

Code-Switching in the Instagram Captions of Male and Female Perfume Ads by *C&F Store*

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the types of code-switching used in Instagram captions of male and female perfume advertisements by C&F Store. It focuses on identifying the types used and any differences or similarities between the two. The theory by Hoffmann (2014) divides code-switching into inter-sentential, intra-sentential, and emblematic switching. A total of 40 captions of 20 male and 20 female were manually collected and analyzed using a qualitative approach. Inter-sentential switching appeared 40 times and intra-sentential 39 times; emblematic switching did not appear. No major differences were found between male and female captions, likely due to a shared marketing style or template. This study aims to help readers understand code-switching in Indonesian social media advertising and encourage future research on platforms like TikTok or YouTube.

Keywords: Advertisement, C&F Store, Code-Switching, Gender, Instagram Captions,

INTRODUCTION

This study discusses code-switching used by C&F store in their Instagram captions. Code-switching is a linguistic phenomenon that happens among bilingual or multilingual people. Hoffmann (2014) defines it as the alternating use of two or more languages in a single conversation, sentence, or phrase. It is often used when people communicate across languages. People who speak two languages are known as bilinguals (Cambridge University Press, n.d.), and they often switch languages during conversation.

Code-switching can also happen in non-verbal contexts like social media, such as in C&F Store. Established in 1994, C&F is a beauty and fragrance retailer with around 90 global stores (Needl.co, n.d.), offering products from brands like Giorgio Armani, YSL, Gucci, and more. The writer noticed that their Instagram captions often use two different languages, which connects with the topic of code-switching.

Instagram has been popular since 2010 (Big 3 Media, 2025). It allows users to share photos and videos and engage with others. Now, it is also used to promote products. Business accounts on Instagram can boost their posts and use tools to increase their reach.

As people around the world access social media, English becomes the bridge language. English is the main language of social media among non-English speakers and is often seen as more attractive than Indonesian (Murray & Christison in Harjanto, 2021). Social media trends, especially among youth, make bilingual communication more natural.

C&F's captions are interesting because they often mix languages. For example: "Rediscover youthful skin with Sampar Age Antidote line. Dirancang khusus untuk melawan tanda-tanda penuaan..." This helps reach a wider audience and makes the message relatable for bilingual users (Hoffmann, 1991).

Captions for both male and female perfume products often use code-switching. This is worth analyzing to see how language is used differently based on gender. Akter, Mohiuddin, & Joher (2024, p. 105) stated that code-switching is used to fill lexical gaps, catch attention, improve understanding, and persuade customers.

C&F Store was chosen because of its creative use of more than one language in promoting products. This topic also hasn't been widely discussed in Indonesian contexts. Based on observations in KATAKITA, there haven't been studies analyzing code-switching between male and female ads specifically.

Studies found in KATAKITA include Uzziela (2024), Hiandaka (2022), and Catherine & Floris (2023), but most of them don't focus on Instagram ads or gender comparison. In fact, many Indonesian brands still use monolingual ads. For example: "Si 15% yang lawan kulit kusam mu!" from Scarlett Whitening shows they use only Bahasa.

Forty recent captions were selected for this study: 20 for male perfumes and 20 for female perfumes. This was done to provide balanced data and is also supported by Marshall et al. (2013), who suggest that around 30–50 data samples are effective for qualitative analysis.

Only bilingual sentences were analyzed. Sentences that used only one language or contained call-to-action parts at the end were excluded, as they were not relevant to this study. This helped focus specifically on the code-switching parts.

The analysis also explores whether gender affects the way code-switching is used. Pepper (2022) noted that males prefer straightforward product information, while females often look for more context and detail. This inspired the writer to see if code-switching also follows these gender preferences. This study focuses on analyzing the types of code-switching used. According to Hoffmann (2014), there are three types: intra-sentential (within a sentence), inter-sentential (between sentences), and emblematic or tag-switching (short phrases or exclamations).

The study aims to analyze the types of code-switching used in male and female perfume captions by C&F Store and explore the similarities and differences between the two. This includes identifying what types appear most often in each category. The purpose of the study was to find out which types of code-switching were used in C&F's Instagram captions for both male and female perfumes and whether there are differences in how they are used.

The writer hopes this study helps readers better understand how code-switching is used in social media advertising, especially in Indonesia's beauty and fragrance industry. It might also encourage future research in other social media platforms or online ad formats.

This research focuses on sociolinguistics and the use of code-switching in Instagram captions. The writer used 40 captions from 2023–2025 and only analyzed sentences that contain more than one language. Final CTA sentences were excluded as they did not relate to the main topic.

To support readers' understanding, some key terms are defined. Code-switching is "the alternation of two languages within a single discourse, sentence or constituent" (Poplack, 1980, p. 583). A sentence is "a group of words... that expresses a thought" (Cambridge Dictionary, n.d.).

This study is divided into five chapters. The first covers the background, purpose, and significance. Chapter Two reviews related theories and studies. Chapter Three discusses the methodology. Chapter Four presents findings. Chapter Five concludes the research and gives suggestions.

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Theories and previous studies were used to support the analysis. The main theory is Hoffmann's (2014) types of code-switching. Other supporting studies are from Mainake (2021) and Seddik, Ramakrishna, & Chelah (2024), who explored similar issues in different contexts.

Hoffmann (2014) defines code-switching as switching between languages in a conversation. Grosjean (2010) also says bilinguals often alternate linguistic varieties when speaking. These definitions support the writer's goal to identify switching types in ads. Hoffmann (2014) categorizes code-switching into three types: inter-sentential, intra-sentential, and emblematic/tag-switching. Inter-sentential happens between full sentences, such as switching from German to English and back again.

Intra-sentential happens within one sentence, such as when a speaker says, "Va chercher Marc and bribe him avec un chocolat chaud with cream on top." The language switches multiple times in the same sentence, showing intra-sentential switching.

Emblematic switching involves tags or short expressions that reflect a bilingual identity. Poplack (1980, as cited in Hoffmann, 2014) gave examples like "Ay!" or "prou," which are used emotionally or as short switches in speech. Gender and language have long been linked. Studies by Coates (2004), Lakoff (1975), and Holmes (2000) show women often use more polite and collaborative language, while men are more direct (Cameron, 1998). Though general, these findings help explain how gender may affect language use.

METHOD

This study used a qualitative approach to analyze code-switching types in C&F Store's Instagram perfume captions. Based on Creswell and Creswell (2017), qualitative research focuses on text and context, which fits the study's aim to understand language use in advertising. Three characteristics of qualitative research applied here: (1) the writer acted as the key instrument by manually collecting and analyzing 20 male and 20 female captions, (2) the writer used deductive data analysis to identify patterns and match them with theory, and (3) conclusions were drawn by rechecking and categorizing the findings based on Hoffmann's types of code-switching.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter presents the findings and analysis of code-switching types found in C&F Store's Instagram captions for male and female perfume advertisements. The analysis was based on Hoffmann's (2014) theory, which classifies code-switching into inter-sentential, intra-sentential, and emblematic switching. From a total of 40 captions—20 for male perfumes and 20 for female perfumes—the writer found 20 instances of inter-sentential switching and 19 instances of intra-sentential switching in both categories. Emblematic or tag switching did not appear at all, likely because C&F uses a formal promotional tone, while emblematic switching is usually found in casual or expressive language contexts.

In the male perfume captions, inter-sentential switching was found in all 20 advertisements. This type of switching occurred between full sentences, often starting with an English sentence followed by an explanation in Indonesian. For example, captions would begin with attention-grabbing phrases in English like "This is the new era of masculine elegance!" before continuing with descriptions in Bahasa. These

switches help create contrast and clarity in promotional messages, making them more dynamic and appealing to bilingual audiences.

Intra-sentential switching in male captions was found in 19 out of 20 advertisements. This type of switching occurs within a single sentence, often inserting English fragrance terms like “bold,” “Blood Mandarin,” or “Cinnamon” into Indonesian sentence structures. The use of English keywords in Indonesian text reflects a modern, stylish tone often found in beauty advertisements. Only one male caption did not use intra-sentential switching.

Similarly, in female perfume captions, inter-sentential switching appeared 20 times. Each of the 20 captions included at least one full sentence in English, such as “Classy & elegant with Lancôme’s Idole Perfume,” followed by a full Indonesian sentence. This type of switching was consistent with the male ads, suggesting a unified promotional strategy by C&F across both product lines.

Intra-sentential switching in female captions was also found 19 times, just like in the male captions. English words like “sweet,” “vanilla,” “pear,” and “fresh lavender” were inserted into Indonesian sentences to describe fragrance notes. This style of switching not only adds a modern touch but also aligns with how bilingual consumers naturally mix languages in everyday communication. One female caption did not contain intra-sentential switching, mirroring the male ad results.

After comparing both male and female captions, the writer concluded that there were no major differences in the types or frequency of code-switching used. Both used inter-sentential and intra-sentential switching in almost equal amounts, and the writing style appeared consistent. This suggests that the same marketing team or strategy template was used across both product categories, leading to similar sentence patterns and word choices regardless of the target gender.

Interestingly, even in male perfume captions, C&F used words typically associated with more feminine expressions, such as “sensual,” “harmoni,” and “hangat.” This shows that the style of language may lean more toward a general promotional tone rather than strictly gender-based communication. Overall, code-switching in C&F Store’s Instagram ads seems to be used as a strategy to make the language more attractive and accessible to a bilingual audience, rather than to highlight gender-specific messaging

CONCLUSION

The main point of this study is to analyze the sentences containing code-switching in C&F Store’s Instagram perfume advertisements and to identify whether there are any differences or similarities in the types of code-switching between male and female captions. The writer used Hoffmann’s (2014) theory of code-switching to analyze the types found in the data.

Emblematic code-switching was not found in either male or female captions, which may be due to the formal nature of advertisements. Emblematic switching usually appears in informal or conversational contexts, while C&F’s captions aim to present their products in a polished and persuasive manner.

The study also found no significant difference in how code-switching was used between male and female captions. Both used inter-sentential and intra-sentential switching in similar amounts. This shows that C&F’s promotional strategy targets a broader audience without strictly separating the messaging by gender. For example, a male viewer could be interested in a female perfume ad to buy it as a gift, and vice versa.

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Overall, this study has provided a clear overview of how code-switching is used in C&F Store's Instagram captions, using only Indonesian and English. The writer hopes this research helps readers understand the types of code-switching and how they may be used to attract and engage a bilingual audience. Future research may explore gender and code-switching in other media platforms like TikTok or YouTube, where both verbal and nonverbal elements could offer deeper insights.

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