

Translanguaging as a Cultural Practice: A Critical Discourse Analysis of Indonesian Pop Culture for Reframing Bilingual Education in a Multicultural Society

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ABSTRACT

This study examines how translanguaging works as a cultural practice in Indonesian popular culture and what this implies for bilingual education. The corpus comprises 40 multimodal texts: 10 popular song lyrics from YouTube (2020–2025), 10 Instagram and TikTok excerpts, and 20 scene transcripts from Indonesian films and television series. Data were analysed using Norman Fairclough’s three-dimensional model of Critical Discourse Analysis, covering textual, discursive practice, and socio-cultural practice dimensions, to identify translanguaging patterns together with their ideological functions. The analysis shows that translanguaging here is a deliberate and creative communicative strategy that widens audience reach, shapes hybrid identities, and negotiates socio-cultural meanings, rather than a stylistic accident. The practice quietly unsettles monolingual ideologies of the national language by normalising linguistic diversity and projecting a more inclusive, plural national identity. At the same time, the data reveal an internal tension: English tends to accrue prestige and can reproduce new hierarchies among languages. The gap between everyday multilingual practice and the rigid separation models still common in bilingual education motivates a pedagogical reorientation. The article proposes translanguaging pedagogy that treats learners’ full linguistic repertoires as educational capital, supported by curriculum integration of relevant pop culture texts, assessment reform, and teacher professional development so that Indonesian bilingual education can become more responsive, inclusive, and linguistically just.

KEYWORDS:

Translanguaging; Indonesian popular culture; bilingual education; critical discourse analysis; linguistic justice

INTRODUCTION

Indonesia, with more than seven hundred regional languages (Eberhard et al., 2024) and Indonesian as the lingua franca, is a sociolinguistic environment of unusual density. Over the past two decades, this layered situation has been reshaped again by English and other foreign languages arriving through global media and the internet. One communicative pattern that has become increasingly visible in this mix is translanguaging. This article treats translanguaging as a theoretical lens distinct from code-switching and code-mixing. While the latter two describe alternation between named languages, translanguaging, following García and Wei (2014), refers to how multilingual speakers flexibly draw on their full, integrated linguistic repertoire to communicate, produce meaning, and build identities across the boundaries of named languages.

The pattern is most visible in Indonesian popular culture, which both reflects and accelerates the multilingual reality on the ground. In music, artists move between Indonesian, English, and regional languages inside a single song. The choices are rarely ornamental. They widen audience reach, carry particular emotional nuances, or build a distinctive artistic persona. The result is a linguistic soundscape that young listeners recognise as familiar and modern at the same time.

The digital social media ecosystem is equally hospitable to these practices. Studies by Afkarina and Wahyudi (2025) and Rachmi et al. (2025) document how Instagram and TikTok allow users, particularly Generation Z, to combine Indonesian, regional languages, English, emojis, and internet slang in the same post. Translanguaging has become a default mode in these spaces, what Sugiharto (2022) calls ordinary translanguaging, which aligns with hybrid identity and global connectivity. The same tendency is present in contemporary films and television series (*sinetron*), where dialogue blends language varieties to signal social background, education, and emotional register, mirroring conversations in urban life. The reach of pop culture gives this shift practical weight. Translanguaging in music, social media, and screen fiction normalises multilingual practice and marks a move away from purist monolingual views still embedded in official and educational discourse. Reading translanguaging as a living cultural practice becomes one way of tracing identity, ideology, and social change in multicultural Indonesia.

Literature Review

Scholarship on translanguaging has shifted over the past two decades. The earlier deficit framing, which treated language mixing as interference, has given way to a view of mixing as legitimate communicative competence and cognitive resource. García and Wei (2014) define translanguaging as the dynamic practice through which multilingual speakers use their complete linguistic repertoire to make sense of the world. This view dissolves artificial boundaries between labelled languages such as “Indonesian,” “English,” or “Javanese,” and emphasises the integrated repertoire. Canagarajah (2013) extends the argument with translanguaging practice, which highlights how meaning is negotiated across codes in everyday interaction, particularly under globalisation and English as a *Lingua Franca*.

In superdiverse urban settings, Pennycook and Otsuji (2015) develop *metrolinguism* to describe the mixed and creative language practices that sit at the centre of social life in cosmopolitan cities. This framework travels well to Indonesian social media, where users from varied backgrounds meet and generate new registers. Work on digital communication further enlarges the picture. Barton and Lee (2025) and Georgakopoulou and Spilioti (2015) show how digital environments create new conditions for literacy, code-mixing, and multimodality.

In education, pedagogical translanguaging (Cenoz, 2017; García & Kleyn, 2016) proposes to integrate and use students’ full repertoires as learning resources, directly challenging bilingual models that strictly separate languages of instruction. Empirical studies increasingly indicate that translanguaging supports deeper conceptual understanding, more inclusive classroom participation, and positive academic identity among multilingual learners. In Indonesia, interest in the pedagogy is growing within Teaching English as a Foreign Language. Abduh et al. (2025) report variation in teacher attitudes and practices, and Setyarini and Jocuns (2024) examine university lecturers’ beliefs. Implementation remains

uneven, however. Winardi et al. (2025) describe ambivalent stances shaped by structural and ideological constraints.

Parallel work has mapped translanguaging in Indonesian social and cultural life. Hendrikus et al. (2024) analyse code-mixing among social media users in Ambon, while Murniati (2023) looks at emojis as part of translanguaging practice in WhatsApp chats. In the arts, Miftahurrahmi and Nurhabibah (2022) combine translanguaging pedagogy with the traditional performing art of Randai. At family and community level, Hafizha et al. (2023) study parental language ideologies and Manuputty and Makaruku (2023) trace identity negotiation among multilingual youth in Ambon.

Translanguaging is closely tied to linguistic justice and language policy. Piller (2016) argues that linguistic injustice often grows out of monolingual ideologies that ignore the actual practices of multilingual communities. In Indonesia, Margana and Rasman (2021) discuss translanguaging as a resource for minoritised language maintenance, and Permana and Rohmah (2024) analyse contemporary English policy through a translanguaging lens. Makalela (2016, 2018) offers Ubuntu Translanguaging, a framework rooted in African philosophy that stresses interconnectedness, community, and interdependence, and that resonates with collectivist societies such as Indonesia. Wei (2023) develops the case further, linking translanguaging to transformative pedagogy oriented towards inclusion and social justice.

Three strands emerge from this body of work. First, the field has moved beyond deficit thinking and now treats integrated repertoires as a legitimate cognitive and communicative resource (Canagarajah, 2013; García & Wei, 2014); digital communication is constitutively translanguaging (Barton & Lee, 2025; Georgakopoulou & Spilioti, 2015); and pedagogical translanguaging can support deeper learning and more inclusive classrooms (Cenoz, 2017; García & Kleyn, 2016). Second, scholars disagree about whether translanguaging is best framed as a cognitive resource or as a socio-political practice, and Indonesian studies register ambivalent teacher and institutional positions (Abduh et al., 2025; Setyarini & Jocuns, 2024; Winardi et al., 2025). Most empirical work also remains siloed, either in the classroom (Asra et al., 2024; Umam et al., 2023) or on one social media platform (Afkarina & Wahyudi, 2025; Hendrikus et al., 2024; Rachmi et al., 2025), leaving cross-domain cultural circulation under-examined. Third, the present study takes that ambivalence and fragmentation as its starting point. By reading music, social media, and film and television together through a single Faircloughian CDA frame, the analysis asks how translanguaging works as a coherent cultural practice that negotiates national language ideology, and how that reading can ground an evidence-based reframing of bilingual education.

Research Gap

Despite its breadth, the existing literature leaves several areas thin. First, research on Indonesian translanguaging tends to fragment along domains. Many studies concentrate on formal classrooms (Asra et al., 2024; Umam et al., 2023) or on specific social media platforms (Afkarina & Wahyudi, 2025; Hendrikus et al., 2024). Comprehensive analyses that treat translanguaging as a single cultural practice operating across music, social media, and film or television remain scarce. Yet popular culture is an interconnected ecosystem. Trends in one medium spill into others, and a holistic approach is needed to trace the work translanguaging does across them.

Second, although identity is addressed in work such as Manuputty and Makaruku (2023), few studies link pop cultural translanguaging explicitly to broader discourses of national language ideology. How do mixing practices in pop songs or televised dialogue reflect, renegotiate, or push back against official ideologies that place Indonesian in a central and purified position? How does translanguaging in pop culture rearticulate what it means to be “Indonesian” in a multicultural society? These questions remain underdeveloped. Third, and perhaps most consequential, is the gap between pop culture analysis and pedagogical reflection. Indonesian research on translanguaging pedagogy usually begins from classroom problems and imports theory from elsewhere. The reverse move, starting from authentic translanguaging outside schools and drawing systematic implications for bilingual education at the policy level, is still rare. Studies such as Parba (2023) in the Philippines or Thongwichit et al. (2025) in Thailand link translanguaging with classroom justice, but the rich material of Indonesian popular culture has not been mobilised for this purpose. An analytical bridge is needed between the pop culture domain and a bilingual pedagogy framework suited to Indonesian contexts.

From these gaps the study formulates three research questions. RQ1: How does translanguaging work as a cultural practice across three domains of Indonesian popular culture, namely music, social media, and film and television, and what socio-cultural functions does it serve? RQ2: In what ways do these practices reflect, negotiate, or challenge dominant national language ideologies and constructions of national identity? RQ3: What theoretical and practical implications for bilingual education in Indonesia follow from these practices, particularly in the direction of a more responsive, inclusive, and linguistically just framework?

Aims and Contribution

The article has three aims. The first is to analyse translanguaging as a cultural practice in three dominant domains of Indonesian popular culture: music, social media, and film and television. This goes beyond describing linguistic patterns to reading the socio-cultural functions those patterns perform in a multilingual society. The second is to examine how translanguaging in pop culture reflects, negotiates, or challenges dominant language ideologies and constructions of national identity. The third is to draw theoretical and practical implications from this analysis for bilingual education in Indonesia, with the aim of outlining a more responsive, inclusive, and linguistically just pedagogical framework.

The contribution operates on two tracks. Academically, the study enriches scholarship on translanguaging and Indonesian sociolinguistics by offering an integrated analysis linking popular culture, language ideology, and pedagogy. Starting from pop culture rather than the classroom provides a bottom-up vantage point that complements dominant top-down studies, and adds a Global South case with distinctive policy dynamics to the international literature. Practically, the findings give evidence-based input to several audiences. Policymakers and curriculum designers gain a perspective for rethinking language policy in bilingual education, one that works with learners’ full repertoires rather than against them. Educators and practitioners can draw on the analysis to design strategies that connect students’ out-of-school linguistic experiences with classroom learning. By foregrounding linguistic justice, the article also contributes to wider debates about educational development in Indonesia, where recognising cultural and linguistic diversity is central to building a more equitable society.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Type

This is a qualitative study applying Norman Fairclough's three-dimensional model of Critical Discourse Analysis, which integrates textual analysis, discursive practice analysis, and socio-cultural practice analysis (Fairclough, 1995). This tradition of CDA was chosen because it was designed to make visible the relationship between discourse, power, and ideology in social practice, and its three-dimensional structure suits multimodal pop culture data. The textual dimension allows close linguistic and semiotic analysis of translanguaging patterns in song lyrics, social media posts, and film dialogue. The discursive practice dimension examines how these texts are produced and consumed inside specific cultural industries. The socio-cultural practice dimension links those processes to broader ideological structures such as national language policy. CDA does not stop at describing linguistic structure; it seeks to show how texts and discursive practices reproduce, maintain, or contest social domination and injustice (van Dijk, 2001). Given the focus on pop culture, national language ideology, and educational implications, CDA offers an analytical frame that can move between linguistic detail and political context.

Data Collection Technique

Data were collected through documentation, focusing on multimodal texts from three domains of Indonesian popular culture (see Table 1 for the complete list). In the music domain, 10 song lyrics were taken from popular music videos on YouTube released between 2020 and 2025, each showing clear language mixing. Selection criteria included measurable popularity (minimum 1 million views at the time of collection), genre diversity (pop, hip-hop, dangdut, and indie), and the presence of at least two named languages in the lyrics. In the social media domain, 10 excerpts from Instagram and TikTok were collected using hashtags related to Indonesian identity or urban life (#IndonesianCulture, #GenZIndonesia, #DailyLifeID), following approaches used by Afkarina and Wahyudi (2025) and Rachmi et al. (2025). Content was drawn from public accounts posted between January 2023 and December 2025.

Inclusion required complex linguistic interaction between at least two codes and a minimum of 50 user engagements (likes and comments). All usernames were anonymised and content was paraphrased rather than quoted verbatim to protect user identities. In the audiovisual domain, 20 scene transcripts from contemporary Indonesian films and TV series released between 2020 and 2025, set in multilingual communities, were produced by the researcher through careful manual transcription. Sampling across all three domains was purposive, with the principal criteria being clear translanguaging and the text's potential to engage with broader discourses of identity and nationhood.

Table 1. Corpus Overview of Data Items (N = 40)

Code	Item / Platform	Year	Genre / Setting	Language Mix	Popularity / Engagement
<i>A. Music (YouTube music videos, 2020–2025; minimum 1 million views at collection)</i>					
M1	Pop ballad (single, major label)	2021	Pop	ID + EN	> 25M views

Code	Item / Platform	Year	Genre / Setting	Language Mix	Popularity / Engagement
M2	Indie folk song	2022	Indie folk	ID + EN + Javanese	> 3M views
M3	Pop single	2023	Pop	ID + EN + Javanese	> 40M views
M4	Hip-hop single	2022	Hip-hop	ID + EN	> 10M views
M5	Dangdut koplo single	2024	Dangdut koplo	ID + Javanese + EN	> 20M views
M6	Indie pop song	2020	Indie pop	ID + EN	> 5M views
M7	Hip-hop single	2023	Hip-hop	ID + EN + Sundanese	> 8M views
M8	Pop-rock single	2025	Pop-rock	ID + EN	> 2M views
M9	Dangdut modern	2024	Dangdut modern	ID + Javanese	> 15M views
M10	Pop single	2022	Pop	ID + EN + Minangkabau	> 4M views
B. Social media (Instagram & TikTok, January 2023–December 2025; minimum 50 engagements)					
SM1	TikTok caption & comments (User A)	2024	Lifestyle / daily life	ID + EN	~ 1,200 eng.
SM2	TikTok caption (User B)	2024	Family / weekend	ID + EN + Arabic + SE	~ 850 eng.
SM3	Instagram Reels (User C)	2023	Urban youth	ID + Javanese + EN	~ 600 eng.
SM4	TikTok (User D)	2025	Food / kuliner	ID + EN + SE	~ 2,000 eng.
SM5	Instagram caption (User E)	2024	Travel / heritage	ID + EN	~ 400 eng.
SM6	Instagram comment thread (Users F–G)	2024	Pop culture fandom	ID + Javanese + EN + SE	~ 300 eng.
SM7	TikTok (User H)	2023	Campus / student life	ID + EN	~ 1,500 eng.
SM8	Instagram Reels (User I)	2025	Regional identity	ID + Bugis + EN	~ 700 eng.
SM9	TikTok (User J)	2024	Comedy / humour	ID + EN + SE	~ 2,500 eng.
SM10	Instagram caption	2023	Urban identity	ID + Sundanese + EN + SE	~ 500 eng.
C. Film and TV series (theatrical + streaming, 2020–2025; purposive sampling of multilingual-setting scenes)					
F1	Urban romance feature film	2022	Jakarta, middle-class	ID + EN	Theatrical release
F2	Coming-of-age feature film	2021	Central Java, small town	ID + Javanese	Theatrical release
F3	Streaming drama series	2023	Bandung, youth culture	ID + EN + Sundanese	Netflix
F4	Jakarta office drama series	2024	Jakarta, corporate	ID + EN	Vidio
F5	Jakarta office drama (episode)	2024	Jakarta, corporate	ID + EN	WeTV
F6	Comedy feature film	2022	Yogyakarta, family	ID + Javanese + EN	Theatrical release
F7	Streaming drama series	2025	Bali, mixed-heritage	ID + EN + Balinese	Disney+ Hotstar
F8	Teen drama series	2023	Bandung, high school	ID + EN + Sundanese	Vidio
F9	Feature film	2021	West Sumatra, diaspora	ID + EN + Minangkabau	Theatrical release
F10	Streaming series	2024	Surabaya, young adults	ID + EN	Netflix
F11	Family drama series	2023	Central Java, multigenerational	ID + Javanese	Free-to-air
F12	Family drama series (episode)	2023	Maluku, multigenerational	ID + Ambonese Malay + EN	Free-to-air
F13	Romantic comedy film	2024	Jakarta, creative workers	ID + EN	Theatrical release

Code	Item / Platform	Year	Genre / Setting	Language Mix	Popularity / Engagement
F14	Streaming drama series	2025	Bandung–Jakarta, youth	ID + EN + Sundanese	Netflix
F15	Religious-themed drama	2022	Jakarta, devout middle-class	ID + Arabic + EN	Free-to-air
F16	Teen comedy film	2023	Jakarta, high school	ID + EN	Theatrical release
F17	Drama series (episode)	2024	Solo, mixed household	ID + Javanese + EN	Vidio
F18	Feature film	2025	Eastern Indonesia, youth	ID + EN + Ambonese Malay	Theatrical release
F19	Feature film	2021	Yogyakarta, traditional arts	ID + Javanese	Theatrical release
F20	Streaming drama series	2025	Jakarta, Gen Z professionals	ID + EN	WeTV

Notes. Music popularity was operationalised as YouTube views of the official music video at the time of data collection (threshold: $\geq 1,000,000$ views); genre diversity was ensured by sampling at least two items each from the pop, hip-hop, dangdut, and indie categories. Social media engagement was operationalised as likes plus visible comments (threshold: ≥ 50). Film/TV items were drawn from streaming platforms (Netflix, Disney+ Hotstar, Vidio, WeTV) and Indonesian free-to-air broadcasters. Social media usernames are anonymised as User A–J; content is paraphrased rather than quoted verbatim in line with the ethics protocol described below. Language codes: ID = Indonesian; EN = English; RL = regional language (e.g., Javanese, Sundanese, Ambonese Malay, Bugis, Minangkabau); SE = semiotic elements (emoji, multimodal hashtags).

Data Analysis

The unit of analysis is the translanguaging episode, defined as any stretch of discourse (a song verse, a social media caption or comment thread, or a film or TV dialogue exchange) in which the speaker or writer moves between two or more named languages or varieties within or across utterance boundaries. Analysis followed Fairclough's three-dimensional model through a four-step coding procedure. Step 1 (Identification) segmented each text into translanguaging episodes and marked the languages used: Indonesian (ID), English (EN), regional language (RL), and semiotic element (SE). Step 2 (Textual Analysis) coded episodes for linguistic features including lexical insertion, inter-sentential switching, intra-sentential mixing, and multimodal semiotic resources, and for socio-cultural functions including audience reach, emotional expression, identity construction, humour and solidarity, prestige marking, and resistance. Step 3 (Discursive Practice Analysis) examined how pop culture texts are produced, distributed, and interpreted inside specific cultural practices, treating digital platforms as new interactional spaces (Barton & Lee, 2025; Georgakopoulou & Spilioti, 2015). Step 4 (Socio-cultural Practice Analysis) linked these discursive processes to wider ideological contexts, reading pop culture discourse as a site where national identity and linguistic hierarchies are contested.

The analysis connected findings from pop culture texts to Indonesian language and education policy debates, drawing on Piller (2016) on linguistic justice and Permana and Rohmah (2024) on translingual English policy to build the argument for a responsive educational framework. Trustworthiness was supported by a detailed audit trail of coding decisions and by peer debriefing with two colleagues in sociolinguistics and CDA, who independently reviewed 25 per cent of the coded data to check interpretive consistency.

Researcher Positionality and Ethics

As a critical qualitative study, the research acknowledges the researcher's positionality. The researcher is part of multilingual Indonesian society and engages in translanguaging in everyday life. This awareness is used reflectively to sharpen interpretation while critical vigilance is maintained through systematic methodological reflection. Data from public social media accounts were analysed with respect for their public context and with confidentiality where appropriate. Creative works such as song lyrics and films were cited fairly, within the principles of fair use for academic and critical research, with clear acknowledgement of sources and creators. The study treats discourse critically without diminishing the artistic meaning or intent of the works analysed.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Manifestation, Functions, and Socio-Cultural Meanings of Translanguaging in Indonesian Pop Culture

Across the three domains, translanguaging appears not as deviation but as an intentional, creative, and meaningful communicative strategy. In popular music, the practice is a hallmark of younger generations of musicians. Lyrics often use Indonesian for narrative verses and memorable choruses, English to add cosmopolitan nuance or to carry specific emotional content, and regional languages (Javanese, Sundanese, Ambonese Malay) to introduce local flavour, familiarity, or humour. In Data Item M3, a verse opens with Indonesian [ID] narration, moves to an English [EN] chorus that carries romantic longing with a cosmopolitan feel, and inserts a Javanese [RL] phrase as an interjection that signals emotional authenticity and local identity. In Data Item M7, a hip-hop track, the rapper alternates between colloquial Indonesian [ID] for storytelling, English [EN] slang for street credibility, and Sundanese [RL] terms of address that mark in-group solidarity. These cases show translanguaging in music working through deliberate lexical insertion and inter-sentential switching to carry several social meanings at once. The pattern is not random. It widens market reach, layers emotional connection with audiences from different backgrounds, and affirms hybrid artistic identities whose local roots remain strong alongside a global orientation. This is consistent with what Canagarajah (2013) describes as translanguaging competence, where creators assemble resources from several languages to compose resonant works.

On social media, particularly Instagram and TikTok, translanguaging is a central feature of everyday digital interaction in the dataset. Content shows fluid mixing of formal and colloquial Indonesian, internet English (for example, "FYI," "literally," "gaskeun"), regional languages, and semiotic resources including emojis, multilingual hashtags, and viral slang. In Data Item SM2, a TikTok caption reads: "Weekend vibes [EN] *di kampung* [ID] *makan besar bareng keluarga, alhamdulillah* [ID/Arabic]." English frames the setting, Indonesian carries the narrative, the Arabic-origin *alhamdulillah* adds a religious register, and emojis extend the tone, producing a hybrid digital persona that is global, local, and devout at once. In Data Item SM6, an Instagram comment thread, users alternate between Javanese terms of endearment [RL], English internet slang [EN], and informal Indonesian [ID] to build in-group solidarity. Echoing Afkarina and Wahyudi (2025) and Rachmi et al. (2025), the platforms operate as translanguaging spaces where Generation Z performs identity. The mixing builds communities around shared interests, signals digital and global literacy, and keeps local familiarity intact. Its socio-cultural meaning is clear: it treats linguistic diversity as an ordinary feature of

modern, connected Indonesian digital identity and offers a quiet resistance to the pressure to use only one code “correctly.”

In contemporary Indonesian films and television series, translanguaging is a fine-grained tool for characterisation and social setting (all transcripts were produced from audiovisual scenes rather than from official subtitle files). Upper-middle-class urban characters, students in international settings, and creative workers often mix Indonesian and English in dialogue. In Data Item F5, from a contemporary Jakarta-set drama, a young professional says to a colleague: “*Aku udah submit report-nya [ID+EN], tapi boss bilang needs revision [ID+EN], ya udah, ngopi dulu lah [ID].*” The intra-sentential insertion of English work vocabulary (“submit,” “report,” “needs revision”) indexes the character’s professional environment and cosmopolitan identity, while the colloquial Indonesian closing (“*ngopi dulu lah*”) signals casual familiarity and local belonging. Data Item F12 shows a family dinner in an Eastern Indonesian setting where a grandmother speaks Ambonese Malay [RL] to express affection, the parents respond in standard Indonesian [ID], and the teenage children add English slang [EN]. The generational translanguaging dynamic indexes both intergenerational solidarity and youth modernity. These uses mark education, social mobility, and global industry involvement. Mixing with regional languages frequently underlines family warmth, origin, or comic situations. Translanguaging here carries certain social and cultural capital within the pop cultural imagination. It is cultural practice as much as linguistic practice, representing and shaping shared understandings of modernity, class, and identity in multicultural Indonesia.

Translanguaging as Negotiator and Challenger of National Language Ideology

Critical discourse analysis makes visible a complex, dialectical relationship between translanguaging in popular culture and Indonesian national language ideology, which traditionally elevates “good and correct” Indonesian as a unifying symbol of a pure national identity. On one side, pop culture reproduces this ideology at times. Nationalism-themed songs or historical films rely on standard Indonesian and reinforce official discourse on unity. On the other side, and more interestingly, the sheer pervasiveness of translanguaging gradually renegotiates that ideology from below.

First, these practices challenge the myth of language purity embedded institutionally in national language policy, particularly the discourse of “*bahasa Indonesia yang baik dan benar*” promoted through the national language planning agency (Badan Pengembangan dan Pembinaan Bahasa). By openly mixing Indonesian with other languages, popular culture blurs the lines between national, foreign, and regional. This challenge is visible in specific textual features in the data: English lexical insertions (for example, “mood,” “vibes,” “healing”) appear inside Indonesian syntactic frames without apology or metalinguistic commentary, and regional language affective markers (for example, Javanese “lho,” “kok”) are naturalised in mainstream pop contexts. Stance markers of this kind indicate that producers and audiences take language mixing as the default mode rather than a deviation that requires explanation. National identity is no longer articulated only through a single purified code; it is articulated through dynamic linguistic hybridity. This aligns with Sugiharto’s (2022) account of the ordinariness of code-meshing in the Indonesian linguistic landscape, which is now moving into popular representation.

Second, pop cultural translanguaging becomes an arena for negotiating a more inclusive national identity. When a musician uses Javanese in an Indonesian pop song, or when a TikTok creator mixes Bugis with English slang, particular local and multilingual experiences are inserted into the mainstream of national imagination. As Manuputty and Makaruku (2023) suggest, this is a form of identity negotiation that empowers specific linguistic groups. Popular culture turns into a field where monolithic notions of “Indonesianness” are negotiated into a more fluid, multilingual identity that acknowledges internal diversity. It registers the demand from a multicultural society to be recognised in its linguistic complexity, a demand that official, homogenising national discourses rarely accommodate.

Implications for Conceptualising Responsive and Just Bilingual Education

Reading this pop cultural practice closely produces important implications for rethinking bilingual education in Indonesia. The first and second findings show a wide gap between the living, authentic linguistic practices of society (reflected and shaped by pop culture) and the approaches still widely used in formal bilingual education, which tend to follow strict separation models.

The first implication is a paradigm shift from deficit-based pedagogy towards asset-based pedagogy. Learners are not blank slates or deficient speakers. They bring rich and complex repertoires into the classroom, shaped by daily interaction with popular culture. Bilingual education should recognise and use this translingual competence as learning capital, as translanguaging pedagogy suggests (Cenoz, 2017; García & Kleyn, 2016). Asra et al. (2024) show that students themselves already regard translanguaging as legitimate in learning, and Setyarini and Jocuns (2024) note its development potential from the lecturer’s side.

The second implication is the need to integrate culturally relevant materials, including pop culture, into the curriculum. Song lyrics, film clips, and social media content using translanguaging can work as entry points for discussing identity, globalisation, and linguistic justice. An EFL lesson on persuasive language could use a translingual pop song as its text, asking students to identify the languages used, analyse the rhetorical effect of each switch, and then produce their own multilingual persuasive text aligned with discourse analysis and critical literacy outcomes. A social studies unit on national identity could take a film dialogue scene as stimulus, inviting students to examine how language choices index social class and regional belonging, with assessment criteria that credit translingual analysis rather than penalise non-standard language use. This lifts student engagement and grants academic legitimacy to the language practices students already carry. As Miftahurrahmi and Nurhabibah (2022) propose with traditional arts, contemporary pop culture can act as an effective bridge.

The third and most fundamental implication is that bilingual education frameworks should explicitly incorporate a vision of linguistic justice, following Piller (2016). In this study, linguistic justice is operationally understood as a condition in which (a) assessment rubrics recognise and credit translingual responses rather than marking them as errors, (b) curriculum policies include provisions for multilingual materials and teaching practices, (c) teacher training programmes equip educators with frameworks for valuing diverse repertoires, and (d) no student is systematically disadvantaged on the basis of which languages they bring to the classroom. The education system should empower, not punish or ignore, the languages and varieties students carry. Policies, curricula, and assessments should

be designed to include translingual practice, so that education does not reproduce linguistic injustice but prepares learners for a multilingual world with confidence and critical awareness. “Ubuntu Translanguaging” (Makalela, 2016, 2018), centred on interconnectedness and co-existence, and Wei’s (2023) transformative pedagogy offer useful sources for building a contextual framework in Indonesia.

Discussion

The findings show that translanguaging in Indonesian popular culture is a complex, ideologically charged sociolinguistic practice. The analysis reinforces the central claim of translanguaging theory (García & Wei, 2014) that multilingual speakers use their full repertoire as an integrated whole to engage with the world. The Indonesian case shows this practice has entered the production and consumption of mass culture, which increases both its legitimacy and its visibility. The dialectical relationship between this practice and national language ideology strengthens Canagarajah’s (2013) argument that translingual practice is always in negotiation with established structures and norms. Pop culture acts as a productive site of contestation, where monolithic national identity is subtly reworked by representations of hybrid, multilingual identities.

The findings also add nuance to the global discussion by pointing to ambivalence. While language mixing can promote inclusion for particular linguistic groups, especially in the use of regional languages, it can also reproduce new hierarchies. Two contrasting cases from the dataset illustrate this tension. On the empowerment side, Data Item M7 shows a hip-hop artist inserting Sundanese phrases into an Indonesian-English rap verse, giving visibility and prestige to a regional language within a nationally consumed medium. On the hierarchy-reproduction side, Data Item F5 shows a professional character’s unmarked use of English workplace vocabulary (“submit,” “report,” “needs revision”), which indexes education and upward mobility. English becomes an implicit marker of professional success and modernity, often treated as cultural capital in films and social media, with the potential to displace certain regional languages. This echoes the ambivalence noted by Winardi et al. (2025). Popular culture is not a value-neutral space. It mirrors wider tensions between national homogenisation, local diversity, and the pull of globalisation. Translating the spirit of linguistic justice (Piller, 2016) into concrete practice must remain critical and contextual, because linguistic practice itself can carry logics of exclusion.

Research Implications

Several clear implications follow from the analysis. Theoretically, the study extends translanguaging research beyond classroom contexts and Global North urban spaces. Documenting how the practice unfolds in the cultural economy of Indonesian pop culture widens the empirical scope of the theory and shows its relevance for analysing meaning production in mass media and creative industries. The findings on identity and ideology negotiation also offer a new perspective for studies of nationalism and language policy, underlining the role of popular cultural agency in sociolinguistic change.

Practically, the main implication lies in language education and policy. The gap between authentic practices in society and formal approaches that remain largely monolingual calls for a fundamental reorientation. Bilingual education curricula and language teaching should

recognise and build on students' translingual competence explicitly, as proposed in pedagogical translanguaging (Cenoz, 2017). This means revising teaching materials, methodologies, and assessment systems so that they respond to multilingual realities. The findings can also support advocacy for more inclusive educational policy and feed into professional development programmes that equip teachers with frameworks and strategies for linguistically just pedagogy in diverse classrooms.

Research Limitations

The study has several limitations. First, the purposively sampled corpus of 40 texts supports analytic generalisation, that is, contributions to theoretical understanding of translanguaging as cultural practice, rather than statistical generalisation to Indonesian pop culture as a whole. Focusing on three main domains gives a comprehensive picture but does not exhaust the range of translanguaging manifestations in Indonesia, which include pop literature, comics, and video games. Second, the CDA approach concentrates on texts and therefore has limited access to producers' intent or audience interpretation. The perceptions of creators and the varied readings of consumers were not explored directly through interviews or surveys. These limitations open space for further ethnographic or mixed-methods research to test and deepen the pedagogical implications identified here.

CONCLUSION

The analysis shows that translanguaging in Indonesian popular culture is a significant cultural practice, serving simultaneously as creative expression, identity negotiation, and ideological contestation. Across music, social media, and film and television, linguistic hybridity is not a marginal feature but a central characteristic of contemporary pop culture, reflecting the reality of a multicultural society. The findings offer a basis for transforming bilingual education in Indonesia. To remain relevant and just, education should shift from a paradigm that separates and restricts languages towards one that embraces and uses students' full linguistic repertoires as resources for learning. The education system can then more effectively prepare young generations to be competent, critical, and confident communicators in Indonesia's diverse society and in a closely connected global world. Future research should pursue three complementary directions. The first is audience ethnography investigating how different consumers interpret and respond to translanguaging in pop culture. The second is in-depth interviews with content producers to access their intentional language choices and ideological positioning. The third is pedagogical intervention research that designs, implements, and evaluates classroom activities integrating translingual pop culture materials, to measure impact on student engagement, multilingual identity development, and learning outcomes.

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AI Usage Declaration

During the preparation of this work, the authors used ChatGPT-4 solely for language polishing, copyediting to improve readability and academic tone, and formatting assistance, while all intellectual content including research design, data analysis, theoretical interpretation, and conclusions was carried out independently by the human authors, who assume full responsibility for the final version.

Author Contribution

Haikal Romadhan Al Yusad contributed to conceptualisation, methodology design, formal analysis, data curation (including transcription of film/TV scenes), investigation, writing the original draft, and visualisation; Diaarkan Ombakkita contributed to validation, supervision, writing–review and editing, socio-cultural practice analysis, resources, and funding acquisition, and both authors contributed equally to the interpretation of findings and final revision of the manuscript.

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