code-mixing in Tabola Bale by Silet Open Up and its collaborators, focusing on their potential communicative functions and relationship to social identity. The findings indicate that the lyrics combine regional linguistic elements associated with Minangkabau and Eastern Indonesian varieties with Indonesian colloquial expressions and English vocabulary. These patterns illustrate the linguistic diversity present in contemporary Indonesian popular music. However, the classification of particular expressions requires careful consideration of their grammatical structures and linguistic contexts.

The analysis also suggests that these linguistic choices may contribute to regional identity representation, stylistic variation, narrative presentation, and emotional

expression. Tajfel's Social Identity Theory provides a framework for interpreting regional expressions as potential markers of group affiliation, while Bhabha's concept of cultural hybridity helps explain the coexistence of different linguistic and cultural resources within a single musical work. Nevertheless, the lyrics alone cannot establish the artists' intentions or demonstrate that the song generates collective pride, social prestige, cross-regional solidarity, or cultural resistance.

This study contributes to sociolinguistic research by examining code-switching and code-mixing in a song that brings together linguistic resources associated with different regional backgrounds. It highlights the value of analyzing popular music as a medium for representing linguistic and cultural diversity. Future research should incorporate interviews with the artists, consultation with speakers of the regional varieties represented, and audience-reception data to verify linguistic interpretations and investigate how listeners understand the social meanings of these language choices.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest.

Authors' Contributions

Yohana Pe Kale: Conceptualization, Investigation, Data Curation, Formal Analysis, Writing – Original Draft.
Deby Marisa Malelak: Supervision, Validation, Writing – Review & Editing.
Yanrini Martha Anabokay: Supervision, Validation, Writing – Review & Editing.

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