

# Advertising Language: Secrets of Persuasion

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*Advertising  
Language:  
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Universiti Malaysia Sarawak

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# Preface

*Advertising Language: Secrets of Persuasion* reveals the mileage gained through the strategic use of language in advertising to convince customers to purchase products and services. Emotions can sell, but not facts! Find out what research has unravelled.

This book starts with an analysis of slogans in Chapter 1. Wun-Chiew Pung and Nurin Nisa' Aminuddin uncovered the clever use of the emotional appeal to create anticipation of enjoying fast food, and the logos appeal to highlight speed and quality. From their five-level linguistic analysis of the slogans, they found a formula for writing slogans to engage customers and accentuate the advantages and uniqueness of the fast food products.

In Chapter 2, Fatin Izzati Mohd Izam and Kee-Man Chuah turn their attention to femvertising on Instagram. They found that women empowerment messages in the caption and the brand's stance need to be coupled with the right use of emotive words to sell the product or services. Read on to find out the double standards of combining activism and consumerism, including how some brands hide behind the "go green" façade to boost sales.

Chapter 3 presents Siti Marina Kamil and Alvenna Theay Ritchi's work on code-mixing in a Malaysian social influencer's YouTube videos, Bella Khann from Kuala Lumpur. Let the authors walk you through her videos to find out how she achieves psychological closeness with her viewers through her frequent outer code-mixing between Malay and English, and versatile inner code-mixing – often relying on single words in up to seven Malay varieties!

In Chapter 4, Su-Hie Ting and Siti Sarah Hosen delved into how code-switching is used in online advertisements for identity construction. By comparing advertisements in English and Malay, they show that the need for code-switching is greater in English advertisements to tap into certain identities to increase product appeal, often achieved using single words. Find out how inter-sentential code-switching juxtaposes formality and informality.

Chapter 5 focuses on a less-known type of advertisement. Nadia Husna Yusuf Anthony and Rosnah Hj. Mustafa revealed that public service announcements on mental health rely on the pathos or emotional appeal to create a strong connection with the audience. However, there is a place for logos or the rational appeal in poster-type advertisements and the ethos appeal in video advertisements!

**Professor Dr Su-Hie Ting (Editor)**

# Foreword

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# Identity Construction through the Use of Code Switching in Online Advertisements

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## Introduction

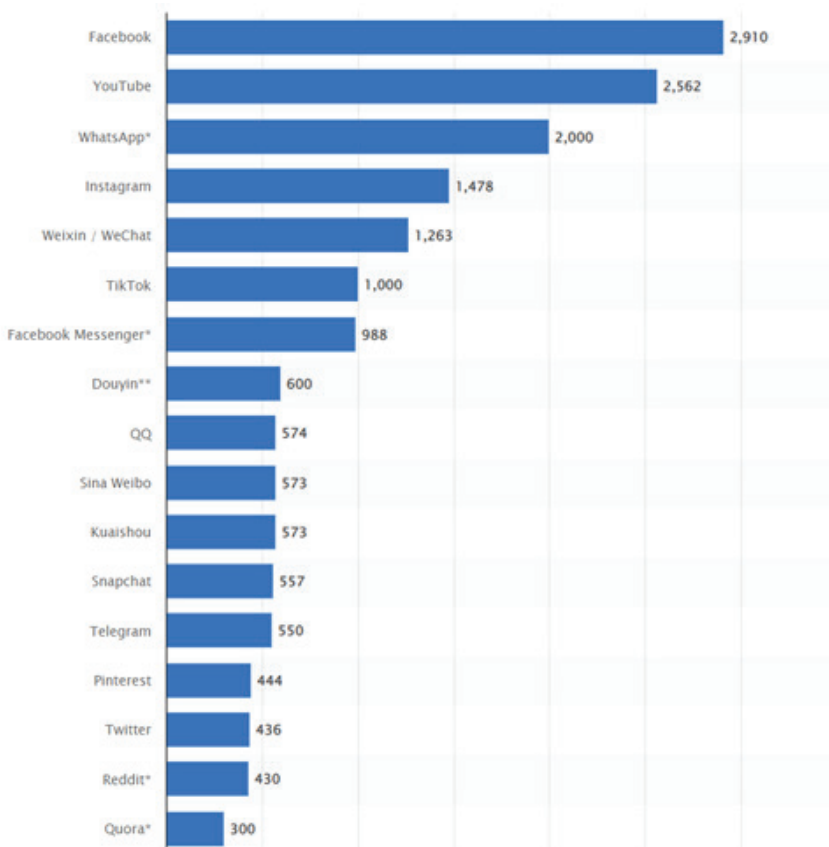
During the COVID-19 pandemic, when economic activities slowed down due to lockdown and disease preventive measures, some businesses adapted fast and moved their businesses online. According to the Minister of Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs, online buying-and-selling activities spiked by 28.9% in April 2020 (Ruzki, 2019). Overnight, normal social media platforms became means of advertising products and services. For example, Facebook, YouTube, and Instagram are among the most popular social networks worldwide as of January 2022, as shown in Figure 1 (Statista, 2022). Advertisements draw

the customer's attention to the brand and the message of the advertisement. Successful advertisements are those that succeed in persuading customers to buy a certain product or pay for a certain service.

Various strategies are used to persuade customers, and no less important is the play of languages in advertisements. The last one to two decades saw the emergence of code-switching in advertisements such as the use of English in Chinese advertisements published in newspapers (Lau, 2007), in Spanish commercials in printed fashion magazines (Mansor, Halim, Mamat, & Rahim, 2016), and in motorcycle advertisements in Indonesia (Saputra, 2018). Interestingly, a common finding is that switching to English confers the notion that the product has attained the international standard and promotes the brand image of the advertised services or products. In Sajib, Nahar, and Zahan's (2020) study conducted in Bangladesh, 55.17% of producers, sellers and consumers believed that advertisements with code-switching increased the sale of products.

This chapter describes how other languages are cleverly woven into online advertisements to persuade customers to buy products or pay for services. The types and functions of code-switching in advertisements will be the focus of this chapter. Code-switching refers to "the juxtaposition within the same speech exchange of passages of speech belonging to two different grammatical systems or subsystems" (Gumperz, 1982, p. 59). In other words, two or more languages are used in the same advertisement.

Figure 1. Most popular social networks worldwide as of January 2022, ranked by number of monthly active users in millions (Source: Statista, 2022)



### Code-switching in printed advertisements

It seems that in printed advertisements, whether in newspapers or in magazines, switching to English words happen mostly for nouns to show customers that the product is stylish and modern. “In the process of globalization of the world business, advertising has also become more international. Moreover, as the world of business needs a common language in order to communicate, English serves for that purpose” (Saputra, 2018, p. 19). Interestingly, research on advertising language in various settings

has shown that code-switching to English portrays the product as more prestigious, exotic, stylish and modern.

In Indonesia, Saputra (2018) analysed 31 Honda motorcycle advertisements in Indonesian. Only 12 of the printed advertisements had switching to English, of which 75% were intra-sentential code-switching (e.g., “Beli scoopy bikin **happy**”) and 25% were inter-sentential code-switching (“Satria Baja hitam aja pake’, **what about you?**”). There were no instances of tag switching. In the Honda advertisements, code-switching is often used for interjections conveying surprise, strong emotion or to gain attention (e.g., “**Unbeatable you!**”). Saputra (2018) concluded that skill in using a prestige language (English) would project the advertised product as exotic.

In Chinese newspapers, business advertisements already made use of code-switching almost two decades ago in Malaysia because of stylish-modern connotations and the more extensive vocabulary in English. Lau (2007) analysed 100 sentences from advertisements published from July to December 2005 in China Press, Guang Ming Daily, Nanyang Siang Pau and Oriental Daily. He found that English appeared in Chinese advertisements in the form of nouns, abbreviations, adjectives and verbs rather than as exclamations and prepositions. Code-switching was particularly frequent for nouns, partly because equivalent words do not exist in Chinese. The English nouns are more familiar to customers. Sometimes nouns (e.g., “SMS”, “MMS”) are used as verbs in the Chinese advertisements. There are also instances when verbs (e.g., “hit”) are used as an adjective. Besides saving space (and therefore cost) through the direct use of English, Chinese advertisements with English words come across as more informal (e.g., “wow”, “yeah”), stylish and modern, thereby attracting young people to purchase the advertised commercial products.

In Spanish fashion advertisements, code-switching to English also carries meanings of modernity and prestige, plus globalisation. In another study, Mansor et al. (2016) analysed 50 slogans in beauty and fashion advertisements in magazines published in Spanish (Glamour, Vogue, Marie Claire and MODAyLOOK), and found code-switching to English for generic nouns like “look” and “street style” (31.7%), proper nouns like brand name (17.6%), adjectives like “chic” (22.2%), verbs like “shopping” (16.8%), acronyms (3.4%), slang like “glam” (2.7%), prepositions like “outside” (2.1%) and others (3.5%). Code-switching to English in Spanish advertisements



conveys modernity, globalisation, versatility, trendiness, and sophistication, and the added advantage is precision in meaning.

The same meanings of advancement and trendiness were associated with the use of English in Urdu advertisements, based on Riaz's (2019) analysis of 70 television commercials aired in 2011-2015. The videos amounting to 4,746 words were on cosmetics, household goods, electronic appliances, telecommunication companies, digital products and food. A majority (76.02%) of the commercials were in local languages, and the rest incorporated English words (21.44% intra-sentential code-mixing; 2.54% intersentential code-switching). Although there may be equivalent local words, it is easier to use English which also associate the products with modernity. Overall, the research findings across settings are consistent in showing the association of products with stylishness and modernity when there is code-switching to English.

## The Study

The descriptive study involved the analysis of 32 online advertisements, which include those put up by food delivery companies such as Foodpanda, Grabfood, and Lyfe. Advertisements selected were those that contained a mixture of at least two languages, inclusive of dialects. Advertisements in the form of images without any texts were excluded. Also excluded were advertisements that have elements of obscenity, violence and impolite language.

The code-switching in the advertisements was analysed for form and functions. The analysis of the form of code-switching was made with reference to Poplack (1980) who categorised code-switching into tag, intra- and inter-sentential code-switching. These three types of code-switching are:

- (1) Tag switching, where a word or phrase from another language is added at the beginning, middle or end of an utterance which is otherwise complete by itself. For example, "*Oh bahkan lebih dari tiga, **you know the-**, uh, yang salah satu hotel yang punya mall itu juga mall lho.*" Translated to English, it means "Oh even

more than three, **you know the-**, *uh, one of the hotels that has a mall is also a mall, you know.*"

- (2) Intra-sentential switching, where words from another language are included within a clause or sentence in the matrix language, and the syntax is that of the matrix language. For example, "*Tampil **sporty** dengan warna **two-tone** dan **stripping** baru yang trendi*" (Saputra, 2018). *Sambut idola baru matik.*" Translated to English, it means "Looks **sporty** with **two-tone** colour and new **stripping** that's trendy".
- (3) Inter-sentential switching, where one sentence is in language A, and another sentence is in language B. For example, "*Satria Baja hitam aja pake', **what about you?** Sambut idola baru matik, the all new beat FI, **Unbeatable***" (Saputra, 2018). Translated to English, it means "Just use black Satria Baja, what about? Welcome the new idol, the all new beat FI, Unbeatable".

The function of code-switching was analysed with reference to Gumperz (1982) whose framework comprised six functions as shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Functions of code-switching

Function	Description	Example
Quotation	Serves as direct quotations or as reported speech.	She doesn't speak English, so, <b>dice que la reganan: "Si se les va olvidar el idioma a las criatura"</b> (she says that they would scold her: "the children are surely going to forget their language")
Addressee specification	Serves to direct the message to one of several addressees.	A: Sometimes you get excited and then you speak in Hindi, then again you go on to English. B: No nonsense, it depends on your command of English. A: [shortly after turning to a third participant, who has just returned from answering the doorbell] <b>Kən hai bai</b> (who is it)?

Interjection	Serves to mark an interjection or sentence filler.	A: Well, I'm glad I met you. B: <b>Andale pues</b> (O.K. swell). And do come again. Mm?
Reiteration	Serves to repeat a message from one code to another code either literally or in somewhat modified form.	Keep straight. <b>Sidha jao</b> [louder] (keep straight)
Message qualification	Serves to qualify constructions such as sentence and verb complements or predicates following a copula.	The oldest one, <b>la grande la de once anos</b> (the big one who is eleven years old).
Personalisation or objectivisation	Serves to distinguish between talk about action and talk as action, the degree of speaker involvement in, or distance from, a message, whether a statement reflects personal opinion or knowledge, whether it refers to specific instances or has the authority of generally known fact.	A: <b>Vigələ ma yə sa americə</b> (Wigele got them from America) B: <b>Kanada pridə</b> (it comes from Canada). A: <b>kanada mus I səgn nit</b> (I would not say Canada).
Situational code-switching	Code-switching resulting from a change in social setting: topic, setting or participants.	

(Examples are from Gumperz, 1982)

The online advertisements were collected by searching the official websites of Foodpanda, Grabfood, and Lyfe. Nine of the 32 advertisements were taken from YouTube and the utterances were transcribed. Advertisements that fulfilled the selection criteria were downloaded and pasted onto a word document for analysis. For ease of analysis, the texts from the advertisements were typed onto a word document and code-switched words were coloured, and the type and functions of code-switching were identified. Proper names (e.g., Soul Brew) were counted as one word.

## **Extent of code-switching in online advertisements**

This section describes the extensiveness of code-switching in online advertisements. Altogether, 32 online advertisements put up in the year 2021 were analysed, of which 24 (or 75%) were in English and eight (or 25%) were in Malay. Interestingly, there is more code-switching in English advertisements than in Malay advertisements. This is probably because when Malay is used, the Malaysian identity is already built into it. In comparison, English is not the ethnic language of any group in Malaysia, which is why many advertisements in English have code-switching to other languages to give it a local flavour.

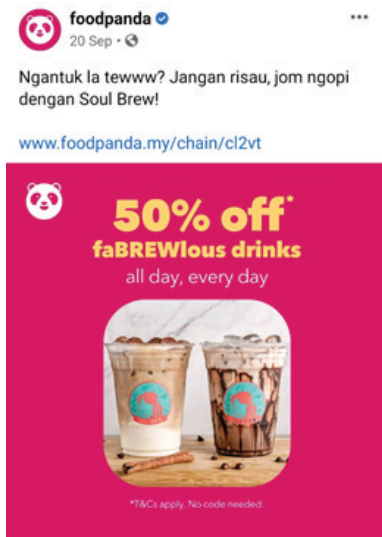
More space in the advertisements is given to image rather than text, as would be expected. Altogether, the 24 English advertisements had 695 words, which is an average of 29 words per advertisement. Out of the total of 695 words, 15.4% (or 100 words) were code-switched words using Malay, Arabic, Chinese or Korean. In other words, in the English advertisement, one in seven words is not in English.

The extent of code-switching in English advertisements ranged from 2.4% to 36.4%. Figure 2 shows advertisement No. 23, which had only one code-switched word out of 41 words (2.4% code-switching). The single code-switched word in Malay was “belanja” which Malaysians use to mean “treating someone to a meal”. The localised use of “belanja” appeals to the shared Malaysian identity.

Figure 2. Advertisement No. 23 with only one code-switched word “belanja” meaning “treat someone to a meal”



Figure 3. Advertisement No. 19 where eight out of 22 words were code-switched words



At the other end of the extreme is advertisement No. 19, with 36.4% code-switching (Figure 3). The short text of 22 words had eight code-switched words. No. 19 is considered an advertisement in English because the poster itself is in English, but the text uses Sarawak Malay (“*Ngantuk la tewww?*”, “*jom ngopi*”) and Malay (“*Jangan risau*”). These phrases mean “you sleepy?”, “let’s drink coffee” and “don’t worry” respectively. The switching to Sarawak Malay and Malay in the Soul Brew coffee advertisement targets Malay-speaking customers, particularly those who come from the state of Sarawak. Generally, the English advertisements incorporated Malay words to tap into the Malaysian identity.

The Malay advertisements were different from the English advertisements in the extent of code-switching. Interestingly, the Malay advertisements had more lengthy texts but less code-switching. The eight Malay advertisements had 1,182 words, with an average of 148 words per

advertisement. Out of the total of 1,182 words, 11.4% (or 123 words) were in English, Arabic and French.

The extent of code-switching in Malay advertisements ranged from 2.5% to 10.9%. One advertisement (No. 8) had 80 Malay words but only 2.5% (or 2 words) were in English and these are proper nouns or brand names (e.g., “Grabmart”). On the other hand, another advertisement (No. 9) had 576 words, but only 10.9% (or 63) were in English. For example, No. 9 had a sentence, *“Aku superhero, Nama superhero aku ...”*. It seems that the English words are nouns like “superhero” which are expressive. Catchy phrases like “superhero” and “fabulous” do not have the same impact if translated to Malay (*“adiwira” and “hebat” respectively*).

To sum up, English advertisements tend to have code-switching in Malay to tap into local identities, while Malay advertisements use English for original brand names and to attract young customers through catchy phrases.

## **Types of code-switching in online advertisements**

In this section, the types of code-switching will be described with the aid of examples. Out of 165 occurrences of code-switching in the 32 online advertisements, the most frequent is intra-sentential code-switching (142 or 86%), followed by inter-sentential code-switching (14 or 8.5%) and tag switching (9 or 5.5%). Our analysis showed that single words (tag switching and intra-sentential switching) are sufficient to convey shared identity as a means to connect with customers, and suggest that the product or service is meant for them.

### **(1) Tag switching**

Tag switching is often used in spoken communication, and our analysis shows that in online advertisements, tag switching is used to make an appeal to customers. The emergence of tag switching in online advertisements is a sign of informality in a written medium, and this is a way for advertisers to get close to their customers. The tag does not add specific

denotative meaning, but perhaps add emphasis. Examples of tags like “lah” and “please” are found in some online advertisements:

- (1) If you want to save more, just sign up **lahhh** for pandapro!  
(Advertisement No. 1)
- (2) Sejujurnya, jangan la balik. Tahun ni saja, **Pleaseeeee**.  
(Advertisement No. 5)  
Translated to English:  
Honestly, don't go back. This year only, Pleaseeeee.

Malaysians often add the particle “lah” at the end of their utterances, regardless of whether they are Malay, Chinese, Indian or indigenous (Lee & Hall, 2019; Talif & Ting, 1994). Therefore, using “lah” in online advertisements adds a Malaysian flavour to the advertisements. In the case of (1), “lahhh” seeks to convince the audience to register for pandapro as a cost-saving measure and the repetition of “h” imitates how “lah” is said in an elongated manner. In the case of (2), the English word “pleaseeeee” is also elongated for emphasis, and probably has more effect than “*tolonglah*” in Malay which carries the same meaning. The tag switching improves the audience appeal in both situations.

## (2) Intra-sentential switching in online advertisements

The dominance of intra-sentential switching in online advertisements show that single words can be used to signal a shared identity with targeted customers to win them over and, in the process, achieve psychological closeness.

Figure 4 shows a FoodPanda advertisement (No. 16) which begins with “*Apa khabar tek, orang Kuching?*”. “*Tek*” is a word from Sarawak Malay Dialect, said in contexts such as “*Apa tek?*” (What is it?). Here “*tek*” helps direct the advertisement at Sarawakians, or Kuching people to be specific. With just one extra word, foodpanda has tailor-made the advertisement for Sarawakians.

Figure 4. Advertisement No. 16 with “Apa khabar tek, orang Kuching?” to target Sarawakians

foodpanda 13 Sep

Apa khabar tek, orang Kuching? Have you signed up for pandapro? Subscribe from RM14.90 a month to enjoy exclusive discounts and more!

[www.foodpanda.my](http://www.foodpanda.my)

Bila kitak nak pro gik?

**exclusive 15% off for pandapro users**

Discounts on these brands

SCR S lea live and more!

Sign up to pandapro!

However, when English is used in Malay advertisements in the form of intra-sentential code-switching, it often conveys precision and science. An example is advertisement No. 7 on house disinfection services that are advertised through Grab (<https://youtu.be/vffmjcytouw>). The disinfection that is promised is of medical grade to be safe from the COVID-19 virus. The advertisement is in Malay, but 11 words are in English and all involve intra-sentential switching. This advertisement has code-switching to Chinese and Malay languages to target customers from two ethnic groups at one go. The word “lu” (colloquial Chinese for “you” in line 5) suggests that the targeted customers for the house disinfection advertisement are Chinese. At the same time, the phrase “yang tu semua basic je beb” (“that’s all basic only, babe” in line 4) uses colloquial Malay, suggesting that the targeted customers are Malays.



**House disinfection** masa PKP. Semenjak PKP ni, banyak benda aku kena buat. Maklumlah, ketua keluarga kan. aku kena pastikan keluarga aku sentiasa sihat dan selamat. Ini **list** aku, cuci karpet, dah. Mop lantai, dah. Cuci pinggan mangkuk, dah. Cuci rambut aku, **check**. Cuci sofa, **settle**. Cuci langsir, settle, yang tu semua **basic** je beb. Nak lagi selamat, **lu** orang kena order **Clean and Fix** dekat Grab. Biar diorang datang rumah, buat **full disinfection**. Lagipun, diorang guna bahan cuci gred perubatan. **Confirm** terbaik beb. Jom, aku ajar cara nak **order**. Buka **clean and fix** dari aplikasi Grab, tekan di sini, buat pilihan anda. Senang je.

Translated to English:

**House disinfection** during MCO. Since this MCO, I have to do many things. You know, the head of the family, right? I have to make sure my family is always healthy and safe. This is my **list**, wash the carpet, already. Mop the floor, yes. Wash the dishes, already. Wash my hair, **check**. Clean the sofa, **settle**. Wash the curtains, **settle**, that's all **basic** only, babe. If you want to be safe, you have to order **Clean and Fix** at Grab. Let people come home, do **full disinfection**. After all, people use medical grade detergents. Best confirmation baby. Come on, I'll teach you how to **order**. Open **Clean and fix** from the Grab application, press here, make your choice. It's nice.

In the English translation, it can be seen that intra-sentential code-switching is used for proper nouns, namely, "Clean and Fix". The word "full disinfection" is also in English, possibly as this is treated as a type of technical jargon whose meaning would be lost in translation (*"pembasmian kuman sepenuhnya"*). Other English words describe actions, as shown in verbs such as "check", "settle", and "order", but there are also nouns, namely, "list" and "lu" (Colloquial Chinese for "you"). This switch to "lu" has been explained earlier.

Besides the intra-sentential code-switching occurrences in advertisement No. 7, there are other examples from the online advertisements as follows in Figure 5:

(3) *Jom beli belah* this August with up to 50% off. (Advertisement No. 11)

Translated to English:

*Let's go shopping* this August with up to 50% off.

Figure 5. Advertisement No. 11 where there is a switch to “Jom Beli Belah” in an English advertisement

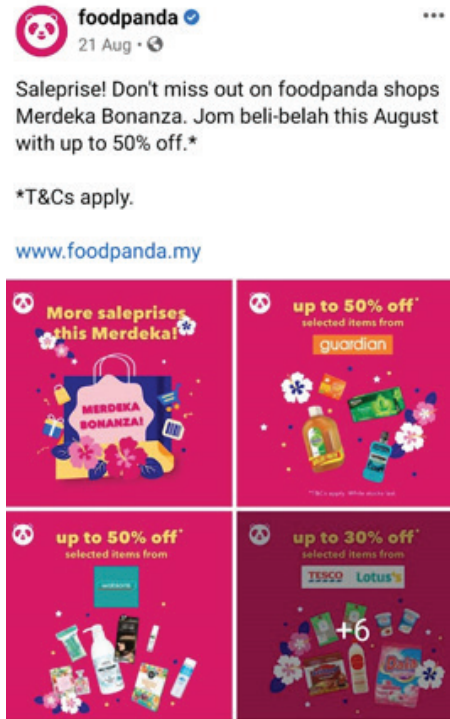


Figure 5 shows “Jom beli belah” (Let’s go shopping), which is a slang that is commonly used by Malaysians. It is so catchy that it has even been used as the name of an online business. Although “Jom beli belah” can stand on its own as an utterance, here it is meant to be part of a longer sentence with information on the time for foodpanda shops Merdeka Bonanza and the discount. Therefore, it is considered intra-sentential code-switching. Businesses usually have a Merdeka Bonanza in the lead-up to the Malaysian Independence Day on August 31 to boost sales. Advertisement No. 11 advertises the Merdeka Bonanza in Guardian, Watson, Tesco and Lotus’s.

Similarly, the intra-sentential code-switching seen in the use of Korean words marks advertisement No. 21 as targeting fans of K-pop in Example (4):

- (4) Share **Jjang Chikin** with your **gganbu**. No games, no fighting, no marbles. Just relax and share crispy Korean fried chicken with your **gganbu**. #foodpandaMY #squidgame

“Jjang Chikin” is a Korean chicken shop that offers online delivery services. “Gganbu” is a word made popular by the Korean Netflix show “Squid Game” but the meaning is unclear and is taken to mean very close friends who also live in the same neighbourhood (Urban Dictionary, n.d.). Hence, when “gganbu” is used in the advertisement, it closes the distance between the business operator and the customers to persuade customers to place orders.

### (3) Inter-sentential switching in online advertisements

Inter-sentential code-switching involves a switch of language in between utterances or sentences. In advertisement No. 20, the greeting “Happy Mid-Autumn Festival” is given in Chinese, and repeated in English, “中秋节快乐 and Happy Mid-Autumn Festival to all”. The mid-autumn festival is celebrated on the 15th day of the eighth month of the Chinese calendar, and the Chinese eat mooncakes in remembrance of Hou Yi who shot down nine suns, leaving one sun, so that the earth would not be scorched.

However, other examples of inter-sentential switching have utterances carrying their own meanings, as shown in Examples (5) and (6). Example (5) is a clear case of inter-sentential code-switching because “*Bila kitak nak pro gik?*” is in Malay, but the next part is in English (“Exclusive 15% off for pandapro users”).

- (5) **Bila kitak nak pro gik?** Exclusive 15% off for pandapro users.  
(Advertisement No. 16)

Translated to English:

**When do you want to go pro?** Exclusive 15% off for pandapro users.)

- (6) **Takkan tak tahu?** Tap.Tap. Ta-da! Challenges & Rewards.  
Bag vouchers galore with our loyalty program! Tap. Order to complete loyalty challenges. Pssst... **geng hantu diskaun? Coupon kween? Mak Cik Baucar?** Eh, saving is a virtue and foodpanda loyalty program gotchu! **#TakkanTakTahu?** Order to complete challenges, collect badges and earn points to redeem for special vouchers. Just Tap. Tap. Ta-da!  
( Advertisement No. 24)

Translated to English

**Can't be, don't know?** Tap.Tap. Ta-da! Challenges & Rewards.  
Bag vouchers galore with our loyalty program! Tap. Order to complete loyalty challenges. Pssst... **discount ghost gang? Queen of coupon? Voucher Aunt?** Eh, saving is a virtue and foodpanda loyalty program gotchu! **#Can'tBeDontKnow?** Order to complete challenges, collect badges and earn points to redeem for special vouchers. Just Tap. Tap. Ta-da!

Example 6 showing Advertisement No. 24 flips back and forth between Malay and English to promote the foodpanda loyalty programme. The advertisement starts off with Malay ("*Takken tak tahu?*") and switches to English to announce the benefits of the loyalty programme. At this point, the advertisement switches back to Malay ("*Pssst... **geng hantu diskaun? Coupon kween? Mak Cik Baucar?***") before using English to talk about how members can earn points for redemption. The inter-sentential code-switching is used with a clear purpose: Malay for informal talk and English for formal promotion of the foodpanda loyalty programme. The Malay text alludes to customers who are always on the lookout for discounts, coupons and vouchers. Advertisement No. 24 is a good example of how inter-sentential code-switching is used to present the official message of the business and, at the same time, personalise the message for potential customers. This juxtaposition of formality and informality within the same advertisement, achieved through the use of code-switching, is very interesting – and demonstrates the potential of language play to increase the persuasiveness of online advertisements. The online medium is generally considered less formal than printed advertisements in

newspapers, and this provides the avenue for importing colloquial use of language and code-switching for effect.

## Functions of Code-switching in Online Advertisements

This section presents the insights obtained from the analysis of code-switching functions in online advertisements. Using Gumperz's (1982) model of conversational code-switching, the functions were found to be interjection, reiteration, message qualification and personalisation.

### (1) Interjections

Interjections in the online advertisements often take the form of tag switching, which means that the words can be excluded without affecting the core meaning. For example, in Examples 1 and 2 (shown earlier), "lahhh" and "Pleaeeease!" add emphasis, as explained earlier. "Lahhh" is interjected in the middle, whereas "Pleaeeease!" is added at the end of the sentence. "Lahhh" is usually said in a gentle and persuasive tone. "Pleaeeease" is said in an appealing tone to tell customers not to travel home during the Raya as the COVID-19 disease is still around but to use Grab to get close to loved ones ("Raya ini, dekatkan yang jauh dengan Grab", meaning "This Raya, get close to those far away with Grab"). The "pleaeeease" interjection has better effect than "tolonglah" in Malay.

In Example 7, the particle "Wei" (for "Hey!") is interjected at the beginning of a sentence. "Wei" is a Chinese greeting used in telephone calls, equivalent to "hello". "Wei" rhymes with "hey" but it is not impolite usage to circumvent addressing someone using their name. Advertisement No. 15 is actually a KFC advertisement promoting extra hot and spicy deals, and an offer of RM8 off follows.

(7) *Wei, ade org buat* advertisement about u! (Advertisement No. 15)

Translated to English:

Wei, got people make advertisement about you!

There are also interjections at the beginning of sentences, such as “*Insyallah*” (meaning “God-willing”), an expression which Muslims often use. The interjections make the text in the advertisements sound conversational, and create a sense of familiarity.

## **(2) Reiteration**

The second function of code-switching is reiteration, which does not occur much in advertisements. The message may be repeated in another language literally. For example, in advertisement No. 20, the mid-autumn festival greeting is stated first in Chinese and then in English.

Example (6) has reiteration. “*Takkan tak tahu?*” is first stated in Malay and reiterated as a hashtag (**#TakkanTakTahu?**). In another instance in the same advertisement, customers are told to “order to complete loyalty challenges” and the message is reiterated in English in the closing line. The closest to code-switching for reiteration purposes is in these sentences, “*Pssst... geng hantu diskaun? Coupon kween? Mak Cik Baucar?*” Three different terms in Malay are used but, the meaning conveyed is the same, that is, ladies who like discounts, don’t miss your chance. The switch to Malay pokes fun at ladies who are on the lookout for discounts, coupons and vouchers, but immediately affirms that saving is a virtue, which is what the Foodpanda loyalty programme is all about. Example (6) shows reiteration in modified form. There are few advertisements with reiterations because space is limited in advertisements, and words are economised so that customers can get the message quickly. Too much text may be lost on customers.

## **(3) Message qualifications**

Advertisement No. 18 (shown in Figure 6 and Example 8) promotes Food panda services. This is among the few online advertisements with message qualification, and this is partly because it is a YouTube advertisement with a conversation.

Advertisement No. 18 promotes pick-up with Foodpanda shops. The advertisement is largely in Malay, but personal pronouns (“I”, “you”) and the term “pick-up” are in English. There is no message qualification in connection with the personal pronouns, but the significance of these intra-sentential

code-switches will be explained here, as an aside. The use of English pronouns by Malay speakers in Kuala Lumpur and other urban areas is common, and circumvents the politeness issue with address terms. It said that “saya” (“I”) and “awak” (“you”) can be patronising while “aku” (“I”) and “kau” (“you”) can be too harsh, unless it is used by people close to one another.

Figure 6. Foodpanda advertisement showing message qualification for the term “pick-up”



The code-switching for message qualification is to do with the term “pick-up”. The male speaker (B) pretended to misunderstand pick-up (“my heart is topsy-turvy”). At this point, the female speaker (A) clarified that when she said “pick-up”, she meant Foodpanda shops and there is delivery to the door-step for everything. This is an example of how the “pick-up” idea is qualified in Malay. However, in poster-type online advertisements, there are hardly message qualifications because of the need to be succinct. Often when the information is clear, and additional information is not needed.

- (8) A: I dah guna **pick-up** tadi, huhu. Senang la, bang. (I already use pick-up just now, huhu. Easy la, darling.)  
B: **You dr Klang ke?** (You're from Klang, is it?)  
A: *Eh... nape?* (Eh, why?)  
B: *Sbb hati I kelam kabut tak tentu arah lepas pandang awak.* (Because my heart is topsy-turvy after I look at you.)  
A: *Aduh, **pick-up** dengan **foodpanda shops** la bang, bukannya **pick-up line!** Semuanya lebih senang dengan **pick-up.** Cubalah sekarang: [www.foodpanda.my](http://www.foodpanda.my) (Ouch, pick-up with foodpanda shops la darling, not pick-up line! Everything is easier with a pick-up. Try it now. [www.foodpanda.my](http://www.foodpanda.my))*

Other examples of code-switching with the message qualification function can be seen in Example (9), where the Malay term "*beraya jauh-jauh sangat*" ("celebrate far far away") is clarified by inserting a French term "*le tour*". This can be considered message qualification, whereby the speaker discouraged extended journeys because everyone still needs to be careful about travelling to prevent COVID-19 disease transmission. The intra-sentential code-switching to French "*le tour*" gives the idea that the journey is to a far away destination like France halfway across the globe, although in reality the speaker was talking about travelling home to the *kampung* within Malaysia itself to visit family during the festive season. The usage of the word "style" in the last line of advertisement no. 5 reinforces the earlier results on how the use of English connotes modernity and trendiness.

- (9) *Seterusnya, janganlah beraya jauh-jauh sangat. janglah dibuat **le tour** di Malaysia. Kita masih dalam fasa berjaga-jaga. Lagipun, kita boleh sambut raya guna video call. Macam aku. Rasanya, eloklah kita amalkan salam kekanda dinda. Lebih style dan selamat.* (Advertisement No. 5).

Translated to English:

Next, don't go too far. Don't make a tour in Malaysia. We are still in the precautionary phase. After all, we can celebrate Raya using video calls.



Like me, I think it's good that we practise salam to your sisters and brother. More style and safety.

#### (4) Personalisations

The code-switching is mainly for personalisation rather than objectivisation. Advertisement No. 24 in Example 6 is a good example where Malay is used for personalisation, as opposed to English for objectivisation. The code-switching serves to distinguish personal opinion or knowledge which is expressed in Malay (e.g., *"Takkan tak tahu?"*), as opposed to authoritative messages conveyed in English ("Bag vouchers galore with our loyalty program!") between talk about action and talk as action, the degree of speaker involvement in, or distance from, a message,

Code-switching for personalisation and objectivisation is also used in advertisement No. 2. It is a YouTube video persuading people to use Panda Mart services. The advertisement shows a young man using rap to say the lines in Example (10) against five different backscene in cartoon form (Figure 7).

Figure 7. Pandamart advertisement showing code-switching for personalisation



(Source: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S6u11Zmb8Ko>)

The foodpanda advertisement targets five different groups of customers through the referents and images used: guys ("brother"), girls ("homegirl"),

older women (“auntie”), exercise geeks (“Abang sado”), and young mummies (“mami”).

(10) Brother, brother, brother, ***takkan tak tahu?*** foodpanda ***banyak*** deals ***bila*** tapau, stack your discounts with a voucher code, get discounts on top of discounts bro like tap tap tadaa!

Op hold on, homegirl, ***takkan tak tahu?*** Save delivery fee, group order rightnow, tell your girlfriends, ***satukan jer***, standby for foodpanda rider, tap tap tadaaa!

***Assalam*** auntie, auntie ***tak tahu?*** Order dengan foodpanda to collect points, loyalty points ***tukar jadi*** voucher, ***nanti dapat pakai untuk belanja***. tap tap tadaa!

***Abang sado*** if you didn’t know, ***bila*** click pick-up you can stay on the go, dapat skip line ***bila sampai kedai***, discounts save money and time, tap tap tadaa!

Mami hold up, ***takkan tak tahu? tak usah keluar beli barang*** right now, pandamart dan shops ***dapat bantu*** all day, mami ***pergi rehat, barang*** shopping on the way! tap tap tada

Example (10) uses English for the official messages from Foodpanda like “stack your discounts with a voucher code, get discounts on top of discounts bro like tap tap tadaa!”). In this advertisement, Malay is used for informal messages to connect with customers. For example, the question “*takkan tak tahu?*” and informal words like “*satukan jer*” (combine into one only) personalises the messages. Without the Malay words, the advertisement sounds too formal and may not be persuasive. The play of language is in addition to the persuasive lines which are adapted to the different groups of customers, like the message for auntie mentions vouchers whereas the message for mami (busy mummy) asks her to rest and tells her that she does not need to go out and shop.

## **Conclusion**

Code-switching is a simple juxtaposition of other languages in advertisements to create desired effects. The main finding from the analysis of online advertisements is the use of code-switching for identity construction. From a comparison of advertisements in English and Malay, it is found that the need for code-switching is greater in English advertisements to tap into certain identities to increase product appeal, which can be achieved using single words (tag switching and intra-sentential switching). Inter-sentential code-switching is useful for moving between formality and informality within the same advertisement.

Code-switching is generally considered a strategic choice in advertisements. The copywriters of advertisements felt that using foreign words in Bangla advertisements helps them to “describe their products and deliver the information about them more easily, smoothly, and clearly using more concise language” (Sajib et al., 2020, p. 250). In our analysis of the Malaysian online advertisements, there was also precision in the messages, and there was not much use of code-switching for reiteration and message qualification because copywriters of advertisements strive to keep their messages short and simple, but there is an interesting use of code-switching involving the use of Malay for personalisation and English for objectivisation. Interjections in other languages also add flavour to the online advertisements while targeting customers from the groups speaking those languages.

Our search of online advertisements circulated among Malaysians in 2021 indicated that most of them were Malay and English, and words in Arabic, Korean, Mandarin, and even French were included for effect. Code-switching involving one or two words (intra-sentential code-switching) is far more common than switching involving full sentences. This is different from Mulyani’s (2018) analysis of 15 commercial advertisements in Indonesian newspapers, where inter-sentential code-switching (86%) is far more common than intra-sentential (13%) and emblematic switching (1%). The difference could be due to the medium of the advertisement because in the present study, the advertisements were in the form of online posters and YouTube videos whereas Mulyani’s (2018) advertisements were in printed newspapers and the context is different.

Nevertheless, there seems to be an almost universal meaning attached to the use of English in advertisements. We found that code-switching to English in a Malay advertisement imbues meanings of prestige, style, modernity and internationalisation to the product. This finding is similar to other studies conducted in various settings (Lau, 2007; Mansor et al., 2016; Riaz, 2019; Sajib et al., 2020). However, English is also used for expressiveness and to gain attention in Indonesian advertisements (Saputra, 2018).

However, in English advertisements, the code-switching to Malay adds to knowledge in the field because of the inadequacy of studies in this area. We found that inclusion of Malay words in English advertisements creates the togetherness and oneness of being Malaysian (e.g., “lahhh”, “jom”). Malaysians are generally multilingual. Malaysians study both English and Malay in the education system, and therefore do not have problems comprehending either language. This is why business operators can freely and cleverly use English and Malay in their advertisements. In the sales and marketing sense, code-switching is seen positively because it persuades customers and may increase sales.

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# *Advertising Language:*

*Secrets of Persuasion*

This book exposes the secrets of persuasion embedded in advertising language used in various social media platforms. While you and I may be aware of the magnetism of vibrant imagery, we may not realise the surreptitious pull of wordplay. This book explains how slogans and emotive words are used to convince consumers that “This product is worth it!”. The book also reveals the power of weaving in and out of languages. Read and find out how code-switching is used by social influencers to carve out their desired profile and advertisers to construct identities that appeal to a range of consumers. “Advertising language: Secrets of persuasion” is not only about increasing sales. The book also goes into how rhetorics are used in public service announcements on mental health to spur actions towards social well-being.



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