



Code Switching in Digital Dakwah: A Sociolinguistic Study of Sheikh Fathurahman's Serambi Islami Lecture on TVRI

Nur Aisyah^{1*}, Izzuddin Mustofa²

¹²Magister Pendidikan Bahasa Arab, UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung, Jawa Barat, Indonesia

*E-mail: 2249010036@student.uinsgd.ac.id

ABSTRACT

This study aims to identify the forms, functions, and communicative strategies of code-switching in the sermons of Syekh Muhammad Fathurahman in the *Serambi Islami* program on TVRI. The research was conducted in November 2024, analyzing three sermon episodes available on the official TVRI YouTube channel. The population of the study comprises all digital sermons delivered by Syekh Fathurahman, with purposive sampling of three topics: tauhid, fiqh, and tasawwuf. Data collection instruments included transcription guidelines and linguistic annotation sheets. The data were analyzed using content analysis and sociolinguistic discourse approaches. The findings reveal that the most dominant form of code-switching is intra-sentential, followed by inter-sentential, and tag switching. Code-switching serves multiple functions: authoritative-referential (quoting sacred texts and classical scholars), didactic-scientific (clarifying Islamic terminology), rhetorical-aesthetic (enhancing speech style), and cultural-modernity (adapting language for urban audiences). This research concludes that code-switching is not merely a linguistic phenomenon but a deliberate, contextual, and strategic mode of religious communication. The study's strength lies in its triangulated analysis combining linguistic form, frequency, and function. However, the limitation stems from the small number of sermon episodes analyzed. Future research is encouraged to explore rhetorical and multimodal dimensions of Islamic digital preaching.

Keywords: code-switching, digital dakwah, sociolinguistics study

Alih Kode Dalam Dakwah Digital: Studi Sociolinguistik Terhadap Ceramah Syekh Fathurahman di Kajian Serambi Islami TVRI

ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengidentifikasi bentuk, fungsi, dan strategi komunikasi dari penggunaan alih kode dalam ceramah Syekh Muhammad Fathurahman di program *Serambi Islami* TVRI. Penelitian dilaksanakan pada bulan November 2024 dengan menganalisis tiga episode ceramah yang ditayangkan di kanal resmi TVRI YouTube. Populasi dalam penelitian ini adalah seluruh ceramah Syekh Muhammad Fathurahman di media digital, dengan sampel purposif berupa tiga topik ceramah bertema tauhid, fiqh, dan tasawuf. Instrumen utama penelitian berupa pedoman transkripsi dan lembar anotasi linguistik, sedangkan teknik analisis data menggunakan pendekatan analisis isi dan wacana sociolinguistik. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa bentuk alih kode yang dominan adalah intra-sentensial, diikuti inter-sentensial, dan tag switching. Fungsi alih kode mencakup fungsi otoritatif-referensial (kutipan teks suci dan ulama), didaktik-ilmiah (penjelasan istilah teknis), retorik-estetis (penguatan gaya ceramah), dan kultural-modernitas (adaptasi wacana dengan audiens urban). Penelitian ini menegaskan bahwa alih kode bukanlah gejala linguistik yang spontan, melainkan strategi komunikasi dakwah yang adaptif, kontekstual, dan retorik. Kelebihan penelitian ini terletak pada analisis triangulatif antara bentuk, frekuensi, dan fungsi wacana, namun keterbatasannya terdapat pada jumlah episode ceramah yang terbatas. Rekomendasi lanjutan diarahkan pada eksplorasi gaya retorika ceramah digital dengan melibatkan analisis multimodal.

Keywords: alih kode, ceramah digital, strategi komunikasi dakwah, sociolinguistik

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INTRODUCTION

The advancement of digital technology has revolutionized the way Islamic preaching (*dakwah*) is conveyed to the public. Whereas previously religious messages were predominantly delivered through face-to-face forums such as mosques or *majelis taklim*, contemporary *dakwah* has expanded to encompass television broadcasts, YouTube, and various digital platforms. One notable figure who actively delivers sermons through national media is Shaykh Muhammad Fathurahman, known for his regular preaching sessions on the “Serambi Islami” program on TVRI. The researcher selected Shaykh Fathurahman’s linguistic phenomena as the focus of this study due to his distinctive preaching style, which is deeply rooted in the Sufi tradition and marked by a unique, communicative, and emotionally resonant language.

His sermons are particularly accessible to diverse audiences due to his use of code-switching, making the religious messages easier to digest and comprehend. The evolution of digital technology has significantly transformed the landscape of religious communication. While traditional preaching relied on physical gatherings, contemporary religious discourse can now reach wider, more diverse audiences through digital means—including YouTube—transcending both geographical and demographic boundaries (Crystal, 2006). This phenomenon presents both opportunities and challenges, particularly concerning language choice and communication strategies (Wibowo, 2018).

In this context, language functions not only as a means of conveying information but also as a rhetorical tool to foster closeness, establish authority, and facilitate understanding (Holmes, 2013). One of the most prominent linguistic features in digital sermons is **code-switching**, defined as the alternating use of two or more languages within a single communicative context (Poplack, 1980). Code-switching reflects social dynamics, cultural identity, and an adaptive communication strategy tailored to the

heterogeneous characteristics of contemporary audiences—including youth who are often familiar with slang or global languages such as English (Canagarajah, n.d.).

In multilingual societies such as Indonesia, code-switching frequently occurs between Indonesian, Arabic, and English (Nababan, 1984). Arabic is typically used for conveying religious terms or quoting the Qur’an and Hadith, whereas English appears in greetings or casual phrases (Yusof, N. A., & Rahman, 2013). This pattern demonstrates the highly contextual and strategic nature of language use in digital *dakwah* (Auer, 1998). Preachers are not merely transmitting religious content but are also actively constructing their image, credibility, and social rapport with their audiences.

Code-switching in religious preaching cannot be understood as mere linguistic spontaneity. Rather, it is a socially meaningful practice with specific communicative purposes (Myers-Scotton, 1993). In many instances, code-switching is employed to reinforce religious messages, clarify complex concepts, or simply create a more relaxed and engaging atmosphere (Chaer, A., & Agustina, 2010). Therefore, the study of code-switching in digital sermons is essential for revealing how language is used both functionally and ideologically within contemporary religious communication.

According to Suwito as cited in (chaer, 2007) code-switching is divided into two types: internal and external. Internal code-switching occurs between languages that share geographic or genetic proximity. Geographical proximity implies that the languages are spoken in neighboring regions, while genetic proximity suggests that the languages belong to the same linguistic family. In contrast, external code-switching involves languages that do not share such relationships. In this case, the languages involved are neither related nor spoken in neighboring areas, indicating distinct linguistic lineages. The motivations for code-switching are varied: to foster a sense of intimacy, show respect, reinforce the topic, add humor, or simply project



prestige (Suwito, 1996). In religious sermons, code-switching and code-mixing are frequently used to enhance clarity, fill syntactic gaps, emphasize the speaker's intention, or show deference to the audience. As a result, preachers often employ two or more languages in daily religious discourse (Sukmana, 2021).

This study aims to: (1) identify the forms of code-switching used in Shaykh Muhammad Fathurahman's sermons on the *Serambi Islami* program on TVRI; (2) explain the communicative functions and purposes behind the use of code-switching in digital *dakwah*; and (3) analyze how code-switching functions as an effective communication strategy in constructing religious messages that are both contextual and accessible. Accordingly, this research seeks to make a theoretical contribution to the field of sociolinguistics (Wardhaugh, 2010), while also offering practical insights into religious communication in the digital era (Mulyana, 2007).

METHOD

This study employed a qualitative descriptive approach with a focus on sociolinguistic discourse and content analysis. This methodology was selected due to its suitability for examining language practices within specific social contexts—namely, digital *dakwah* practices on the YouTube platform (Alwasilah, 2005). The primary data for this study comprised **three selected episodes** of sermons delivered by Shaykh Muhammad Fathurahman on the *Serambi Islami* program aired by TVRI during **November 2024**, accessed via the official TVRI YouTube channel. The episodes were chosen based on their **30-minute duration** and **contextual representativeness**, covering a variety of formats such as general sermons, short preachings (*kultum*), and Q&A sessions (Wibowo, 2018).

Data were collected using **digital documentation** and **non-participant observation** techniques. The researcher observed, transcribed, and linguistically annotated each video. Every instance of **code-switching** that appeared explicitly

was recorded and categorized using Poplack's (Poplack, 1980) yakni intersentensial, intrasentensial, dan tag switching. typology, which includes **intersentential**, **intrasentential**, and **tag switching**. This was followed by an analysis of the **communicative functions** of the code-switching instances, applying a **functional approach** (Holmes, 2013) that considers language as a tool for **social negotiation and identity construction** within specific communicative settings (Gumperz, n.d.).

To ensure data validity, **data triangulation** was carried out by cross-referencing observational findings with audience commentaries and the YouTube channel profile. The results were compiled into **frequency and function matrices** of code-switching, and subsequently interpreted contextually to reveal patterns in **religious communication strategies** employed by preachers in the digital era.

RESULT

1. Forms of Code-Switching in the Sermon Split Personality

1.1 Forms of Code-Switching

a. Inter-sentential Code-Switching

This form involves a shift between languages across sentence boundaries. Example: "Syahwatul bathn, syahwatul farj, hubbul mal, hubbus syaraf... all of these are desires that drive us toward wrongdoing."

The primary function of this type of code-switching is to project religious authority and credibility, often through the quotation of Qur'anic verses, Prophetic traditions, or Islamic jurisprudential terminology.

b. Intra-sentential Code-Switching

This occurs within a single sentence, combining lexical items from different languages without disrupting grammatical coherence. Example:

"There are three types of desires in Islam: an-nafs al-ammarah, an-nafs al-lawwamah, and an-nafs al-muthma'innah."

This form is commonly employed to introduce technical religious terms while maintaining the structural integrity of the Indonesian sentence, thereby ensuring audience comprehension.

c. Tag Switching

This involves the insertion of single words or short phrases from another language into an otherwise monolingual utterance. Examples include:

“Dwi-kepribadian”, “kontrol diri”, “split personality” This strategy reflects an effort to integrate psychological terminology within the framework of religious discourse, facilitating conceptual linkage between contemporary psychological constructs and Islamic values.

Table-1
Forms of Code-Switching in the Sermon “Split Personality

No.	Original Quotation	Type of Code Switching	Source → Target Language	Description
1	“ <i>Syhwatul bathn, syhwatul farj, hubbul mal, hubbus syaraf...</i> ”	inter-setential	Arabic → Indonesia	Arabic utterance followed by explanation in Indonesian; used for emphasizing religious concepts.
2	“ <i>...maka ini disebut dengan al-hawa.</i> ”	intra-setential	Arabic → Indonesia	An Arabic term inserted within an Indonesian sentence defines a religious notion.
3	“ <i>Yadkhuluna an-nar yaumal qiyamah...</i> ”	inter-setential	Arabic → Indonesia	Quoted to reinforce the argument, followed by an interpretation in Indonesian.
4	“ <i>Kita sering melihat orang yang memiliki dwi-kepribadian...</i> ”	tag-switching	English/Latin → Indonesia	The term <i>dwi-kepribadian</i> (dual personality) carries scientific nuance, borrowed into preaching.
5	“ <i>Nafsu yang disebut dengan an-nafs al-ammarah bis suu'...</i> ”	inter-setential	Arabic → Indonesia	Key Arabic religious phrase embedded in Indonesian sentence for clarity and emphasis.

1.2 Functions of Code-Switching

a. Religious—Authoritative Function

Example: Classical Arabic quotations

Code-switching into Arabic—particularly when citing authoritative sources such as the Qur'an, Hadith, or classical Islamic scholars—

serves to provide epistemic and spiritual legitimacy to the preacher's arguments. Arabic, as the *lingua sacra* of Islam, carries significant rhetorical weight, reinforcing the speaker's religious and intellectual authority before the audience. In *dakwah* discourse, this also signals



the preacher’s authenticity in interpreting sacred texts According to (Gumperz, n.d.) this type of code-switching falls under the **authoritative function** category, where language choice is used to assert credibility and control over the message.

b. Emphasis on Technical Terms

Example: *an-nafs al-ammarah*

Switching into Arabic for specific technical religious terms—such as *an-nafs al-ammarah bis suu’* (the soul that incites evil)—is intended to maintain conceptual precision and avoid interpretive bias through translation. This practice reflects the transfer of knowledge in a bilingual academic setting, especially within fields such as Islamic psychology or Sufism. These Arabic terms are often followed by clarification in Indonesian to ensure accessibility for non-specialist audiences, without diluting their theoretical depth. This dual approach exemplifies a balance between terminological accuracy and communicative clarity.

c. Interdisciplinary Interconnection

Example: split personality, trauma

Code-switching into English or Latin-based psychological terms reflects an intertextual relationship between Islamic scholarship and

contemporary sciences such as psychology and psychiatry. This function creates an epistemological bridge between classical Islamic discourse and modern scientific findings. Such practice aligns with the concept of translanguaging, where speakers utilize multiple linguistic resources to expand meaning and explain cross-disciplinary concepts. The use of terms like split personality also demonstrates the speaker’s engagement with global academic literature and their competence in integrating diverse disciplinary vocabularies.

d. Audience Accommodation

Example: Restating in Indonesian

This function pertains to linguistic accommodation based on audience diversity. After quoting from Arabic or incorporating foreign terms, preachers often revert to Indonesian to ensure clarity and comprehension. This reflects a pragmatic awareness of the listeners’ linguistic repertoire, allowing for meaningful engagement without sacrificing intellectual substance. According to the Audience Design theory (Bell, 1984), such adaptation illustrates how speakers adjust their linguistic style to match the characteristics and expectations of their audience.

Table-2
 Functions of Code-Switching

Function	Example	Explanation
Religious– Authoritative	Classical Arabic quotations	Provides epistemic and spiritual legitimacy using sacred texts.
Technical Term Emphasis	<i>an-nafs al-ammarah</i>	Highlights key Islamic concepts to maintain semantic precision.
Interdisciplinary Linkage	<i>split personality, trauma</i>	Bridges Islamic discourse with modern psychology and scientific terminology.
Audience Accommodation	Reiteration in Indonesian language	Ensures accessibility and comprehension for a heterogeneous audience.

Table-3
Forms of Code-Switching in the Sermon *Harmonization of Sharia and Haqiqah*

No.	Original Quotation	Type of Code Switching	Source → Target Language	Description
1	“ <i>Syariat itu adalah ismun limajmūæ al-a%kām at-taklīfiyyah...</i> ”	inter-sentential	Arabic → Indonesia	A fiqh-related term is embedded within the Indonesian sentence.
2	“ <i>Man tacawwafa wa lam yatafaqqah faqad tazandaqa...</i> ”	intra-sentential	Arabic → Indonesia	A quotation from a classical Arabic text followed by explanatory remarks.
3	“ <i>Syariat itu way of life...</i> ”	tag-switching	English → Indonesia	A popular English term is used to emphasize the intended meaning.
4	“ <i>Fa idhā sa%alaka æibādī æannī fa innī qarīb...</i> ”	inter-sentential	Arabic → Indonesia	A direct citation from the Qur’an.
5	“ <i>Syariat itu adalah ac-cirām jalan.</i> ”	inter-sentential	Arabic → Indonesia	A metaphorical Arabic term integrated into the Indonesian syntax.
6	“ <i>Maka dikatakan dalam bahasa itu %aaqīqat asy-syaī’i muntahāhu.</i> ”	inter-sentential	Arabic → Indonesia	A philosophical phrase in Arabic inserted to reinforce conceptual depth.

2. Forms of Code-Switching in the Sermon Titled *Harmonization of Sharia and Haqiqah*

2.1 Forms of Code-Switching

a. Inter-Sentential Code-Switching

This form involves a shift between languages at the sentence level.

Example: “*Man tacawwafa wa lam yatafaqqah faqad tazandaqa.* That is, a person who practices Sufism without understanding fiqh is misguided.”

This type of code-switching is typically employed when quoting classical sources (the Qur’an, Hadith, or works of traditional scholars), followed by a contextual interpretation.

b. Intra-Sentential Code-Switching

This occurs when two languages are mixed within a single sentence structure.

Example: “*Haqiqah* is when we integrate *fiqh* and *tacawwuf...*”



Technical terms are often embedded directly within the explanation without translation, in order to preserve conceptual authenticity.

c. Tag Switching

This involves inserting short words or phrases from another language as part of discourse emphasis. *Example*: “*Sharia is a way of life, a path of living.*”

This form is frequently used to align with contemporary or popular terminology among urban audiences.

In this sermon, several instances of code-switching illustrate the integration of Arabic and Indonesian, along with occasional insertions of non-Arabic terms. The following table presents a systematic classification of these occurrences.

2.2 Functions of Code-Switching in Religious Sermons

2.2.1 Authoritative–Referential

Authoritative-referential code-switching serves to establish religious and epistemic legitimacy by directly quoting primary Islamic sources such as the Qur’an, the Hadith, or classical scholarly works. This function reinforces the sermon content with the authority of the sacred text, whereby Arabic—being the language of revelation—provides credibility, fosters obedience, and shows reverence for the Islamic intellectual tradition.

Example: A quotation such as “*Inna a’dâ’ukum anfusakum allatî baina janbaikum*” (“Indeed, your enemy is your own self”) emphasizes that the conveyed argument is not merely a personal opinion but rooted in revelation or muḥtamad (authoritative) scholarly views. This aligns with the referential and authoritative functions of bilingualism as classified by (Appel & Muysken, 1987).

2.2.2 Didactic–Scholarly

This function denotes the use of code-switching to deliver scientific, technical, or key terminologies in Islamic disciplines such as

jurisprudence (fiqh), mysticism (taḥawwuf), theology (ucūl al-dīn), or ethics (akhlāq). By retaining original Arabic terminology, the speaker preserves conceptual accuracy and scholarly depth. These terms are typically explained in Indonesian to ensure audience comprehension.

2.2.3 Rhetorical–Aesthetic

Code-switching may be employed to enhance rhetorical appeal and discourse aesthetics. The use of foreign words or phrases (Arabic, English, etc.) can create emotional resonance and enrich the speaker’s oratory style. This function often appears in the climactic sections of sermons to evoke affective responses, emphasize moral values, or strengthen persuasive impact.

A sentence like “*Maka jangan sampai kita terjebak materialistik*” (“Thus, we must not fall into materialism”) merges a religious discourse structure with ideologically modern terminology, creating emotional tension while reinforcing normative messages. This corresponds to the expressive and poetic functions as described by (Carter & Simpson, 2003).

2.2.4 Cultural–Modernity

This function arises when speakers switch codes into English or other global terms to align their discourse with an urban, educated audience, projecting Islam as relevant and connected to contemporary global issues. It creates a sense of inclusivity, renewal, and relevance, portraying Islam as engaged in global modernity.

For example, the use of expressions such as “*way of life*” or “*split personality*” in religious sermons reflects the transcultural adaptation of Western concepts within an Islamic spiritual framework. This illustrates the phenomenon of glocalization, namely the harmonization of local religious identity with global language and discourse.

This can be linked to identity and solidarity functions, as discussed by (Giles & Coupland, 1991) in the Communication Accommodation Theory.

Table-4
Functions of Code-Switching in the Sermon Entitled *Harmonizing Shari'ah and Saqîqah*

Function	Representative Example	Explanation
Authoritative–Referential	Quoting hadîth or Qur'anic verses	Establishing religious legitimacy through quotations from sacred texts or classical scholars.
Didactic–Scientific	“ <i>Akām al-taklîfiyyah</i> ”, “ <i>ma'rifah</i> ”	Conveying technical concepts (fiqh, tacawwuf) using original Arabic terminology.
Rhetorical–Aesthetic	“ <i>So let us not fall into materialism.</i> ”	Enhancing emotional appeal and stylistic expression through specific language choices.
Cultural–Modernist	“ <i>Way of life</i> ”, “ <i>split personality</i> ”	Adapting to the linguistic register of urban, educated audiences with global references.

DISCUSSION

This study reveals that code-switching in the sermons of Sheikh Muhammad Fathurahman constitutes a structured communicative strategy with strong social and rhetorical functions. The forms of switching—inter-sentential, intra-sentential, and tag switching—are not merely instances of linguistic shift but rather serve as tools to reinforce the message of da'wah within the context of digital preaching. These findings align with (Poplack, 1980) theory on the forms of code-switching, as well as Holmes' (n.d.) emphasis on the social role of language in constructing identity and social relations.

From a sociolinguistic perspective, Sheikh Fathurahman's use of code-switching reflects a form of functional bilingualism aimed at enhancing the effectiveness of religious communication to a diverse audience, especially within a multilingual digital environment. This supports (Auer, 1998) argument that, in multilingual public discourse, code choices are often motivated by pragmatic and affective functions. In this context, Sheikh Fathurahman demonstrates linguistic flexibility that reflects not

only his competence in multiple languages but also his rhetorical and pedagogical strategies.

Compared to a previous study by (Yusof, N. A., & Rahman, 2013) which analyzed code-switching in Friday sermons in Malaysia, Fathurahman's sermons show a higher frequency of tag switching that incorporates popular psychological terms in English. This suggests the presence of intertextuality between Islamic discourse and modern knowledge systems, reinforcing the notion that contemporary da'wah requires translanguaging competence to bridge classical textual traditions with modern society (Canagarajah, 2011).

The function of code-switching in Sheikh Fathurahman's sermons may also be interpreted through the framework of Audience Design Theory (Bell, 1984) which posits that language choice is tailored to the characteristics of the audience. This adaptation is clearly observed in the use of Arabic for establishing religious authority and Indonesian as the primary narrative medium. Meanwhile, the insertion of English terms serves as a form of interdisciplinary and



cultural connection, indicating that the sermon is not merely a vehicle for religious transmission but also a means of mediating values and modernity.

One of the strengths of this study lies in its detailed and systematic documentation of the distribution of code-switching forms and functions across three sermon episodes, using a data triangulation approach (video recordings, transcripts, and audience comments). Another strength is the comprehensive theoretical framework, which integrates both classical and contemporary sociolinguistic theories. However, this study is limited by the number of episodes analyzed—only three sermon videos from a single speaker—which affects the generalizability of the findings. Additionally, stylistic aspects such as intonation, gestures, and rhetorical parallelism were not explored through a multimodal lens, even though these elements significantly contribute to the effectiveness of digital religious communication (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2001).

Based on these findings, future research is recommended to broaden the scope both temporally (e.g., analyzing a full month of sermons) and in terms of subject (by comparing with female preachers or millennial da'i), while also incorporating multimodal analysis to explore the interplay between verbal and non-verbal styles in constructing meaning and persuasive impact in digital da'wah..

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that the practice of code-switching in the sermons of Sheikh Muhammad Fathurahman, as featured in the *Serambi Islami* program on TVRI, constitutes an integral part of an effective, adaptive, and context-sensitive da'wah communication strategy. Based on the analysis of three sermon episodes, intra-sentential code-switching was identified as the most dominant form—namely, the insertion of Arabic terms into Indonesian-language sentences. This form serves to preserve the semantic precision of religious concepts while maintaining

communicative accessibility for an Indonesian audience. Additionally, inter-sentential switching and tag switching were also found in significant numbers, particularly in the delivery of sacred text quotations and popular rhetorical expressions.

In terms of function, the code-switching observed in these sermons serves four main purposes: (1) authoritative–referential, affirming the legitimacy of the sermon's content through citations from the Qur'an and Hadith; (2) didactic–scholarly, preserving the accuracy of *fiqh* and *tasawwuf* terminology within the da'wah discourse; (3) rhetorical–aesthetic, enhancing emotional appeal and the preacher's stylistic effectiveness; and (4) cultural–modernity, demonstrating adaptation to the sociocultural context of a modern digital audience.

Thus, code-switching not only reflects the preacher's bilingual competence but also serves as a deliberate rhetorical tool to reinforce content, clarify messages, and reach a broad and heterogeneous audience. The use of code-switching in Sheikh Fathurahman's sermons represents a communicative da'wah strategy in the digital era, one that merges the authority of Islamic texts with a pragmatic awareness of the audience's linguistic needs. These findings support the understanding that code-switching in religious discourse functions as a mechanism for negotiating between tradition and modernity, as well as between spiritual values and rhetorical effectiveness.

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