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Linguistic Creativity in Music: Analyzing Code-Switching in the Acehese Regional Pop Songs

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Abstract

This study explored the types of code-switching in Acehese songs sung by Bergek, an Acehese pop musician, and identified additional phenomena of code-switching beyond existing theoretical frameworks. The data consisted of ten purposively selected Bergek's songs collected from YouTube and Smule.com. The data were analyzed using a qualitative data analysis model that involves data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification. The data were categorized based on types of code-switching, including tag-switching (insertion of brief phrases or tags from one language into another), intra-sentential switching (the switch at the clausal, sentential, or word levels), and inter-sentential switching (alternation between clauses or sentences). The findings show that these three types of code-switching exist in Bergek's songs, with intra-sentential switching being the most prevalent (80 occurrences), reflecting the complex integration of multiple languages within a single sentence. Inter-sentential switching is the second most dominant type, observed 36 times. Tag-switching is the least common type identified, with only four occurrences. Interestingly, other notable patterns were also discovered, including affixation (the combination of Acehese affixes with Indonesian base words) and phonemic fusion, where phonetic elements from different languages were blended. These patterns occurred 14 times in total. These findings provide a detailed view of the frequency and variety of code-switching in Bergek's songs, contributing to enhancing comprehension of language use in bilingual and multilingual musical contexts.

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Keywords: Acehese songs, code-switching, inter-sentential, intra-sentential, tag-switching.

1. INTRODUCTION

Human beings from various linguistic and cultural backgrounds are interconnected for various reasons, reflecting a global community in which national languages often take precedence over regional ones. As tools of globalization, national or global lingua franca, like English, frequently dominate and supplant regional dialects in global and inter-societal exchanges (Maikanti et al., 2021; Rayo et al., 2024). As a result, many people become multilingual or bilingual and use particular codes in verbal or nonverbal communication. They may also switch from one code to another, even within very brief utterances or short-written lines. In linguistics, this process is known as code-switching or language alternation. The terms ‘code’ and ‘language’ are often used interchangeably. Wardhaugh and Fuller (2015) defined ‘code’ as a language or variety of a language, including dialect, style, and register. The term ‘code’ is often considered a neutral concept of linguistic variety as it encompasses both languages and dialects.

Code-switching in conversation differs significantly from that in music, particularly because conversational switches often occur spontaneously within intimate, interactive contexts, whereas lyrical or musical code-switching is typically deliberate and intended for a broad, external audience (Kadir, 2021). In song lyrics, code-switching does not occur spontaneously or in intimate settings; rather, it is performed intentionally for stylistic and communicative purposes. Unlike everyday conversation, it is not directed to a single speaker or to a personally known group of listeners. Recent research on bilingual songs shows that code-switching often serves dual functions of globalization and localization, where singers aim to connect with international audiences while simultaneously preserving their cultural and linguistic identity (Lemrow, 2010; Masruddin et al., 2022).

In music, singers are generally aware of the fact that their words can reach audiences outside their immediate linguistic environment. Recent research on K-pop confirmed this awareness, showing that English code-switching in lyrics is intentionally used to engage a global audience and enhance international reach (Sriautarawong & Wattanapanich, 2025). Code-switching in song lyrics is often motivated by the expansion of media and the internet, which expose global audiences to music from different cultures. Therefore, singers seeking success in the popular music industry often use code-switching as a form of ‘stylistic innovation’ in their song lyrics. More recently, studies of global pop music, such as the Spanish–English alternations in the song *Despacito* (Remix), showed that code-switching is strategically used to enhance expressiveness, foster cultural hybridity, and expand global reach (Sabtiana, 2025).

Many Acehese people living in urban settings in Indonesia have shown preferences towards the national language over their own local language (Ismail et al., 2021). The use of the Acehese language among these individuals gradually decreases due to certain factors, while the Indonesian language is utilized in daily communication across various situations. This phenomenon correlates with code-switching, making it one of the most observable phenomena within bilingual and multilingual communities. This phenomenon is not only evident in everyday interactions of the Acehese people but also in the musical expressions of Acehese local artists. Bergek, a prominent figure in the Acehese music industry, has gained wide recognition for his songs, which uniquely employ code-switching. As one of the leading figures in Aceh music, Bergek has crafted songs known for their catchy and distinctive bilingual lyrics (Nurmina & Aflah, 2017).

Although previous studies have investigated code-switching in global music industries such as Latin pop, hip hop, and K-pop (Lemrow, 2010; Masruddin et al., 2022; Sabtiana, 2025; Sriautarawong & Wattanapanich, 2025), little attention has been given to regional Indonesian contexts. Most research in Indonesia has focused on code-switching in conversational or educational settings (Kadir, 2021; Rosita et al., 2023), leaving a gap in understanding how local musicians employ language alternation in their lyrics to negotiate cultural identity, stylistic

creativity, and audience engagement. In particular, the unique bilingual and trilingual patterns found in Acehese popular music, such as those performed by Bergek, remain underexplored. This study seeks to fill that gap by examining both the conventional forms of code-switching identified and the additional innovative patterns that emerge in Bergek's works.

The analysis of code-switching can be examined through Poplack's (1980) linguistic framework, which identifies three types of code-switching: inter-sentential, intra-sentential, and tag-switching. Based on the rationale, the present study aims to address the following questions:

1. What types of code-switching are employed in Acehese songs performed by Bergek based on Poplack's (1980) framework?
2. How frequently does each code-switching occur in Bergek's Acehese songs?

This study contributes to the growing body of research on bilingualism and code-switching in popular culture by providing empirical evidence from Acehese music, a context that has been under-explored in sociolinguistic studies. Specifically, it highlights how popular songs can serve as a site of linguistic creativity, identity construction, and cultural negotiation in post-conflict Aceh. The findings are expected to enrich theoretical discussions on code-switching beyond classroom and conversational settings, while also offering practical insights into how local artists like Bergek use language as a medium to connect with diverse audiences and preserve cultural heritage.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Code-Switching

Code-switching is often regarded as a communicative skill of bilingual and multilingual speakers. In linguistics, the term refers to the practice of alternating between two or more languages or language varieties within a single conversation or discourse (Nguyen et al., 2022). Bilingual speakers may resort to code-switching when they encounter difficulties in clarifying meaning, expressing identity, or ensuring mutual understanding with their interlocutors. Such switching may occur multiple times within interactions and can be observed even among speakers who share the same language background, reflecting both linguistic competence and social dynamics (Wei, 2018).

Code-switching can occur at different levels: between sentences (inter-sentential), within sentences (intra-sentential), and at the morpheme level (intra-word). Code-switching involves the juxtaposition of utterances in unintegrated linguistic forms from two or more languages. It cannot occur arbitrarily at any point in a sentence; rather, it is governed by the grammatical constraints of the languages involved. Bilingual speech remains fluent only when these constraints are observed; otherwise, the speech may appear ungrammatical or disfluent (Moradi & Chen, 2022).

There are different perspectives on code-switching. A major sociolinguistic approach focuses on social motivations for switching, examining both immediate discourse factors (such as lexical need, topic, and setting) and broader factors (such as speaker or group identity and relationship-building, such as solidarity) (Wei, 2018). Code-switching may also reflect how frequently an individual uses expressions from one language over another in daily communications, making certain expressions more readily accessible than their equivalents in the other language.

2.2 Types of Code-Switching

Several scholars have proposed typological frameworks to account for the phenomenon of code-switching. One framework distinguishes between 'situational code-switching', occurring when the social context changes, and 'metaphorical code-switching' that speakers use to convey identity, emphasis, or attitudinal nuance (Callesano et al., 2025; Sleeper, 2025). This distinction illustrates that code-switching is not a random occurrence but a socially and pragmatically motivated choice that reflects the communicative intentions of speakers.

Another influential framework by Poplack (1980) identified several types of code-switching: tag-switching, inter-sentential switching, and intra-sentential switching. Tag-switching refers to the insertion of a tag or short phrase from one language into an utterance that is otherwise entirely in another language. Tags typically include interjections, fillers, and idiomatic expressions, and their use is commonly associated with informal and colloquial speech (Callesano et al., 2025; Rosita et al., 2023). This type of code-switching is particularly facile because tags carry minimal syntactic restrictions, allowing them to be inserted almost anywhere in discourse without disrupting grammatical structure (Halidun, 2024). Tags typically include interjections, fillers, and idiomatic expressions. Common examples in English include ‘you know’, ‘I mean’, and ‘right’. Meanwhile, inter-sentential code-switching occurs at sentential boundaries, where one clause or sentence is in one language while the next clause or sentence is in another. To switch effectively at the sentence or discourse level, speakers must demonstrate a high degree of bilingual competence, not only in terms of lexical and grammatical competence but also in their sensitivity to the sociocultural contexts that shape communication (Callesano et al., 2025; Sleeper, 2025). Therefore, inter-sentential code-switching, which occurs across speaker turns, requires a high level of fluency in both languages to ensure that speakers can follow the grammatical rules of each. Contemporary studies further validate this: higher proficiency in both languages enables smoother and more controlled switching (Hartanto & Yang, 2020; Yow et al., 2018). For example, a Malay-English switch might appear as follows:

“Itula. Mama dah agak dah. Adik ni demam ni. Pity you. Your voice is also different already”.
[That’s why. I knew it. You have a fever. Pity you. Your voice sounds different.]

In this instance, the speaker switched from Malay to English in the last two utterances, which served several functions. First, it emphasizes emotional expression, as phrases like “Pity you” convey sympathy more effectively and might resonate more with bilingual speakers. Second, the shift facilitated clearer communication by allowing the speaker to choose the language that conveys the intended meaning more effectively. Finally, alternation to English in a predominantly Malay context may signal the speaker’s bilingual identity.

Intra-sentential code switching is arguably the most complex type, as it can occur at the clausal, sentential, or even word level (Poplack, 1980). Specifically in song lyrics, by smoothly incorporating elements from different languages, songwriters can enhance the depth and richness of their lyrics and resonate with linguistically and culturally diverse listeners (Callesano et al., 2025; Nazri & Kassim, 2023; Sleeper, 2025). An example of this type of code-switching is given below:

“But it’s sort of like ‘n bietjie van dit en ‘n bietjie van dat.
[But it’s sort of like a bit of this and a bit of that.] (Van Dulm, 2007, p. 7).

In this case, the speaker establishes intra-sentential switching by beginning the utterance in English and concluding it with an Afrikaans phrase. This illustrates how intra-sentential code-switching requires advanced bilingual competence, as it integrates elements of both languages within a single syntactic structure.

3. METHODS

This descriptive qualitative research employed a content analysis design, defined as an empirically grounded and methodologically controlled analysis of texts within their communicative context, following established content-analytic rules and step-by-step procedures (Kuckartz & Rädiker, 2025). The object of qualitative content analysis can include any form of recorded communication, such as interview transcripts, discourse records, observation protocols, video recordings, and written documents. Data were collected using purposive sampling, which is defined as a technique that enables researchers to intentionally select participants or sites directly related to the phenomenon and research problem under investigation (Etikan, 2017;

Palinkas et al., 2015; Saunders et al., 2018). The data sources for this research comprised ten Acehnese songs performed by Bergek. Every single word or phrase of the song lyrics containing instances of code-switching was considered a unit of analysis.

The selection of songs followed three criteria:

- Ten songs were selected from Bergek's official YouTube and Smule channels, prioritizing those with high view counts and clear instances of code-switching.
- All songs were officially performed by Bergek, a leading Acehnese singer.
- The lyrics incorporated multiple languages: Acehnese, Indonesian, and occasionally English.
- Several songs reached over a million views on YouTube, reflecting their popularity among children, adolescents, and middle-aged Acehnese listeners.

The ten selected Acehnese songs are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. List of Bergek's Acehnese songs used in this study.

No.	Song title	Year
1.	<i>Boh Haté 1</i>	2005
2.	<i>Tan Meuhoe</i>	2007
3.	<i>Gitu-Gitu</i>	2008
4.	<i>Cinta Ka Meuri</i>	2008
5.	<i>Dikit-Dikit</i>	2009
6.	<i>Yang Peunteng Happy</i>	2010
7.	<i>Cinta Dabel</i>	2011
8.	<i>Boh Haté 2</i>	2012
9.	<i>Curéh-Curéh</i>	2012
10.	<i>Goyang Lagi</i>	2013

To address the research questions, the data were critically analyzed using the qualitative data analysis model developed by (Miles et al., 2018), which comprises three phases: (1) data condensation, (2) data display, and (3) conclusion drawing/verification. In this study, the data were condensed by selecting, simplifying, abstracting, and transforming instances of code-switching extracted from the lyrics. Data display was conducted by categorizing the data based on Poplack (1980) typology of code-switching, presenting them in tables, supplemented with narrative descriptions that offered alternative ways of organizing and interpreting textually embedded aspects of the data. Conclusion drawing or verification involved stepping back to consider what the analyzed data revealed, and verification was achieved by iteratively revisiting the data to cross-check and confirm emergent interpretations. To ensure clarity, the data are presented alongside their references and acronyms: S refers to the song, L to the line, and D to the data number.

4. RESULTS

4.1 Types of Code-switching in Bergek's Songs

This section presents the findings of the study concerning the types of code-switching that appear in Bergek's Acehnese songs. The analysis follows Poplack's (1980) framework, which classifies code-switching into three main types: tag-switching, inter-sentential switching, and intra-sentential switching. By examining the data from Bergek's repertoire, the study not only illustrates how these linguistic patterns emerge in his lyrics but also highlights their cultural and communicative significance. Each type of code-switching is discussed in detail and supported with examples drawn directly from the selected song lyrics.

4.1.1 Tag-switching

Tag-switching entails incorporating a tag or brief phrase from one language into speech in another language. This type of code-switching is highly prevalent because tags have minimal

syntactic constraints, allowing them to be used without violating the grammatical rules of the first language (L1). The following data, extracted from a selection of Bergek's multilingual song lyrics, illustrate the phenomenon of tag-switching where he alternated between languages within the same composition. The underlined text is in Indonesian, while the bold text is in Acehese.

- (1) *Mumang d  k, capek deh abang h  k seumik  .* (S5/L9/D58)
[I'm dizzy, [I'm] so tired, I'm tired of overthinking.]

Excerpt (1) was a lyric of Bergek's song entitled *Dikit-Dikit*. The expression *mumang d  k, capek deh abang hek seumik  * belongs to tag-switching as it blends Acehese and Indonesian languages. In this line, the phrases *mumang d  k* and *abang hek seumik  * are in the Acehese language, while *capek deh* is in the Indonesian language. The switch occurs with the insertion of *deh*, a colloquial filler in Indonesian that imparts a casual tone or emphasis without altering the grammatical structure or core meaning of the sentence.

- (2) *Napsi-napsi sampai jumpa.* (S2/L19/D28)
[Every man for himself, goodbye.]

Excerpt (2) is another example of tag switching. It was taken from the song *Tan Meuhoe*, in which a short expression from one language is inserted into another. The phrase *napsi-napsi* in Acehese is derived from Arabic and means 'Every man for himself', and is combined with the Indonesian phrase *sampai jumpa* ('see you'). This blending reflects both familiarity and cultural depth, highlighting individuality while maintaining clarity of meaning. Such tag-switching reflects the singer's bilingual proficiency while reflecting the cultural hybridity of Acehese identity.

- (3) *Uroe susah malam gundah kagak bisa bobok.* (S3/L9/D35)
[Sad days, restless nights, can't sleep.]

Excerpt (3), extracted from the song *Gitu-Gitu*, illustrates tag-switching across Acehese and Indonesian languages. The first half of the main clause is expressed in Acehese, consisting of the phrases *uroe susah*, which means 'sad days', and *malam gundah*, which means 'restless nights'. However, the second half of the main clause is a colloquial Indonesian phrase *kagak bisa bobok*, meaning 'cannot sleep'. The latter serves as a tag that adds informality or casualness without disrupting the Acehese grammatical frame. This particular alternation indicates the speaker's bilingual competence, where he skillfully combined the Acehese language to convey emotional depth and the Indonesian language to provide expressiveness and relatability. It shows how tag-switching conveys layered meaning and highlights the interchange between local and national linguistic identities simultaneously.

4.1.2 Inter-sentential switching

Inter-sentential code-switching refers to the shift from one language to another between clauses or sentences. This phenomenon generally occurs during a discussion or discourse in which one utterance is expressed in one language and the subsequent utterance in another. Several instances from the data illustrate this pattern, as in (4).

- (4) *H  k ka l  n seut  t adinda. Sungguh sakit di ulu hati.* (S1/L5/D2)
[I'm tired of searching for (you), darling. It really hurts deep inside.]

Excerpt (4), which is a lyric from the song *Boh Hat  *, illustrates inter-sentential switching between Acehese and Indonesian languages. The Acehese line *h  k ka l  n seut  t adinda* ('I'm tired of searching for (you), darling') is paired with the Indonesian phrase *sungguh sakit di ulu hati* ('It really hurts deep inside'). The switch occurs between sentences, matching the category of inter-sentential switching. The Acehese line conveys intimacy and personal sentiment, with

the term *adinda* serving as a culturally embedded term of endearment in Aceh. The subsequent Indonesian sentence, *sunnguh sakit di ulu hati*, intensifies the emotional pain using a vivid metaphor broadly understood by a wider Indonesian audience. This strategic code-switching reveals the singer's bilingual identity and allows him to connect with both Acehnese and Indonesian speaking audiences simultaneously. More importantly, through this alternation, cultural intimacy is preserved, the song's emotional depth is enriched, and accessibility is broadened at the same time. A similar pattern also emerged in another Bergek's song, *Tan Meuhoe*, as in excerpt (5).

- (5) *Sengsara daku sengsara. Meu'ah lôn nyoe nyö na dosa.* (S2/L8/D17)
[I am in anguish. Forgive me if I have sinned.]

Excerpt (5) exemplifies quintessential code-switching between Acehnese and Indonesian to convey a plea for forgiveness and deep anguish. The Indonesian phrase *sengsara daku sengsara* ('I am in anguish') delivers emotional intensity in a language accessible to a wider audience, whereas the Acehnese verse *meu'ah lôn nyoe nyö na dosa* ('Forgive me if I have sinned') carries cultural and religious weight. By blending the two, the singer preserves cultural intimacy, broadens audience understanding, and enhances both emotional expression and audience connection.

- (6) *Haté lalè teuma malè 'oh lôn kalön adék,
yang putéh licén ngon malém seureta kaya,
Aku tau diriku banyak yang sayang.* (S3/L3/D31)
[My heart is complacent but shy when I look at (you) darling,
who is fair-skinned, pious, and rich,
I know that many people love me.]

Excerpt 6, originating from the song *Gitu-Gitu*, shows the singer's competence in integrating the Acehnese and Indonesian languages between sentences seamlessly. The lyric *yang putéh licén ngon malém seureta kaya* contains Acehnese linguistic elements. The Acehnese phrase *yang putéh* ('one with fair skin'), in particular, is most likely used to convey an aesthetic reference to a girl's beauty, as 'fair skin' is commonly idealized in many local cultural contexts, including in Aceh. The following verse *aku tau diriku banyak yang sayang* is in the Indonesian language, containing the word *aku*, which means 'I', *tau* as a colloquial variant of the standard Indonesian *tahu* ('know'), *diriku* referring to 'myself', and '*banyak yang sayang*' meaning 'many (people) love (me)' in the standard Indonesian. The use of everyday Indonesian here not only aims to reach the Indonesian audience but also signals a shift toward emotional self-expression.

4.1.3 Intra-sentential switching

Unlike inter-sentential code-switching, which involves language shifts between sentences or clauses, intra-sentential code-switching takes place within a single sentence. This form of linguistic blending can achieve a variety of stylistic purposes, express emotions, and produce a distinct poetic effect. From the analysis, it is identified that Bergek's songs have 80 instances of intra-sentential switching where the elements from the Acehnese and Indonesian languages are integrated. For example, in excerpt (7) below, the lyric combines Acehnese and Indonesian codes to convey a deeply emotional plea:

- (7) *Habéh pulsa ku isi.* (S1/L18/D7)
[(When my) phone credit ran out, I topped it up.]

This particular excerpt was extracted from the song *Boh Haté*, in which the line *habéh pulsa ku isi* exemplifies intra-sentential code-switching. Here, Acehnese and Indonesian expressions are blended within a single utterance to convey a complete action related to 'mobile phone credit'. In this line, *habéh* (the Acehnese word for 'run out' or 'used up') and *pulsa* (an Indonesian term for 'mobile phone credit') describe the condition of the singer who ran out of phone credit while

searching for his girlfriend. The following part, *ku isi* is in Indonesian, in which *ku* is a morpheme meaning ‘I’, and *isi* is the Indonesian word for ‘refill’ or ‘top up’, indicating the action that follows, namely refilling the credit. This combination allows the singer to succinctly express both the problem (‘depletion of mobile phone credit’) and its resolution (‘topping up’) using the most precise and culturally resonant terms from each language. This practice not only reveals the singer’s bilingual identity but also his ability to select the most effective linguistic resources or concepts to reach audiences in both languages. Such a pattern also appears in Bergek’s song *Gitu-Gitu*, which demonstrates communicative efficiency and cultural authenticity, as seen in (8).

- (8) *Peugah dék bèk diam saja.* (S2/L9/D19)
[Say it, darling; don’t just stay silent.]

In excerpt (8), the use of intra-sentential code-switching conveys a poignant message. The Acehese phrase *peugah dék* directly addresses the listeners with affection, akin to ‘say it, darling’ in English. The word *dék* here is a familiar term of endearment to Acehese speakers. The switch from Acehese to Indonesian in the phrase *bèk diam saja* delivers a clear directive, urging the listener not to remain silent but to speak up or communicate. This blending within the same sentence enriches the lyric’s emotional tone, allowing the singer to express a complex sentiment effectively. A similar instance was also identified in excerpt (9) from the song *Tan Meuhoe*, as shown in (9).

- (9) *Kemana arah tan meuhoe.* (S2/L9/D19)
[To which direction, I don’t know.]

In excerpt (9), the blending of Indonesian and Acehese languages functions to express uncertainty about the clarity or direction of a romantic relationship. The Indonesian phrase *kemana arah*, literally meaning ‘to which direction’ in the Indonesian language, provides clarity in this context. Meanwhile, the Acehese phrase *tan meuhoe* (‘don’t know where’) amplifies the singer’s confusion and desperation about his condition. This shift reflects the cultural identity of the singer as he mixed two codes to express nuanced feelings and authentic expression. Hence, all these data show how intra-sentential code-switching in song lyrics can enhance lyrical storytelling, making the messages more relatable and evocative to diverse audiences fluent in either language. The intentional use of multiple languages in music enhances the lyrical expressions and strengthens the connection with diverse listeners.

4.2 Hybrid Affixation and Phonemic Fusion in Code-switching

Some other findings beyond Poplack’s (1980) code-switching framework emerged during the data analysis in this research. These findings are outlined in Table 2.

Table 2. Other findings in Bergek’s songs related to code-switching.

No.	Identified data	Code	Pattern
1.	<i>Sebab cumèh bak meucanda</i>	(S2/L21/D29)	Affix (Acehnese) + base word (Indonesian)
2.	<i>Kalo dikit-dikit adék ka hei abang</i>	(S5/L18/D66)	Phonemic Fusion (Indonesian)
3.	<i>Adék jatuh dikit pun hei abang</i>	(S5/L19/D67)	Phonemic Fusion (Indonesian)
4.	<i>Abang dikit-dikit</i>	(S5/L21/D68)	Phonemic Fusion (Indonesian)
5.	<i>Kalo meusireuk dikit abang</i>	(S5/L22/D69)	Phonemic Fusion (Indonesian)
6.	<i>Dikit-dikit</i>	(S5/L26/D63)	Phonemic Fusion (Indonesian)
7.	<i>Peunteng tanyoe hepi (happy)</i>	(S6/L9/D68)	Phonemic Fusion (English)
8.	<i>Peunteng tanyoe hepi (happy)</i>	(S6/L20/D71)	Phonemic Fusion (English)
9.	<i>Cinta kau peu(r)dua</i>	(S7/L19/D81)	Affix (Acehnese) + base word (Indonesian)
10.	<i>Ee hai...apa harus bilang wow gitu</i>	(S10/L1/D121)	Phonemic Fusion (Indonesian)
11.	<i>Boh haté meutubi</i>	(S10/L6/D124)	Affix (Acehnese) + base word (Indonesian)
12.	<i>Gitu-gitu ku ditinggalkan</i>	(S10/L15/D131)	Phonemic Fusion (Indonesian)
13.	<i>Dikit-dikit ka suet bajè</i>	(S10/L19/D133)	Phonemic Fusion (Indonesian)
14.	<i>Manis imut kiut (cute) cuek beukah ganteng</i>	(S10/L22/D135)	Phonemic Fusion (English)

Table 2 reveals distinctive code-switching patterns that extend beyond Poplack's (1980) classic framework, showing Bergek's creative integration of Acehnese, Indonesian, and English. One notable pattern involves attaching Acehnese affixes to Indonesian base words, as shown in S2/L21/D29, S7/L19/D81, and S10/L6/D124, producing hybrid forms that preserve the essence of both languages. This approach weaves local linguistic elements with Indonesian terms, creating expressive variations that enhance lyrical style and meaning. Another key feature is phonemic fusion, where words keep their original sounds while adapting to the song's phonology and style. For instance, the repetition *dikit-dikit* in S5/L18/D66, S5/L21/D68, contributes to rhythmic flow and reinforces the conversational, emotive tone of the lyrics, enhancing listeners' engagement.

Additionally, the inclusion of phonemically adapted English words, such as *hepi* (from 'happy') as in S6/L9/D68 and S6/L20/D71, and *kiut* (from 'cute') as in S10/L22/D135, adds novelty and a global pop appeal, appealing to the younger, cosmopolitan audiences. This creative manipulation of code-switching in Bergek's music not only amplifies its emotional and humorous tones but also bridges cultural and linguistic divides, making his songs relatable and accessible to a diverse listener base.

4.2.1 Affixation (Acehnese + Indonesian words)

A distinctive pattern emerging from the analysis is the use of affixation, which combines morphological elements from Acehnese and lexical items from Indonesian, shown in (10) to (12).

- (10) *Sebab cumèh bak meucanda.* (S2/L21/D29)
[Because of a misguided attempt at humor.]
- (11) *Cinta kau peu(r)dua.* (S7/L19/D81)
[You shared your love with another.]
- (12) *Boh haté meutubi.* (S10/L6/D124)
[My heart is pounding.]

Excerpts (10), (11), and (12) are the lyrics from the songs *Tan Meuhoe*, *Cinta Dabel*, and *Goyang Lagi*. These lyrics illustrate how Acehnese prefixes are attached to Indonesian root words, such as *meu* (Acehnese prefix) + *canda* (Indonesian word), *peu(r)* (Acehnese prefix) + *dua* (Indonesian word), and *meu* (Acehnese prefix) + *tubi* (Indonesian word), to generate hybrid expressions that are intelligible to speakers of both languages. This affixation pattern reflects a morphological blending, in which Acehnese bound morphemes are combined with Indonesian free morphemes to create a cohesive integration that facilitates understanding among bilingual or multilingual listeners. These combinations challenge the grammatical rules of either language yet remain intelligible to bilingual and multilingual speakers. It shows the flexible morphological integration that enriches the lyrics and reflects bilinguals' creative adaptability in crafting meaningful, accessible messages.

4.2.2 Phonemic fusion (predominantly Indonesian)

Another distinctive pattern observed in Bergek's lyrics was phonemic fusions, where words from different languages are blended at the phonemic level to create rhythmic, memorable expressions, as shown in (13) to (17).

- (13) *Kalo dikit-dikit adék ka hei abang.* (S5/L18/D66)
[If for every little thing, you keep calling me.]
- (14) *Adék jatuh dikit pun hei abang.* (S5/L19/D67)
[When you stumble, you also call me.]
- (15) *Dikit-dikit ka suet bajè.* (S10/L19/D133)
[Keep taking clothes off again and again.]

- (16) *Gitu-gitu ku ditinggalkan*. (S10/L15/D131)
[Just like that, I was left.]
- (17) *Manis imut kiut (cute) cuek beukah*. (S10/L22/D135)
[Sweet, adorable, cute, and incredibly handsome.]

Excerpts (13), (14), and (15) are the lyrics from the song *Dikit-Dikit*, while (16) and (17) are from *Goyang Lagi*. These excerpts exemplify phonemic fusion, enabling a fluid integration of elements from multiple languages and producing expressions that feel natural in conversation yet are enriched with multilingual flavor. The repeated use of the word *dikit* across various contexts demonstrates how rhythmic and phonemic fusion enhances memorability and audience engagement. Similarly, *manis imut kiut cuek beukah ganteng* fuses descriptive terms from Indonesian, English (phonetically adapted), and Acehese, creating a playful yet coherent expression that is easily understood by the audience.

4.2.3 Phonemic fusion (involving English)

A further notable pattern identified in Bergek's lyrics is phonemic fusion, which is the incorporation of English terms that are phonemically adapted to the Acehese linguistic context, as illustrated in (18).

- (18) *Peunteng tanyoe hepi (happy)*. (S6/L9/D68, S6/L20/D71)
[What matters is that we're happy.]

Excerpt (18) shows the fusion of English phonemes with the local language elements. In this line, the English word 'happy' is adapted into *hepi*, aligning with Acehese phonological patterns while retaining its original meaning. Such adaptation allows foreign terms to blend smoothly into the local speech.

All these unconventional patterns identified in Bergek's songs offer important perspectives on the complex nature of code-switching in multilingual contexts. They not only challenge existing theories to account for morphological and phonemic integration but also reveal the fluid and adaptive character of language use among bilingual and multilingual speakers. These findings advance the development of code-switching theories, particularly in creative and performance-based domains.

4.3 Distribution and Frequency of Each Code-switching Type in Bergek's Songs

Based on the research analysis, the distribution of various types of code-switching identified in each analyzed Bergek's song can be presented in Figure 1. It illustrates the distribution of various types of code-switching in each of the analyzed Bergek's songs. Intra-sentential switching emerges as the most prevalent code-switching type across the corpus, with the highest number of instances found in the song *Tan Meuhoe* (13 instances). Inter-sentential switching also appears frequently in the songs *Boh Haté 2* and *Curéh-Curéh*, with six instances, respectively. The 'Others' category are hybrid affixation and phonemic fusion in code-switching, which includes cases that do not fit neatly into the predefined types, generally appears infrequently, except in the songs *Dikit-Dikit* and *Goyang Lagi*, with five occurrences each. Tag-switching is the least frequent type identified, occurring sporadically across songs, with the highest count of two in the song *Gitu-Gitu*.

Figure 2 presents the total frequencies for each code-switching type across the corpus. It is evident that intra-sentential switching is the most dominant type, totaling 80 occurrences. The second most prevalent type is inter-sentential, with 36 occurrences in total. The 'Others' category has a relatively low frequency at 14, while tag-switching is the least common type identified, with only four instances. This pattern suggests that language alternation within sentences (intra-sentential) is preferred over the alternation between sentences (inter-sentential) or the other forms

of code-switching. The distribution emphasizes the prominence of intra-sentential code-switching in Bergek’s songs examined.

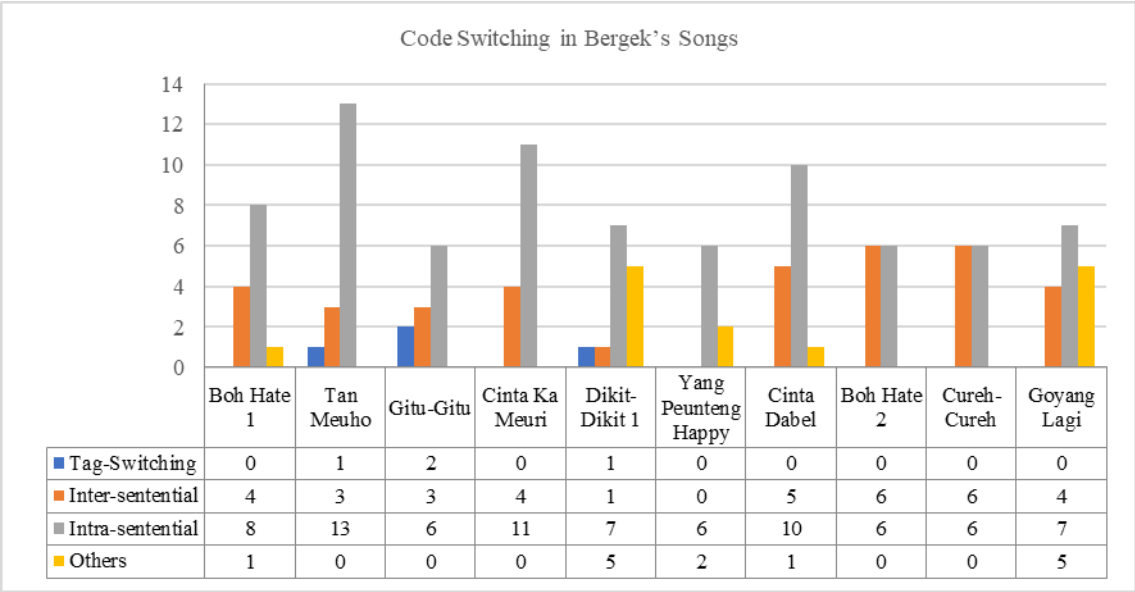


Figure 1. The distribution of code-switching in each of the analyzed Bergek’s songs.

Building on the detailed breakdown in Figure 1, Figure 2 provides a broader overview of the total frequencies for each type of code-switching across all songs.

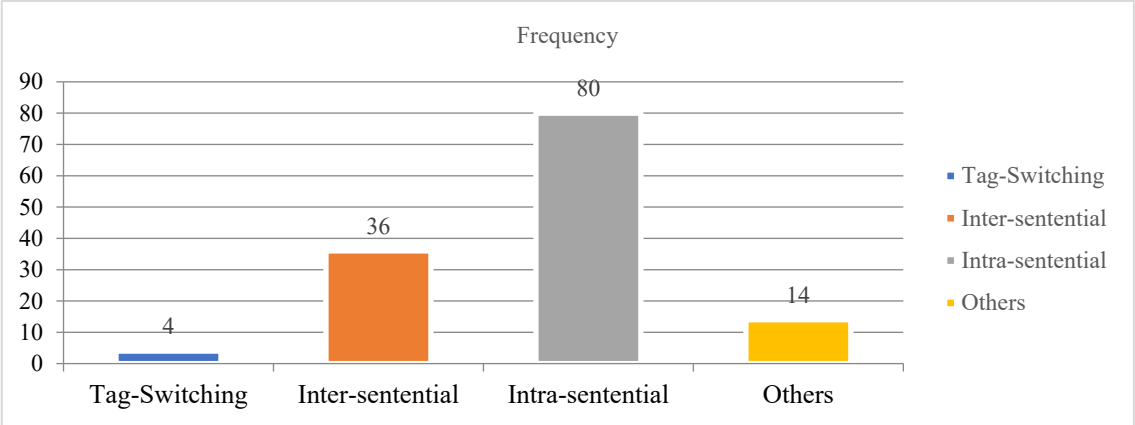


Figure 2. Overview of the total frequency of code-switching in each of the analyzed Bergek’s songs.

5. DISCUSSION

This research uncovers the types of code-switching employed in Bergek’s songs as well as their frequencies. The findings align with existing research on code-switching in multilingual musical contexts. The songs, which frequently alternate between Acehnese, Indonesian, and occasionally English, illustrate how code-switching can function as both a communicative strategy and a stylistic device. In line with [Poplack’s \(1980\)](#) classification, intra-sentential code-switching emerges as the most common type. This is consistent with more recent studies discovering that intra-sentential switching is the most prevalent type in contemporary popular music, in which English and indigenous or local languages blend impeccably to reflect bilingualism and engage diverse linguistic communities ([Masruddin et al., 2022](#); [Picone, 2024](#)).

In Bergek's works, intra-sentential switching plays a similar role, integrating multiple languages to enhance both the aesthetic and communicative dimensions of the lyrics. Recent studies confirmed that code-switching in songs serves dual purposes, namely asserting cultural identity through local languages and reaching broader audiences simultaneously via more widely understood languages, such as Indonesian and English (Masruddin et al., 2022; Picone, 2024). Bergek's frequent use of this switching type reflects his skill in moving across linguistic boundaries, producing a blend that appeals to both Acehese listeners and the wider Indonesian-speaking public. This observation supports Kadir's (2021) assertion that code-switching in Indonesian popular songs mirrors the multilingual nature of society and acts as a vehicle for linguistic innovation in contemporary music.

Inter-sentential switching, although less frequent, remains significant. In educational contexts, more recent studies have shown that this form of switching is often used to emphasize or clarify meanings (Callesano et al., 2025; Rosita et al., 2023). In Bergek's songs, it appears to serve a similar function, juxtaposing different cultural and emotional registers by alternating languages at sentence boundaries. For instance, shifting from Acehese to Indonesian within the same verse allows the artist to articulate intimate, culturally specific emotions in Acehese while expressing more universal sentiments in Indonesian.

Notably, Bergek's lyrics also exhibit patterns that extend beyond Poplack's (1980) framework, namely affixation and phonemic fusion. The use of these unique linguistic features suggests a more nuanced and creative use of language in musical settings. Affixation occurs when Acehese affixes attach to Indonesian base words, while phonemic fusion blends sounds from different languages into a single lexical unit. These are particularly innovative strategies that highlight the fluidity of language use in Bergek's lyrics. For example, *peunteng tanyoe hepi* integrates the English word 'happy' into an Acehese phonological context, resulting in *hepi*. This reflects the phonological rules of Acehese while maintaining recognizability for bilingual audiences. Such blending not only signals the influence of global culture but also enhances relatability for younger audiences familiar with English (Berliana & Anjarningsih, 2022). This linguistic creativity, where the boundaries between languages are blurred, is similar to what Jocelin and Tryana (2019) observed in their analysis of Korean pop music. In their study, the fusions of phonemes and morphemes across languages were used to maintain rhythm and tone while preserving meaning at the same time.

The presence of these novel patterns echoes more recent findings in multilingual music studies, which highlight how code-switching and translation can be deliberately manipulated to create complex lyrical compositions (Masruddin et al., 2022; Picone, 2024). In Bergek's case, the integration of phonemic elements from Acehese, Indonesian, and English reflects a dynamic linguistic environment where traditional grammatical rules are subverted in favor of artistic expression. This supports the notion that code-switching in music is not merely an indication of the artist's bilingualism but also a deliberate stylistic choice that enhances the emotional and cultural resonance of the songs.

From a sociocultural perspective, Bergek's code-switching practice also aligns with the patterns identified by Farisiyah and Zamzani (2018), where language choices in a multilingual environment reflect broader social dynamics, including language preservation efforts. The use of Acehese alongside Indonesian in Bergek's songs can be interpreted as an attempt to preserve regional linguistic identity while still engaging the national linguistic community. This mirrors Ulfa et al.'s (2018) finding that local languages and Indonesian often depend on the sociocultural context, in which local languages are often maintained in more intimate contexts, while Indonesian is preferred in more formal public domains. Through his blend of Acehese and Indonesian, Bergek bridges regional identity and broader audiences.

6. CONCLUSION

This study identified all types and occurrences of code-switching in Bergek's songs based on Poplack's (1980) framework, namely tag-switching (four occurrences), inter-sentential

switching (36 occurrences), and intra-sentential switching (80 occurrences). Intra-sentential switching emerges as the most frequent type, highlighting the complex integration of multiple languages within single sentences. Additional patterns not classified within Poplack's model, such as affixation and phonemic fusion, were also discovered (14 occurrences), revealing a creative and localized adaptation of multilingual expression.

These findings support the view that code-switching in music not only facilitates communication but also emphasizes cultural identity and develops innovation. Bergek's works exemplify the changing role of code-switching in contemporary Acehnese music, representing its significance as both an artistic and sociolinguistic phenomenon. Future research should expand the dataset by including lyrics from a wider range of Acehnese artists to provide a more representative understanding of code-switching patterns in the region's music.

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