**Journal of Management Practices, Humanities and Social Sciences**

Vol 10 Issue 5 pp. 817-828

https://doi.org/10.33152/jmphss-10.5.8



ORIGINAL CONTRIBUTION

# Language and Identity in Intercultural Digital Communication

Nadiia Senchylo-Tatlilioglu[1]*, Svitlana Nastenko[2], Olha Dekalo[3], Tetiana Kuzmenko[3], Liudmyla Usyk[4], Ganna Turchynova[5]

[1] Faculty of Literature, Ataturk University, Erzurum, Turkey

[2] Department of Romance Languages, Faculty of Romance Philology and Translation, Kyiv National Linguistic University, Kyiv, Ukraine

[3] Department of Germanic and Romance Languages, Philological Faculty of Educational Technologies, Kyiv National Linguistic University, Kyiv, Ukraine

[4] Department of Foreign Languages and International Communication, Faculty of Humanitarian Technologies, Cherkasy State Technological University, Cherkasy, Ukraine

[5] Faculty of Natural Sciences, Dragomanov Ukrainian State University, Kyiv, Ukraine

**Abstract**— In the current context of digital transformation in communication, intercultural interaction increasingly takes place in platform-mediated environments, where language practices, cultural codes, and algorithmic mechanisms interact within a single communicative space. This necessitates a rethinking of the processes of identity formation, which acquire a dynamic and hybrid character. The aim is to identify the key mechanisms for the formation of digital intercultural identity. The study answers the question of how translingual practices, multimodality, and algorithmic visibility affect the construction of identity in social media. Qualitative secondary analysis in the format of an interpretive meta-synthesis of empirical research published between 2022 and 2026 was applied. Thematic coding and comparative analysis of peer-reviewed scientific papers on sociolinguistics, digital media, translingualism, and multimodal discourse were used. It has been established that digital platforms structurally determine language practices; translingual strategies go beyond code-switching; multimodality transforms language into one component of semiotic complexes; algorithmic systems redefine language practices as tools for achieving visibility. Identity appears as a dynamic, contextually variable construct. The originality of the study lies in the integration of linguistic, semiotic, and technological dimensions of digital communication within a single analytical model. The concept of the ”zone of fluid identity” is proposed, which allows interpreting identity as a process formed under the influence of translingual practices, multimodality, and algorithmic mediation. Digital intercultural identity is the result of the interaction of language practices, platform architecture, and algorithmic mediation. It functions as a hybrid and fluid process that is constantly reconfigured within digital communication.

**Keywords**— Digital intercultural communication, Digital identity, Translanguaging, Multimodality, Social media

**Received:** 18 April 2026; **Accepted:** 29 August 2026; **Published:** 19 September 2026



*Corresponding Author: tvkurus1@ukr.net

© 2026 The Author(s). All rights reserved.

**Introduction**

In the current conditions of digital transformation of communication, the processes of the formation of linguistic and cultural identity are undergoing significant changes (Arshad et al., 2025; Yao, 2025). Social networks and other digital platforms create an environment in which interaction between users takes place amid the constant intersection of languages, cultures, and semiotic resources (Riaz et al., 2025; Zabrodskaja, 2025). In this context, identity ceases to be a stable characteristic. It appears as a dynamic, hybrid, and contextually determined construct (Boumaza & Baker, 2026; Lestari & Prakoso, 2026).

Accordingly, this problem is of particular importance in the context of intercultural digital communication. In this context, users simultaneously interact with different language systems, cultural codes, as well as platform norms. Such processes are accompanied by the active use of translingual practices and multimodal resources (textual, visual, and auditory), as shown in Instagram and TikTok content (Jofita & Haryanto, 2025; Mokodompit et al., 2026). There is also an adaptation to the specifics of digital platforms and their algorithmic mechanisms (Darvin, 2022a; Lestari & Prakoso, 2026). As a result, identity is formed not only through language choices, but also through interaction with the technological infrastructure of the digital environment.

Recent studies describe each of these processes, but mostly separately. Code-switching on Instagram, TikTok, and Twitter/X is well documented as a means of negotiating cultural, social, and personal identities (Daulay et al., 2024; Riaz et al., 2025; Zhang & Yang, 2025). Translanguaging research goes further. It treats the whole linguistic repertoire as a resource for identity negotiation under power relations and global-local dynamics (Boumaza & Baker, 2026; Lestari & Prakoso, 2026). Multimodal studies add that language choices are combined with visual, auditory, and symbolic resources (Mokodompit et al., 2026; Perez-Arredondo et al., 2025). The platform itself enters the analysis through design and sociotechnical structures (Darvin, 2022a, 2023). There are also indications that algorithmic mechanisms change the very logic of linguistic behavior in the digital environment (Darvin, 2023; Lestari & Prakoso, 2026). Cultural research on artificial intelligence raises questions of subjectivity and authorship (Sovhyra et al., 2026), and these questions concern identity when algorithms co-determine whose self-presentation is seen. Studies of intercultural digital communication connect cultural identity with power, language, and digital mediation, including in non-Western contexts (Yao, 2025; Zabrodskaja, 2025). Much of this evidence, however, comes from studies of a single platform or of young users, and it is spread across discourse analysis, multimodal studies, and digital sociolinguistics.

Despite the considerable interest in digital identity, modern research mostly focuses on its individual dimensions – linguistic, multimodal, or cultural. At the same time, the role of platform contextuality and algorithmic mediation in identity formation remains insufficiently integrated within a single theoretical approach. Such fragmentation significantly complicates a comprehensive understanding of identity construction processes in modern digital intercultural environments. The resulting problem is both theoretical and analytical. When language mixing is examined apart from the platform, it is difficult to see that language practices are formed not as universal digital phenomena, but as configurations mediated by platform architecture. If algorithmic visibility is treated only as background, its role in determining which identity positions become visible remains outside the analysis. The research problem of this article is therefore the absence of a framework that explains how these factors shape identity together. Such a framework is needed because digital intercultural identity is the result of the interaction of language practices, platform architecture, and algorithmic mediation.

The study has theoretical, conceptual, research, and practical significance. Theoretically, it contributes to the integration of linguistic, semiotic, and technological dimensions of digital communication, which are usually examined in different disciplines. Conceptually, it proposes the concept of the zone of fluid identity as a notion for the space within which linguistic, cultural, and technological resources. For research, the analytical categories of Tables I–IV and Fig. 1 can be used for the empirical verification of the proposed model and its application in different cultural and linguistic contexts. The practical significance concerns intercultural education and the cultural sphere. Educational digital storytelling projects already contribute to cross-cultural identity management and transformations during study abroad (Hudak et al., 2024). Vytkalov et al. (2023), in turn, consider the establishment of cultural industries in Ukraine through the implementation of foreign practices. In both areas, an integrated view can help to plan how language choices, multimodal formats, and platform algorithms shape the presentation of cultural identity to other audiences.

To address this problem, there is a need to develop an integrative conceptual model that combines the key dimensions of digital communication. The purpose of this article is to identify the key mechanisms of identity formation in intercultural digital communication and, on this basis, to substantiate such a model that considers digital intercultural identity as the result of the interaction of three basic components – translingual practices, multimodal performativity, and algorithmic mediation – in combination with contextual factors, in particular platform contextuality and social hybridization. The research question follows from the gap identified above: how do translingual practices, multimodality and algorithmic visibility affect the construction of identity in social media when they act together? In answering it, the study addresses the stated problem and combines linguistic, semiotic, and technological dimensions within a single analytical framework.

The scientific novelty of the study lies in the proposal of a multi-level model for the formation of digital identity, in which linguistic, semiotic, and technological aspects are integrated, as well as in the introduction of the concept of ”zone of fluid identity” as a result of the interaction of these factors. This approach allows us to rethink identity as a process that is formed in the context of platform-mediated communication and constantly changes depending on the context. The concept is related to the third space (Bhabha, 1994), superdiversity (Blommaert & Rampton,

2011) and the translanguaging space (Wei, 2011), but it does not coincide with them. Each of these constructs captures hybridity, diversity, or translingual creativity, yet none of them treats platform architecture and algorithmic ranking as active participants in identity construction. In this zone, identity is co-produced by the user and the platform. This is the new theoretical insight of the concept: it treats algorithmic mediation as a constitutive component of identity construction, not as an external background factor. The Literature Review and Finding 5 develop this distinction in more detail.

Thus, the proposed theoretical framework is aimed at overcoming the fragmentation of modern research and creating a holistic approach to identity analysis in the context of digital intercultural interaction.

**Literature Review**

The literature on intercultural communication in the digital space demonstrates a significant evolution from traditional models to complex hybrid practices. Here, language becomes a key resource for constructing and aligning identity. Classical theories of social identity (Tajfel & Turner, 1979) and the performative aspects of identity (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005; Butler, 2006) were adapted to digital contexts. Users actively perform multiple ”selves” through language choices.

Current research highlights the role of digital platforms as a trans-digital space. In this space, online and offline practices intersect. Boumaza and Baker (2026) in a multi-scalar analysis of translingual ELF users, show how users negotiate cultural identities through dynamic translingual and transcultural practices, blurring the boundaries between the global and the local. Zabrodskaja (2025) calls for de-Westernizing intercultural communication. This study emphasizes power, language, identity, and digital mediation in non-Western contexts, including multilingualism and platform politics.

Digital media are radically transforming language practices. This is especially true for code switching and translinguing. García and Wei (2014) introduced the concept of translanguaging as an integrative practice that transcends individual languages. It allows users to mobilize a full linguistic repertoire to construct meaning and identity. In the digital environment, this is becoming the norm. Lestari and Prakoso (2026) in a critical discourse analysis of digital multilingual practices on social networks, demonstrate how code-switching and multimodal resources serve identity negotiation, shaped by power relations and global-local dynamics. Similarly, Mokodompit et al. (2026) in corpus-driven multimodal linguistic landscape analysis of TikTok, Instagram, and WhatsApp, show how adolescents use language variations to signal in-group membership, cultural alignment, and humor.

Empirical evidence from various studies confirms the prevalence of these practices. Studies of code-switching on Instagram and TikTok (Daulay et al., 2024; Zhang & Yang, 2025) record it as an important tool for the negotiation of cultural, social, and personal identities in Gen Z. It has elements of creativity and performative acts. Perez-Arredondo et al. (2025) apply a multimodal discursive approach to translanguaging and identity in Chilean social networks. It emphasizes contextual functions. Arshad et al. (2025) investigate the impact of social media on language use and identity formation. They note informality, multimodality and code-switching as characteristic features that contribute to hybrid identities among young people.

Some attention is also paid to diaspora and migrant communities. Darvin (2022a, 2022b, 2023), in a series of papers on TikTok and translingual practices, illustrates how digital platforms enable agentic construction of the self in transnational contexts. Hudak et al. (2024) show how EDS projects contribute to cross-cultural identity management and transformations during study abroad. Xu (2022) explores the impact of social media on identity development for Chinese international students. The study demonstrates how discussions on Twitter can strengthen national identity.

Statistics reported in various studies also highlight the scale of the phenomenon. Huang et al. (2024) in a survey of 23 countries, found that the median of 91% of respondents considers proficiency in the country’s main language to be key to national identity. However, in the digital space, these boundaries are blurred. DataReportal (2026) reports that there are more than 5.79 billion active social media users. This fact, of course, creates unprecedented conditions for intercultural contacts.

Research also highlights important challenges. Yao (2025) analyzes the impact of digital media applications on intercultural communication. The influence on the formation of cultural identity is also studied. Khan (2024) discusses the impact of English as a global lingua franca on intercultural communication. The study highlights the risks of cultural assimilation. Duna and Garabet (2026) focus on youth culture. They examined how digital platforms, musical subcultures, and symbolic expression can foster new forms of belonging.

Thus, the analyzed literature reflects the transformational nature of digital communication. Within its framework, identity formation occurs as a result of the interaction of translingual practices and multimodal resources, as well as algorithmic mediation. Studies demonstrate that it is these processes that simultaneously contribute to the development of hybrid forms of identity. They also support linguistic diversity. At the same time, they generate risks. They can be associated with platform asymmetry, algorithmic biases, as well as trends towards cultural unification. Contextual factors, in particular platform contextuality and social hybridization, play an important role in this, which determine the conditions for the representation and visibility of identities in the digital environment.

Several established constructs already describe identity as hybrid and in-between, and they are the closest conceptual neighbours of the model proposed in this article. Bhabha (1994) conceptualized the ”third space” as a liminal site of enunciation in which cultural meanings are translated and renegotiated, so that hybridity emerges from the encounter of cultures rather than from their simple sum. Blommaert and

Rampton (2011) used the notion of superdiversity to show that migration and new communication technologies have made the links between origin, language, and group membership far less predictable; this requires the analysis of repertoires, styles, and indexical meanings instead of bounded languages. Wei (2011) described the ”translanguaging space” as a space that is both created by translanguaging and used for it, where multilingual speakers bring together their personal histories, experiences and full semiotic repertoires to perform identities (see also García & Wei, 2014). In digital settings, Perez-Arredondo et al. (2025) show how Instagram influencers create such translanguaging spaces and treat social media as a potential third space for minoritized communities. These frameworks explain hybridity, diversity, and translingual creativity well. However, they were developed mainly for postcolonial, migration, and multilingual community contexts, and they do not treat platform architecture and algorithmic ranking as active participants in identity construction. This limitation is the point of departure for the concept proposed in this article.

Despite a significant amount of research, modern scientific discourse remains fragmented. It should be noted that the literature does not sufficiently present integrated approaches that combine linguistic, semiotic, and technological dimensions within a single analytical framework. In addition, attention is limited to non-Western contexts, as well as to dynamic, longitudinal aspects of identity formation as a ”fluid” phenomenon in the context of constant switching of codes and platforms. It is this theoretical and methodological gap that determines the formulation of the scientific problem of this study.

**Methodological Foundations of the Study and Criteria for Selecting the Empirical Corpus**

The study is based on qualitative secondary analysis. It is implemented in the format of an interpretive meta-synthesis of contemporary empirical works (2022-2026) in the field of digital intercultural communication, social media sociolinguistics, translingualism, and multimodal discourse. This approach does not involve the collection of primary data, but rather the systematic generalization of the results of existing research. The goal is to identify recurring patterns of interaction between language practices, platform affordances, and identity construction processes. The methodological feasibility of such a design is due to the fragmentation of the research field. Empirical results are distributed among different disciplinary traditions (discourse analysis, multimodal studies, digital sociolinguistics). This makes it difficult to integrate them without a generalized analytical framework.

The selection of literature was carried out according to clear inclusion and exclusion criteria. The analysis included peer-reviewed scientific publications indexed in international databases (including Scopus and Web of Science, as well as relevant works from Google Scholar in the case of new studies) empirically exploring digital language practices, translinguing, code switching, multimodality, and identity in social networks. The time frame covered 2022-2026 with partial involvement of classical theoretical works as a conceptual framework. Non-professional sources, journalistic materials, and works without empirical or methodological transparency were excluded. The analytical procedure was based on thematic coding and inter-research comparison, which made it possible to identify recurring analytical categories and form a generalized model of digital intercultural identity.

The final analytical corpus comprised 14 publications that were coded and compared in the synthesis: 13 peer-reviewed journal articles and one bachelor’s thesis (Oktaviana, 2024). The thesis was retained as a supplementary source because it contains case-based data on translanguaging among Gen Z social media users that complement the peer-reviewed studies. The full list of the included studies, with their source type, platform or context, focus, and the findings they inform, is given in Appendix A (Table A1). Other works cited in the Introduction and the Literature Review (Hudak et al., 2024; Perez-Arredondo et al., 2025; Sovhyra et al., 2026; Vytkalov et al., 2023; Xu, 2022; Zabrodskaja, 2025), as well as survey and statistical reports (DataReportal, 2026; Huang et al., 2024), a preprint (Khan, 2024) and a conference abstract (Duna & Garabet, 2026), frame the research field and were not part of the coded corpus. Classical theoretical works (Bhabha, 1994; Blommaert & Rampton, 2011; Bucholtz & Hall, 2005; Butler, 2006; García & Wei, 2014; Tajfel & Turner, 1979; Wei, 2011) served as the conceptual framework.

The tables in the Results and Discussion section combine two levels of synthesis, following the distinction between descriptive and analytical themes in thematic synthesis (Thomas & Harden, 2008). Columns that describe platform affordances, language strategies, and linguistic or semiotic practices summarize patterns reported in the cited empirical studies. Columns that describe communicative mechanisms or functions, identification positioning, and theoretical interpretation present the authors’ interpretive synthesis, that is, analytical categories that go beyond the findings of individual studies. A note under each table specifies these levels. Where a row reflects an interpretive extension without direct support in the reviewed corpus, it is marked with the symbol † and explained in the note.

**Results and Discussion**

This section presents the results of a secondary synthetic analysis of contemporary corpus, discourse-analytical, and multimodal studies of digital intercultural communication (2022-2026). The analysis covers the language practices of social media users in the context of the interaction of English-speaking and other language communities on the Twitter/X, Instagram and TikTok platforms. Data synthesis is carried out through thematic generalization of empirical findings of previous studies with a focus on the relationship between platform characteristics, language practices, and identity construction processes. The results are organized in the form of five key analytical findings, which reflect the multi-level interaction between technological, linguistic and socio-identity dimensions of digital communication.

**Finding 1. Platforms structurally shape language practices of digital communication**

Secondary analysis of modern corpus and content-analytical research (Daulay et al., 2024; Jofita & Haryanto, 2025; Riaz et al., 2025; Zhang & Yang, 2025) indicates that language practices in the digital environment are systemically dependent on platform architecture. Digital platforms not only provide communication infrastructure, but also set the structural conditions for the organization of broadcasting, determining the available semiotic resources, formats of interaction, and acceptable forms of language mixing.

Summarizing the available empirical studies suggests that different platforms direct users' language behavior into distinctive structural models that correspond to their technical and semiotic characteristics (Table I). In particular, the degree of text-centricity or multimodality of the platform directly affects the types of code switching and translingual practices.

Table I

Platform sociotechnical affordances and configuration of language practices in digital intercultural communication

| Platform | Sociotechnical affordances (structural conditions) | Communicative mechanisms | Linguistic and semiotic practices |
|---|---|---|---|
| Twitter/X | Limited message length; streaming public communication; contextual collapse of audiences; high intertextuality | Compression of messages; high rate of interaction; competition for attention; public addressability | Dense intra-sentence code-switching; hybrid multilingual designs; stylistic compression of language code |
| Instagram | Visually dominant architecture; aestheticized self-presentation; hashtag-indexing; asynchronous interaction through comments | Curatorial self-presentation; audience segmentation through hashtags; visual-linguistic coordination | Intersentence code-switching; tag-based switching; stylistically labeled language inserts in captions |
| TikTok | Algorithmic virality; audio-visual integration; remix ecosystem; trending content dynamics | Algorithmic content reinforcement; audio-centered interaction; participation in trends; format replication | Multimodal translingualism; audio-synchronized language practices; trend-oriented language mixing |

Source: authors' analytical model built on a thematic synthesis of empirical studies of digital language practices in social media (Daulay et al., 2024; Jofita & Haryanto, 2025; Mokodompit et al., 2026; Oktaviana, 2024; Riaz et al., 2025; Zhang & Yang, 2025)

Note. The columns "Sociotechnical affordances" and "Linguistic and semiotic practices" summarize patterns reported in the cited studies; the column "Communicative mechanisms" presents the authors' interpretive synthesis.

Benchmarking demonstrates a clear structural differentiation of language practices according to platform affordances. For example, Twitter/X, as a text-centric environment with limited message space, stimulates dense forms of intra-sentence code-switching. Instagram, through its combination of visuals and textual elements and the use of hashtags, supports more fragmented forms of language switching. This includes tag-switching and inter-sentential structures. TikTok, in turn, through the integration of video, audio, and text, creates conditions for multimodal translingual mixing. Here, language resources function as part of a single semiotic complex.

Thus, the generalization of empirical research allows us to consider digital platforms as different types of sociotechnical environments that structurally organize language action in different ways. The revealed differences between text-centric, visually-oriented and multimodal platforms indicate that language practices are formed not as universal digital phenomena, but as context-determined configurations mediated by platform architecture. In this sense, affordances act as an analytical tool to explain the variability of linguistic mixing and translingual strategies in digital intercultural communication.

**Finding 2. Language practices in the digital environment go beyond code switching and acquire a translingual logic of identity construction**

Based on the identified platform conditionality of language practices (Finding 1), the results of the secondary analysis show that digital communication is not limited to the phenomenon of code-switching as the main form of language mixing. Instead, there is a transition to a broader translingual mode of using language resources, in which the boundaries between languages become blurred and language repertoires function as a single integrated semiotic system (Boumaza & Baker, 2026; García & Wei, 2014).

Empirical research (Bojic et al., 2026; Darvin, 2022a, 2022b; Mokodompit et al., 2026; Oktaviana, 2024) notes that in the context of social media, users rarely adhere to "pure" language systems. Instead, they combine the lexical, grammatical, and discursive resources of different languages within the same communicative act. They integrate them with visual, auditory, and symbolic elements. This practice goes beyond the classical understanding of code switching as switching between discrete language systems. It corresponds to the logic of translanguaging as a single language repertoire.

In this context, language practices acquire a clear identification function. Translingual strategies are used by users to construct hybrid, contextually variable, and multiple identities. They are simultaneously aimed at local and global audiences. In particular, digital platforms allow users to dynamically switch more than just language codes. Here, it is possible to switch social positions, styles of self-presentation, and cultural framework of interpretation.

Table II
Translingual practices as repertoire strategies and their identification positioning in digital communication

| Translingual characteristics | Repertoire linguistic and semiotic practices | Identification positioning |
|---|---|---|
| Integration of language repertoires without clear boundaries | Advanced mixing of language codes within one statement; hybrid multilingual designs | Constructing a hybrid language identity |
| Repertoire multimodality | A combination of text, emojis, video, audio, and visual symbols as a single semiotic complex | Performative self-presentation and digital identity performance |
| Contextual repertoire switching | Adaptive shift of language and stylistic resources depending on the audience and platform | Situational and multiple identical positions |
| Discursive repertoire flexibility | Changing registers, cultural codes and stylistic strategies in different social contexts | Negotiation between local and global identities |

Source: authors' conceptualization developed from thematic synthesis and interpretive benchmarking (Boumaza & Baker, 2026; Darvin, 2022a, 2022b, 2023; García & Wei, 2014; Mokodompit et al., 2026; Oktaviana, 2024)

Note. The column "Repertoire linguistic and semiotic practices" summarizes practices reported in the cited studies; the columns "Translingual characteristics" and "Identification positioning" present the authors' interpretive categories.

Comparative analysis shows (Table II) that translingual practices perform not only a communicative function. They act as a key mechanism for constructing identity in the digital environment. Unlike code-switching as switching between language systems, translinguing involves the integrated use of the entire language repertoire. This allows users to flexibly construct social roles and cultural positions.

Thus, the results show that digital intercultural communication is characterized by a transition from discrete language switches to complex translanguaging repertoire practices. Here, language functions as a dynamic system of identity resources, rather than as a stable normative structure.

**Finding 3. Multimodality transforms language practices into a complex semiotic system of identity construction**

The results of a secondary analysis of modern multimodal and discourse-oriented studies of digital platforms (Darvin, 2022a, 2022b, 2023; Jofita & Haryanto, 2025; Mokodompit et al., 2026; Oktaviana, 2024) show that in the context of social media, language does not function in isolation, but as part of an integrated semiotic complex. In digital environments with a high level of multimodality, language practices closely interact with visual, auditory, spatial, and symbolic resources, forming a single system of meaning.

Empirical evidence demonstrates that platforms such as TikTok and Instagram structurally contribute to the formation of multimodal forms of communication, in which text elements (captions, subtitles, and speech inserts) function in interaction with video sequences, music, montage, emojis, and digital symbols (Table III). In this environment, linguistic switches and translingual practices lose their status as autonomous linguistic phenomena and become part of broader performative compositions of content.

Table III
Multimodal resources and their role in the construction of digital identity

| Multimodal resource | Related linguistic and semiotic practices | Identification functions |
|---|---|---|
| Integrated audiovisual-text formats (TikTok, Reels, Shorts) | Translingual and hybrid language practices; synchronization of speech with video sequence and sound; remix practices | Performative self-presentation; narrative identity construction; "performance identity" |
| Emojis, memes, and digital symbolic systems | Paralinguistic coding; semiotic extension of speech; ironic/parody code mixing | Emotional and cultural identification; group affiliation; indexation of social positions |
| Algorithmically controlled music and video structures (TikTok sound trends) | Synchronization of speech elements with musical rhythm; trendy speech repetition; format replication | Algorithmically reinforced identity; participation in cultural trends; "visibility-based identity" |
| Visual-text compositions (Instagram posts/captions) | Code switching in signatures; stylistic variability; hashtag-indexing; aestheticized speech | Contextual adaptation of identity; curatorial self-presentation; social positionality |
| Short-format videos with subtitles and language inserts | Multimodal translanguaging; duplication of meanings through text + sound; contextual switching | Multiple and situational identities; contextual flexibility of self-positioning |

Source: authors' analytical model developed on the basis of thematic synthesis and comparative interpretive analysis of empirical studies of multimodal and translingual digital communication (Darvin, 2022a, 2022b, 2023; Jofita & Haryanto, 2025; Mokodompit et al., 2026; Oktaviana, 2024)

Note. The column "Related linguistic and semiotic practices" summarizes practices reported in the cited studies; the column "Identification functions" presents the authors' interpretive synthesis.

Comparative analysis shows that multimodality significantly changes the functional nature of language practices in digital communication. In text-centric environments, language acts as the main carrier of meaning. Whereas in multimodal ecosystems, it is only one of the components of a broader semiotic composition. Here, the meaning is formed through the interaction of different channels of expression.

In such conditions, identity ceases to be a purely linguistic construct. It takes on the character of a performative multimodal process. Users construct digital ”episodes of identity”. In them, language choices are synchronized with visual images, sound elements, as well as algorithmically structured formats for presenting content. This allows for the simultaneous representation of multiple cultural positions and the adaptation of self-presentation to different audiences on digital platforms.

Thus, the results indicate that multimodality is a key mechanism for expanding language practices, which transforms them from linguistic phenomena into complex semiotic systems for constructing digital identity.

**Finding 4. Algorithmic visibility redefines language practices as attention management and social relevance technologies**

Secondary analysis of current research on digital platforms and social media (Arshad et al., 2025; Darvin, 2023; Lestari & Prakoso, 2026; Yao, 2025) demonstrates that algorithmic mechanisms not only mediate the distribution of content, but also fundamentally change the very logic of linguistic behavior in the digital environment. In the platform economy of attention, language practices no longer perform only a communicative function. They are increasingly becoming tools to increase the visibility of content and attract the attention of the audience. They also provide algorithmic relevance in the digital environment.

The reviewed studies suggest that users take into account the features of algorithms when choosing language tools (Table IV). This manifests itself in the strategic use of language mixing, brevity, repetitive semantic structures, multilingual keywords, and tag-based formulations. This may make it possible to increase the likelihood of content getting into recommendation feeds. Thus, language choice is increasingly subordinated not only to communicative or identification goals. It also obeys the logic of visibility optimization.

Table IV
Algorithmic visibility and transformation of language practices in digital communication

| Algorithmic engine | Language strategies | Communicative function | Theoretical interpretation |
|---|---|---|---|
| Recommendation systems (TikTok, Instagram Reels) | Adaptive language mixing; short multilingual formats | Optimization of algorithmic content distribution | Language as a tool for algorithmic visibility |
| Engagement metrics (likes, comments, shares) | Stylistic intensification; recurring language patterns | Increase the interactive response of the audience | Language as a resource of attention |
| Hashtag and search algorithms | Tag-switching; multilingual key constructs | Expanding audience reach | Language as an indexing mechanism |
| Personalized content feeds | Adaptation of the language repertoire to different audiences | Contextualization of self-presentation | Language as a tool for contextualizing identity |
| Moderation and filtering algorithms† | Strategic coding; euphemization; common language practices | Avoiding sanctions and reducing visibility | Language as a strategy for algorithmic adaptation |

Source: authors’ interpretive synthesis based on the studies analysed in Finding 4 (Arshad et al., 2025; Darvin, 2023; Lestari & Prakoso, 2026; Yao, 2025)

Note. The column ”Language strategies” generalizes practices described in the cited studies; the columns ”Communicative function” and ”Theoretical interpretation” present the authors’ interpretive synthesis. † The row on moderation and filtering algorithms is an interpretive extension proposed by the authors: strategic coding and euphemization as responses to moderation are not directly reported in the cited studies and require empirical verification.

In previous findings, language was considered as a socially or structurally determined practice. In this finding, it appears as an algorithmically controlled resource. It operates under conditions of constant competition for attention. In this context, code-switching and translingual strategies take on a new functional dimension. They are not only used to label identity, but also as tools to increase reach, virality, and platform ”visibility.”

Comparative analysis suggests that the algorithmic logic of platforms forms a new type of linguistic rationality. Within its framework, language practices are subject not only to social norms or communicative intentions, but also to the requirements of machine-controlled visibility. In this mode, speech functions as attention control technology. Here, each language choice is potentially evaluated because of its ability to generate interaction as well as increase the position of content in the platform’s information hierarchy.

Thus, the results show that algorithmic visibility does not just affect language practices. It significantly redefines them. Language becomes a tool for strategic self-positioning in the context of platform competition for attention. Meanwhile, language hybridizations (including code-switching and translanguaging) take on the function of optimization mechanisms for digital presence.

**Finding 5. Digital intercultural identity is formed as a dynamic space of hybrid and contextually variable positionings**

Generalization of the results of the previous Finding (1–4) allows us to move from the description of individual linguistic and platform mechanisms to a more integrative level of analysis. The analysis considers how identity is formed in digital intercultural communication. The analysis of the research shows that identity is not sustainable in social media. It is constantly changing and adapting to different contexts. This process is influenced by language practices, platform technologies, and sociocultural factors.

Research results show that digital platforms enable users to represent different aspects of their identity. How they position themselves depends on the communication situation, the characteristics of the audience, and the specifics of the platform. In this environment, users do not ”have” one identity. They performatively construct it through language choices, translingual practices, multimodal resources, and algorithmically mediated visibility.

The key result is that identity in digital intercultural communication takes on the character of a hybrid space (”zone of fluid identity”). Within this space, local and global, national and transnational, linguistic and non-linguistic resources are constantly interacting and reformatting. Under such conditions, the boundaries between ”own” and ”other” language, between ”local” and ”global” cultural codes, become contextually variable and situationally dependent.

The zone of fluid identity is related to the adjacent constructs discussed in the Literature Review, but it does not coincide with any of them. Unlike the third space described by Bhabha (1994), it is not a liminal space between two cultures defined by colonial or national difference; it is a recurrent configuration of positionings that emerges in everyday platform use and depends on technical conditions as well as on cultural encounter. Unlike superdiversity (Blommaert & Rampton, 2011), which characterizes the sociolinguistic conditions of a society or population, the zone of fluid identity operates at the level of the individual communicative act and captures how this act is adjusted to a particular platform and audience. Unlike the translanguaging space (García & Wei, 2014; Wei, 2011), which speakers create through their own repertoire choices, the zone of fluid identity is co-produced by the user and the platform: affordances, recommendation systems, and moderation rules co-determine which linguistic and multimodal choices become visible and are rewarded. The distinctive contribution of the concept, therefore, lies in treating algorithmic mediation as a constitutive component of identity construction, alongside translingual practices and multimodal performativity, rather than as an external background factor.

It is especially important that identity in the digital environment is formed not only through social interaction, but also through the technological mediation of platforms. Algorithmic visibility, multimodality, and translingual practices combine to create conditions in which identity is the result of simultaneous human, language, and platform interactions (Fig. 1).

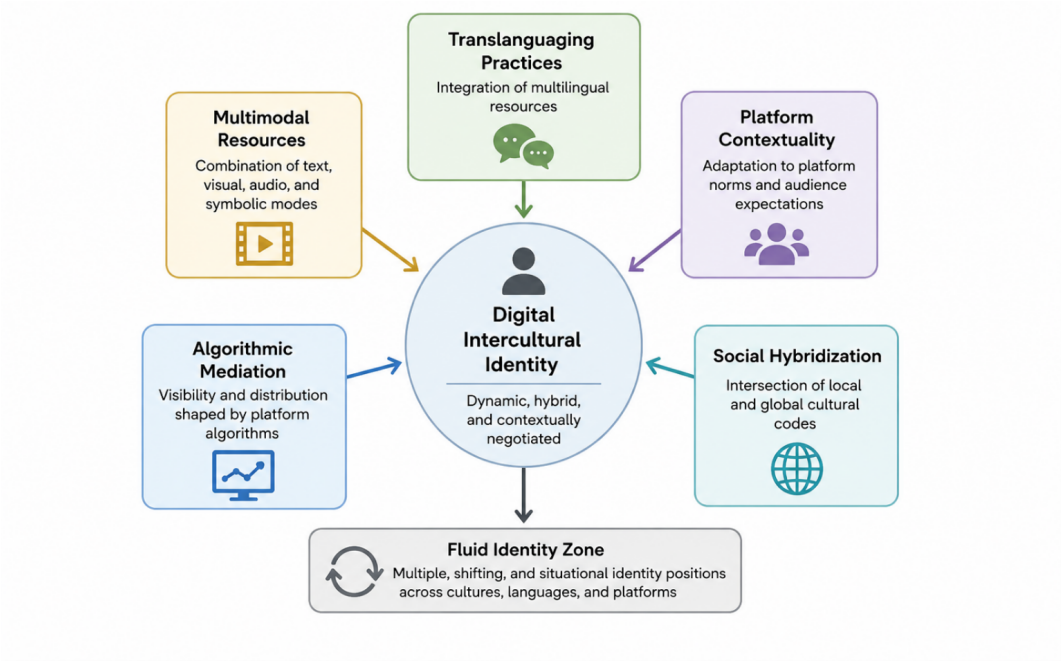



Fig. 1 *Conceptual framework of digital intercultural identity construction*
*Source: built by the authors*

Comparative analysis allows us to conclude that digital identity in intercultural communication cannot be reduced to linguistic or cultural affiliation. It is formed as a result of the interaction of multi-level processes – from translingual practices and multimodal performativity to

algorithmic visibility and platform architecture.

Thus, identity in the digital environment appears as a dynamic, contextually variable and multidimensional construct that is constantly reconfigured in the process of intercultural interaction and platform-mediated communication.

**Conclusions and Prospects for Further Research**

The study confirmed that digital intercultural identity is formed as a complex, multi-layered, and dynamic construct. It arises at the intersection of translingual practices, multimodal communication, and algorithmic mediation. A secondary analysis of current empirical research (2022-2026) established that language practices in social media no longer function as autonomous linguistic phenomena. They are integrated into broader semiotic and technological systems, qualitatively determined by platform affordances and algorithmic visibility logic.

The generalization of the results in the form of five analytical findings showed that digital platforms structurally model the speech behavior of users. This facilitates the transition from code-switching to translingual repertoire practices and reinforces the role of multimodality as a key mechanism for constructing meaning and identity. At the same time, algorithmic systems radically redefine language strategies. They turn them into tools for optimizing visibility, engagement, and social relevance.

The results obtained allow us to conceptualize digital identity as a ”zone of fluid identity”, within which there is a constant reconfiguration of linguistic, cultural, and technological resources. Unlike the concepts of third space, superdiversity, and translanguaging space, this concept foregrounds algorithmic mediation and platform architecture as constitutive factors of identity construction. This approach deepens the understanding of the interaction between language and identity in the context of platform-mediated communication and opens up prospects for further research, in particular the empirical verification of the proposed model and its application in different cultural and linguistic contexts.

**Acknowledgements**

The authors would like to thank the editor and the anonymous reviewers for their constructive comments and valuable suggestions, which helped improve the quality and clarity of this manuscript.

**Conflict of interest statement**

The authors declare no conflicts of interest that could have influenced the research, authorship, or publication of this article.

**References**


Arshad, S., Shabir, Z., Aslam, S., & Farid, S. (2025). The impact of social media on language use and identity: A sociolinguistic analysis. *Journal of Applied Linguistics and TESOL*, *8*(2), 871–883. https://jalt.com.pk/index.php/jalt/article/view/703

Bhabha, H. K. (1994). *The location of culture*. Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203820551

Blommaert, J., & Rampton, B. (2011). Language and superdiversity. *Diversities*, *13*(2), 1–21.

Bojic, L., Prodanovic, N., Samala, A. D., Cabarkapa, M., & Vukovic, V. (2026). Maintaining Journalistic Integrity in the Digital Age: A Comprehensive NLP Framework for Evaluating Online News. *International Journal for Quality Research*, *20*(1), 201–218. https://doi.org/10.24874/IJQR20.01-13

Boumaza, D., & Baker, W. (2026). Negotiating Cultural Identity in the Trans-Digital Space: A Multi-Scalar Analysis of Translingual ELF Users' Intercultural Communication. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, *47*(1), 107–126. https://doi.org/10.1080/01434632.2025.2551127

Bucholtz, M., & Hall, K. (2005). Identity and interaction: A sociocultural linguistic approach. *Discourse Studies*, *7*(4–5), 585–614. https://doi.org/10.1177/1461445605054407

Butler, J. (2006). *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (1st). Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203824979

Darvin, R. (2022a). Design, Resistance and the Performance of Identity on TikTok. *Discourse, Context & Media*, *46*, 100591. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.dcm.2022.100591

Darvin, R. (2022b). TikTok and the Translingual Practices of Filipino Domestic Workers in Hong Kong. *Discourse, Context & Media*, *50*, 100655. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.dcm.2022.100655

Darvin, R. (2023). Sociotechnical structures, materialist semiotics, and online language learning. *Language Learning & Technology*, *27*(2), 28–45. https://doi.org/10.64152/10125/73502

DataReportal. (2026). *Global social media statistics*. https://datareportal.com/social-media-users

Daulay, S. H., Nst, A. H., Ningsih, F. R., Berutu, H., Irham, N. R., & Mahmudah, R. (2024). Code Switching in the Social Media Era: A Linguistic Analysis of Instagram and TikTok Users. *Humanitatis: Journal of Language and Literature*, *10*(2), 373–384. https://doi.org/10.30812/humanitatis.v10i2.3837

Duna, R., & Garabet, B. (2026). Language, identity, and digital communication in youth culture. *Abstract Book of the 12th International Academic Conference on Humanities and Social Sciences*. https://www.dpublication.com/abstract-of-12th-iachss/language-identity-and-digital-communication-in-youth-culture/

García, O., & Wei, L. (2014). *Translanguaging: Language, bilingualism and education*. Palgrave Macmillan. https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137385765

Huang, C., Clancy, L., & Austin, S. (2024, January). *Language and traditions are considered central to national identity: Publics around the world divided on birthplace and religion as requirements for national belonging*. Pew Research Center. https://www.pewresearch.org/global/2024/01/18/language-and-traditions-are-considered-central-to-national-identity/

Hudak, K., Davidson, R., & Winters, E. (2024). Educational digital storytelling and intercultural identity management: A case study for short-term study abroad experiential learning pedagogies. *International Journal for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning*, *18*(2), Article 7. https://doi.org/10.20429/ijsotl.2024.180207

Jofita, K., & Haryanto, S. (2025). Functions and Patterns of Code-Switching in Social Media: A Study on Audreyfannyau's Instagram Captions. *Acuity: Journal of English Language Pedagogy, Literature and Culture*, *11*(2). https://doi.org/10.35974/acuity.v11i2.4248

Khan, M. (2024). *Cross-cultural communication and identity in the age of english as a global lingua franca* [EasyChair Preprints]. https://easychair.org/publications/preprint/hhHC

Lestari, P. I., & Prakoso, I. B. (2026). Digital multilingual practices and identity negotiation on social media from a critical discourse perspective. *LIER: Language Inquiry & Exploration Review*, *3*(1), 1–13. https://doi.org/10.71435/688512

Mokodompit, I., Basalama, N., Miolo, S. T., & Muziatun. (2026). Teen Digital Language and Identity Formation: A Corpus-Driven Multimodal Linguistic Landscape Analysis on Social Media Platforms. *Language, Technology, and Social Media*, *4*(1), 104–126. https://doi.org/10.70211/ltsm.3026-7196.321

Oktaviana, A. A. (2024). *The Use of Translanguaging in Social Media: A Case Study of Gen Z* [Bachelor's thesis]. Universitas Mataram. https://eprints.unram.ac.id/44833/

Perez-Arredondo, C., Avello, D., & Cárcamo-Ulloa, L. (2025). A Multimodal Discursive Approach to Translanguaging and Identity in Chilean Social Media. *Discourse, Context & Media*, *68*, 100951. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.dcm.2025.100951

Riaz, N., Sukhera, F. A., & Ahmed, I. (2025). Code-Switching Patterns in Multilingual Social Media Communities: A Comparative Analysis of Twitter, Instagram, and TikTok. *Social Sciences & Humanity Research Review*, *3*(4). https://doi.org/10.63468/

Sovhyra, T., Vytkalov, S., Volynets, V., Dykhnych, L., & Brailko, I. (2026). Golem & AI: Technologically Advanced Monsters. *Culture Unbound*, *18*(2). https://doi.org/10.3384/cu.6265

Tajfel, H., & Turner, J. C. (1979). An integrative theory of intergroup conflict. In W. G. Austin & S. Worchel (Eds.), *The social psychology of intergroup relations* (pp. 33–47). Brooks/Cole. https://www.scirp.org/reference/ReferencesPapers?ReferenceID=757561

Thomas, J., & Harden, A. (2008). Methods for the thematic synthesis of qualitative research in systematic reviews. *BMC Medical Research Methodology*, *8*, 45. https://doi.org/10.1186/1471-2288-8-45

Vytkalov, S., Petrova, I., Skoryk, A., Goncharova, O., Vytkalov, V., & Antipina, I. (2023). Establishment of Cultural Industries in Ukraine: Implementation of Foreign Practices. *Journal of Law and Sustainable Development*, *11*(3), e813. https://doi.org/10.55908/sdgs.v11i3.813

Wei, L. (2011). Moment Analysis and Translanguaging Space: Discursive Construction of Identities by Multilingual Chinese Youth in Britain. *Journal of Pragmatics*, *43*(5), 1222–1235. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pragma.2010.07.035

Xu, X. (2022). Exploring the Impacts of Social Media Usage on a Chinese International Student's Identity Development. *Journal of Linguistics and Communication Studies*, *1*(1), 27–33. https://doi.org/10.56397/JLCS.2022.11.05

Yao, M. (2025). The study of the effects of digital media applications in cross-cultural communication in the construction of cultural identity. *Acta Psychologica*, *258*, 105247. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.actpsy.2025.105247

Zabrodskaja, A. (2025). De-Westernizing Intercultural Communication: Power, Language, Identity, and Digital Mediation Across Contexts. *Journalism and Media*, *6*(3), 127. https://doi.org/10.3390/journalmedia6030127

Zhang, K., & Yang, L. (2025). Analysis of Code-Switching Phenomena in the Evolution of Social Media Language—Take the Mixed Use of Chinese and English by Gen Z as an Example. *Journal of Humanities, Arts and Social Science*, *9*(3), 642–647. https://doi.org/10.26855/jhass.2025.03.035

## Appendix A. Studies Included in the Analytical Corpus

***Table A1.*** Studies included in the interpretive meta-synthesis (*N* = 14)

| No. | Study | Source type | Platform / context | Focus of the study | Used in |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Arshad et al. (2025) | Journal article | Social media; young users | Impact of social media on language use and identity | LR; F4; T4 |
| 2 | Bojic et al. (2026) | Journal article | Online news | NLP framework for evaluating online news | F2 |
| 3 | Boumaza and Baker (2026) | Journal article | Trans-digital space; translingual ELF users | Negotiation of cultural identity in intercultural communication | LR; F2; T2 |
| 4 | Darvin (2022a) | Journal article | TikTok | Design, resistance and performance of identity | LR; F2; F3; T2; T3 |
| 5 | Darvin (2022b) | Journal article | TikTok; Filipino domestic workers in Hong Kong | Translingual practices | LR; F2; F3; T2; T3 |
| 6 | Darvin (2023) | Journal article | Online language learning | Sociotechnical structures and materialist semiotics | LR; F3; F4; T2; T3; T4 |
| 7 | Daulay et al. (2024) | Journal article | Instagram; TikTok | Code-switching in social media | LR; F1; T1 |
| 8 | Jofita and Haryanto (2025) | Journal article | Instagram captions | Functions and patterns of code-switching | F1; F3; T1; T3 |
| 9 | Lestari and Prakoso (2026) | Journal article | Social media | Multilingual practices and identity negotiation (critical discourse perspective) | LR; F4; T4 |
| 10 | Mokodompit et al. (2026) | Journal article | TikTok; Instagram; WhatsApp; teenagers | Teen digital language and identity (corpus-driven multimodal linguistic landscape analysis) | LR; F2; F3; T1–T3 |
| 11 | Oktaviana (2024) | Bachelor's thesis (supplementary) | Social media; Gen Z | Translanguaging (case study) | F2; F3; T1–T3 |
| 12 | Riaz et al. (2025) | Journal article | Twitter; Instagram; TikTok | Comparative analysis of code-switching patterns | F1; T1 |
| 13 | Yao (2025) | Journal article | Digital media applications | Cross-cultural communication and construction of cultural identity | LR; F4; T4 |
| 14 | Zhang and Yang (2025) | Journal article | Social media; Chinese-English mixing by Gen Z | Code-switching in social media language | LR; F1; T1 |

Note. LR – Literature Review; F1–F5 – Findings 1–5; T1–T4 – Tables I–IV. Finding 5 and Fig. 1 integrate the results of Findings 1–4 and therefore draw on the whole corpus.