

# Multilingual Communication Practices As A Representation Of The Social Identity Of Central Java-West Java Border Communities

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## ABSTRACT

Central Java–West Java border communities live in a multicultural environment where Javanese and Sundanese cultures meet, forming distinctive multilingual communication practices. The use of Javanese, Sundanese, and Indonesian in everyday life functions not only as a means of communication, but also as a representation of the community's social identity. This study aims to analyze the multilingual communication practices of Central Java–West Java border communities and to explain the role of language in representing community social identity. The study uses a descriptive qualitative approach with a literature review method supported by social-contextual reflection. Data were obtained from various scientific sources discussing multilingual communication, social identity, intercultural communication, bilingualism, and multilingualism. The analysis was carried out through the stages of data reduction, theme categorization, meaning interpretation, and conclusion drawing. The findings show that border communities flexibly use Javanese, Sundanese, and Indonesian according to the context of interaction, social relations, and communication needs. The practices of code switching and code mixing are important parts of daily communication as forms of social and cultural adaptation. In addition, language use functions as a symbol of cultural identity, a means of identity negotiation, and a mechanism of social integration in a multicultural environment. The findings affirm that multilingual communication is a representation of dynamic social identity and reflects the ability of border communities to maintain social harmony amid cultural diversity.

**Keywords:** multilingual communication, social identity, border communities, intercultural communication, multilingualism.



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## INTRODUCTION

Language is a fundamental part of social life because it functions not only as a means of communication, but also as a symbol of the social and cultural identity of a community group. From the perspective of social communication, language plays an important role in building interpersonal relationships, creating social closeness, and representing cultural values that exist within society (Littlejohn & Foss, 2011). The use of language in everyday life often reflects how individuals position themselves within particular social and cultural structures. Therefore, language cannot be separated from the continuously developing social dynamics of society (Chaer & Agustina, 2010).

Indonesia is known as a multicultural country with a very high level of linguistic diversity. The Language Development and Fostering Agency notes that Indonesia has more than 700 regional languages spread across various regions, making it one of the countries with the greatest linguistic diversity in the

world (Kemendikbud, 2023). This condition forms bilingual and even multilingual communities, particularly in areas that serve as meeting points for different cultures and ethnic groups. Such linguistic diversity not only demonstrates the richness of national culture, but also creates distinctive communication dynamics in the life of multicultural communities (Siregar, 2022).

One region that clearly reflects the dynamics of multilingual communication is the border area between Central Java and West Java. This area is a social space where Javanese and Sundanese cultures meet in the daily life of the community. Continuous social interaction has made people accustomed to using more than one language, such as Javanese, Sundanese, and Indonesian, in everyday communication activities. The use of these languages can be found in family settings, traditional markets, education, social organizations, and the community's economic activities (Nababan, 1993).

The phenomenon of using several languages within one social environment indicates the presence of multilingual communication practices that develop naturally among border communities. In the context of social communication, people do not use language merely to convey information; they also adjust their language choices according to interlocutors, age, social status, communication situations, and the cultural norms that apply in society (Fishman, 1972). This condition gives rise to the practices of code switching and code mixing in the daily conversations of multilingual communities (Holmes, 2013).

In recent years, studies on multilingualism and social identity have developed quite significantly. Kusumaningputri's (2023) research explains that multilingual communication practices in Indonesian society are not only related to linguistic ability, but also constitute a form of social identity negotiation in multilingual social interactions. The use of several languages is often influenced by individuals' need to build social acceptance and demonstrate the identity of a particular group. These findings show that language has strong social and cultural dimensions in the life of modern society.

In addition, research by Duek and Nilsberth (2022) shows that the practice of using various languages in social life can shape the construction of the social identity of multilingual communities. Language is understood not only as a tool of communication, but also as a medium for representing cultural identity and social closeness in multicultural communities. These findings indicate that the use of a particular language can represent an individual's social position within their community group.

The phenomenon of multilingual communication also shows a close relationship between language and the social identity of a community. According to Tajfel (1981), social identity is formed through an individual's involvement in certain social groups, which then influences their communicative behavior. In the context of border communities, the use of a particular language often represents cultural identity, social solidarity, and a form of community adaptation to a multicultural environment. Javanese, for example, is used as a symbol of respect and interpersonal closeness, while Sundanese is used as a form of acceptance of local culture and the identity of the local community. Meanwhile, Indonesian is used as a lingua franca in formal communication and intercultural interaction (Kridalaksana, 2008).

Multilingual communication practices among border communities also reflect the process of identity negotiation in social life. Wahyuni et al. (2023) explain that multilingual communities tend to use certain languages to adjust to their social environment while simultaneously maintaining their cultural identity. Language then becomes a social symbol that indicates closeness, solidarity, and even acceptance of particular cultural groups.

The community's ability to use more than one language also demonstrates a process of cultural adaptation in a multicultural environment. Lafiana and Azeharie (2023) show that language adjustment is carried out by communities as a communication strategy to create harmonious social relations amid cultural differences. The flexibility of language use in border communities indicates cultural tolerance and social openness among multilingual communities (Liliweri, 2011).

On the other hand, the development of communication technology and digital media also influences the communication practices of multilingual communities. Young people in border communities today tend to use Indonesian more actively in digital communication, especially on social media and in educational settings. Nevertheless, regional languages continue to be used as forms of cultural identity and symbols of social closeness within local communities (Akfan, 2025). This condition shows that multilingual communication practices develop along with the social changes of modern society.

Quantitatively, Statistics Indonesia recorded that the population of Central Java Province in 2024 reached approximately 37 million people, while West Java reached more than 49 million people (BPS, 2024). The large population and high mobility of people in the border areas of the two provinces cause very intense social and cultural interactions, including the use of language in everyday life. This condition makes the Central Java–West Java border area a social space rich in multilingual communication practices and intercultural interaction.

Previous studies on multilingual communication have generally discussed linguistic aspects, such as code switching and code mixing in community conversations and digital communication (Rahmawati, 2022; Hidayat, 2022). Meanwhile, studies that specifically discuss multilingual communication practices as representations of the social identity of border communities remain relatively limited, particularly in the context of communities along the Central Java and West Java border. In fact, border communities have unique sociocultural characteristics because they exist in a space where two major cultures interact and form distinctive communication patterns in community life.

Based on these conditions, this research article aims to analyze the multilingual communication practices of Central Java–West Java border communities and to explain how language use represents the social identity of these communities in everyday interactions. This article is expected to contribute to the development of communication, sociolinguistic, and cultural studies, especially those related to the communication dynamics of multilingual communities in Indonesia's cultural border areas.

## METHOD



**Figure 1:** Research Framework

This article uses a descriptive qualitative approach to understand the multilingual communication practices of Central Java–West Java border communities as a representation of their social identity. A qualitative approach was chosen because this study focuses on the social meanings of language use, intercultural interaction processes, and identity construction formed in the life of multilingual communities. According to Creswell (2018), a qualitative approach enables researchers to understand social phenomena in depth based on the context, experiences, and realities that develop within society.

The research method used is a literature review with a social-contextual approach. The literature review was conducted to identify, examine, and analyze various concepts, theories, and previous research findings related to multilingual communication, social identity, intercultural communication, code switching, and code mixing. This approach was selected because it enables the researcher to obtain a comprehensive understanding of the communication dynamics of multilingual communities that have been discussed in previous studies.

The data sources in this article come from scientific literature, including national and international journals, academic books, proceedings, research reports, and official documents relevant to the research

theme. The literature used was prioritized from publications issued between 2020 and 2025 to obtain an up-to-date picture of developments in studies on multilingual communication and social identity. In addition, several classical references with strong theoretical relevance were still used to strengthen the conceptual foundation of the study, such as social identity theory, sociolinguistics, and intercultural communication.

Data were collected through a literature search process using keywords related to multilingual communication, border communities, social identity, bilingualism, multilingualism, intercultural communication, and language use in multicultural communities. The literature obtained was then selected based on thematic relevance, research novelty, and its contribution to the discussion of communication practices among border communities. This stage aimed to ensure that the sources used had adequate academic quality and were aligned with the focus of the study.

In addition to the literature review, this article also uses social-contextual reflection as a supporting approach to understanding the phenomenon under study. Contextual reflection was conducted based on the author's closeness to the social reality of Central Java–West Java border communities, which serve as an interaction space between Javanese and Sundanese cultures. In qualitative research, the author's position as part of the social context being studied can help the process of interpreting social phenomena, as long as it is carried out critically and supported by relevant scientific studies (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Contextual reflection in this article is not positioned as the main data source, but rather as a means of strengthening the understanding of communication practices that develop in the lives of border communities. Social experience and observations of language use in everyday life were used to help explain the findings obtained from the literature review. Thus, the resulting discussion is not only theoretical, but also connected to the social realities that develop within society.

The data analysis technique used was descriptive qualitative analysis. Data obtained from various literature sources were analyzed through several stages: data reduction, thematic grouping, meaning interpretation, and conclusion drawing. The analysis process was carried out systematically to identify patterns related to language use, factors influencing language choice, forms of multilingual communication, and representations of the social identity of border communities.

At the data reduction stage, various pieces of information obtained from the literature were selected based on their relevance to the research focus. Subsequently, relevant data were grouped into several main themes, such as multilingual communication practices, the use of code switching and code mixing, the social identity of border communities, and the dynamics of intercultural communication. This categorization stage aimed to facilitate the interpretation process and the discussion of research findings.

The interpretation stage was carried out by connecting findings from various literature sources with the communication, sociolinguistic, and social identity theories used in the study. The analysis focused not only on the forms of language use, but also on the social meanings contained within them. Through this process, the study sought to explain how multilingual communication practices become a means of representing the social identity of Central Java–West Java border communities.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### **Multilingual Communication Practices of Central Java–West Java Border Communities**

Central Java–West Java border communities are social groups that live in a multicultural environment with a high intensity of interaction between Javanese and Sundanese cultures. This condition forms multilingual communication practices that develop naturally in everyday life. Based on various studies of multilingual communities, the use of more than one language in a community does not arise solely from linguistic ability, but is also influenced by the social, cultural, and group identity needs that develop within society (Holmes, 2013; Kusumaningputri, 2023). In the context of border communities, Javanese, Sundanese, and Indonesian become communicative resources that are used alternately according to the needs of social interaction.

The literature review shows that border areas are social spaces that enable intensive cultural contact, thereby producing communication patterns that are more dynamic than those found in areas that are relatively culturally homogeneous (Irawan & Tanzil, 2020; Wahyuni et al., 2023). Continuous interaction between Javanese and Sundanese communities has led to the formation of a high level of linguistic adaptability. People not only understand more than one language, but are also able to adjust their language

choices according to the social contexts they face. This phenomenon shows that multilingual communication practices have become part of the social life of border communities and are transmitted across generations through social interaction in families and community environments.

Multilingual communication practices can be found in various social activities, ranging from family communication, economic interaction, education, community organizations, and religious activities. In the family environment, language use is often influenced by the cultural backgrounds of parents and the residential environment. In families that maintain social relations with both Javanese and Sundanese communities, mixed language use is a commonly found phenomenon. This condition shows that language functions as a means of communication as well as a medium of social adaptation that strengthens relations among cultural groups (Chaer & Agustina, 2010; Preece & Marshall, 2020).

A similar phenomenon can also be observed in the community's economic activities, particularly in public interaction spaces such as traditional markets. In this context, traders and buyers tend to use the language considered easiest for the interlocutor to understand. Language choice is intended not only to facilitate the communication process, but also to build social closeness that can support the community's economic relations. According to Fishman (1972), language choice in multilingual communities is strongly influenced by the social domain in which communication takes place. Therefore, the use of different languages in different social situations is a natural form of communicative adjustment in multilingual communities.

Based on various studies of communication in multilingual communities, code switching and code mixing are phenomena that are almost always found in social environments where two or more languages meet (Holmes, 2013; Rahmawati, 2022). These phenomena also characterize the communication of Central Java–West Java border communities. In a single conversation, someone may begin communicating in Javanese and then switch to Sundanese or Indonesian according to the interlocutor's response or the context of the discussion. Such shifts often occur spontaneously and unconsciously because they have become communication habits that develop in the community's daily life.

Akfan's (2025) study shows that code-switching practices are found not only in face-to-face communication, but also in digital spaces. This finding is relevant to the current condition of border communities, which are increasingly active in using social media as a means of communication. The use of Javanese, Sundanese, and Indonesian in digital posts and conversations shows that multilingual communication practices persist even though society is undergoing communicative transformation due to the development of information technology. Thus, multilingual communication is not only a traditional phenomenon, but also continues to adapt within modern communication spaces.

From the perspective of intercultural communication, the flexible use of several languages demonstrates the community's ability to adapt culturally. This ability enables people to build harmonious social relations with different cultural groups without losing their own cultural identity (Liliweri, 2011). Lafiana and Azeharie (2023) explain that language adjustment in communication is a form of communication accommodation, namely a communication strategy used by individuals to create comfort and social acceptance in interaction. This phenomenon is clearly visible among border communities, who consciously or unconsciously adjust their language use to build closeness with their interlocutors.

The analysis shows that the multilingual communication practices of border communities cannot be understood merely as the ability to use more than one language (Beni et al., 2021). These practices are the result of social interaction processes that take place in culturally diverse spaces. Language becomes a means of building social relations, creating a sense of belonging to a community, and maintaining harmony in multicultural community life. Therefore, multilingual communication among Central Java–West Java border communities can be understood as a form of social adaptation as well as a representation of the cultural diversity that lives and develops in the community's everyday life (Duek & Nilsberth, 2022; Wahyuni et al., 2023).

This finding strengthens the view that border areas cannot be seen merely as geographical boundaries between two administrative regions, but rather as social spaces that produce distinctive communication identities (Khanifah & Hendaryan, 2021). Continuous interaction between Javanese and Sundanese cultures produces unique multilingual communication practices that become a defining characteristic of border communities. In this context, language functions not only as a communication tool, but also as a mechanism

of social integration that strengthens community cohesion in a multicultural environment (Samovar, Porter, & McDaniel, 2010; Hidayat, 2022).

### **Language as a Representation of Community Social Identity**

Language functions not only as a means of conveying messages in the communication process, but also as a symbol that represents the social identity of a community group. From a sociolinguistic perspective, language is closely related to identity because through language a person can show cultural background, group membership, social status, and the values held in social life (Wardhaugh & Fuller, 2021). Therefore, language use in multilingual communities cannot be understood merely as a linguistic activity, but also as a social practice that contains cultural and identity meanings (Holmes, 2013).

Based on the literature reviewed, Central Java–West Java border communities show unique characteristics of social identity because they live in an environment that brings together two major cultures, namely Javanese and Sundanese cultures (Tazakka et al., 2025). Continuous interaction between these two cultural groups produces processes of exchanging values, norms, and communication practices that subsequently shape the social identity of border communities. In this context, the social identity of the community is not formed singularly through one dominant culture, but through processes of social interaction that continue in everyday life (Tajfel, 1981; Hall, 1997).

Javanese in border communities is often used as a symbol of respect, politeness, and emotional closeness. The use of Javanese speech levels such as *ngoko* and *krama* indicates the community's awareness of social norms that regulate intergenerational relationships and social relations within the community. The use of this language is not only intended to convey messages, but also serves as a form of respect for interlocutors and a reflection of cultural values passed down across generations (Chaer & Agustina, 2010; Hidayat, 2022). Thus, Javanese functions as a symbol of cultural identity as well as an instrument for maintaining social values in society.

On the other hand, the use of Sundanese also has important social meaning in the life of border communities. Sundanese is used not only as a means of communication with people from Sundanese cultural backgrounds, but also as a form of social adaptation to a broader cultural environment. The ability to use Sundanese shows the community's openness to cultural diversity and its desire to build harmonious social relations with other groups (Liliweri, 2011). In this context, the use of Sundanese does not always indicate an exclusive Sundanese ethnic identity, but can instead represent social closeness and acceptance of the local culture that develops in the border area.

This phenomenon shows that the social identity of border communities is dynamic, fluid, and continuously developing in accordance with the social experiences they encounter. Unlike communities that live in relatively homogeneous cultural environments, border communities tend to have more flexible identities because they are accustomed to interacting with various cultural groups in everyday life. This condition enables individuals to use more than one cultural identity in different social situations through their language choices (Duek & Nilsberth, 2022; Kusumaningputri, 2023).

Based on contextual reflection on the life of Central Java–West Java border communities, language use often becomes a situational marker of social identity. A person may use Javanese when interacting with family members or environments that have cultural closeness to Javanese culture, and then switch to Sundanese when interacting with people who are closer to Sundanese culture. In formal situations such as education, organizations, and public services, Indonesian is more dominantly used as a unifying language. These shifts in language use show that the community's social identity is not fixed, but is continuously negotiated through everyday communication practices (Fishman, 1972; Wahyuni et al., 2023).

The concept of identity negotiation is important for understanding the communication phenomenon of border communities. Ting-Toomey (2017) explains that individuals actively adjust the identities they display in social interaction to obtain acceptance and communicative comfort. In the context of border communities, choosing a particular language is often carried out as a social strategy to build interpersonal closeness, reduce social distance, and create a sense of togetherness. Therefore, language functions as a means of identity negotiation that enables people to build social relations more effectively in multicultural environments.

Furthermore, the use of several languages in everyday life also reflects the formation of a hybrid identity among border communities. The concept of hybrid identity explains that a person's identity can be

formed from the combination of various cultural elements that interact with one another in social life (Bhabha, 1994). In the context of Central Java–West Java border communities, community identity does not fully represent Javanese or Sundanese culture separately, but instead forms a new identity born from the interaction between the two cultures. This hybrid identity is visible through the use of mixed languages, particular vocabulary choices, and communication patterns that combine Javanese and Sundanese cultural elements in everyday life.

This finding is in line with the studies of Akfan (2025) and Wahyuni et al. (2023), which show that multilingual communities tend to use language as a means of affirming social identity while also adjusting to diverse social environments. Language is not only a communication tool, but also a symbol of social membership, group solidarity, and cultural representation in multicultural communities. Thus, multilingual communication practices among Central Java–West Java border communities show that language has a function far broader than merely conveying messages, namely as a medium for representing social identity that is continuously formed, maintained, and negotiated through everyday social interaction.

This analysis strengthens the view that border areas are social spaces that give rise to distinctive forms of identity. Such identity is not born from the dominance of a single culture, but from ongoing processes of encounter, adaptation, and cultural negotiation. In this context, language becomes the main medium through which people represent their social identity while maintaining social harmony amid existing cultural diversity (Samovar, Porter, & McDaniel, 2010; Duek & Nilsberth, 2022; Kusumaningputri, 2023).

### **The Dynamics of Multilingual Communication in the Modern Era**

The development of information and communication technology has brought significant changes to community communication practices, including among people living in the Central Java–West Java border area. Digital transformation over the past two decades has changed the ways people interact, obtain information, and build social relationships. In the context of multilingual communities, the development of digital media affects not only the communication medium used, but also language choices, interaction patterns, and the ways communities represent their social identity in modern communication spaces (Castells, 2010; Androustopoulos, 2015). Based on various literature studies, digital space has now become a new arena that brings together various languages, cultures, and identities in a broader and more open communication space (Blommaert, 2020).

In the life of border communities, the development of communication technology has encouraged the increasingly intensive use of Indonesian, especially among younger generations. Indonesian tends to be used in digital communication because it has wider reach and can be understood by various community groups beyond the local environment. The use of Indonesian is also supported by the national education system, mass media, and various digital platforms that make Indonesian the main language of public communication (Sugiharto, 2022). This condition shows that Indonesian has a strategic function as a connecting language that enables border communities to participate in broader communication spaces at regional and national levels.

The literature review shows that the dominance of Indonesian in digital spaces does not automatically displace the existence of regional languages. Instead, communities demonstrate the ability to combine Indonesian with regional languages according to the communication context they face (Kusumaningputri, 2023). This phenomenon shows that multilingual communities have linguistic flexibility that allows them to move from one language to another without losing the social meanings attached to those languages. In the context of Central Java–West Java border communities, the ability to use Javanese, Sundanese, and Indonesian alternately is a form of adaptation to social changes occurring in the digital era (Hernawati, 2021).

Based on contextual reflection on the life of border communities, younger generations tend to use Indonesian when communicating through social media, instant messaging applications, and educational settings. Indonesian is considered more practical, neutral, and capable of reaching broader friendship networks. Nevertheless, when interacting with family members, close relatives, or local communities, the use of Javanese and Sundanese is still maintained. This phenomenon shows that language choice is influenced not only by technological factors, but also by social closeness, cultural identity, and the communicative context underlying the interaction (Holmes, 2013; Fishman, 1972).

The modernization of communication has also given rise to new communication patterns marked by the increasing practice of code mixing and code switching in digital spaces. Social media users often combine Indonesian with Javanese or Sundanese in a single post, comment, or online conversation. According to Androutsopoulos (2015), digital multilingualism is a common phenomenon in multilingual communities because language is used not only to convey information, but also to display identity and build social closeness within digital communities. This finding is consistent with Akfan's (2025) research, which shows that code-switching practices in Indonesian digital communication are increasing along with the development of social media use.

The phenomenon of mixed language use in digital spaces shows that regional languages still hold an important position in modern community life. Javanese and Sundanese are no longer used only in traditional communication spaces, but also appear in digital communication as symbols of cultural identity and group solidarity. The use of regional vocabulary in social media posts often becomes a marker of emotional closeness and a sense of belonging to a particular community (Wahyuni et al., 2023). Thus, digital media is not always a threat to the sustainability of regional languages, but can also become a new means of maintaining and reproducing community cultural identity.

These changes in communication patterns indicate a transformation of communication culture in border communities. Whereas in the past language use was strongly influenced by geographical boundaries and local social environments, in the digital era people have access to much broader communication spaces. This condition allows various languages and cultures to meet within the same interaction space. According to Castells (2010), the network society is characterized by increasing connectivity that enables identity and culture to continually undergo processes of negotiation and reconstruction. In the context of border communities, these changes are reflected in the ways people combine local and national elements in everyday communication practices.

Furthermore, the development of digital media also shows a process of identity adaptation carried out by multilingual communities. Younger generations no longer view cultural identity as something rigid and exclusive, but rather as an identity that can be expressed through various communication media. The use of regional languages in social media posts, video content, and online communication is a form of cultural identity representation that remains relevant amid the current of modernization (Duek & Nilsberth, 2022). This shows that regional languages still have strong symbolic value as markers of social identity, even though communities are increasingly connected to global culture.

In addition, the presence of digital media has expanded spaces of intercultural interaction that previously occurred mostly face to face. Border communities can now communicate with various social groups from different cultural backgrounds without having to leave behind their local identity. This condition strengthens the view that multilingual communication is an important form of social competence in modern society. The ability to use more than one language enables individuals to build wider social relations while maintaining their own cultural identity (Liliweri, 2011; Ting-Toomey, 2017; Tankosić & Dovchin, 2023).

The analysis shows that the dynamics of multilingual communication in the modern era do not lead to the disappearance of regional languages, but rather to the emergence of new forms of communication that are more flexible and adaptive. Indonesian is indeed becoming increasingly dominant in formal and digital communication, but Javanese and Sundanese persist as symbols of cultural identity, social solidarity, and emotional closeness. Thus, the development of communication technology actually demonstrates the ability of border communities to integrate various linguistic resources in order to adapt to changing times without losing their cultural roots (Akan, 2025; Kusumaningputri, 2023; Blommaert, 2020).

This finding strengthens the argument that the multilingual communication practices of Central Java–West Java border communities are dynamic phenomena that continue to develop alongside social change. Language functions not only as a tool of communication, but also as a means of social adaptation, representation of cultural identity, and a mechanism of community integration in local and global communication spaces. Therefore, the dynamics of multilingual communication in the modern era show that linguistic diversity remains highly relevant in contemporary community life and is an important part of the process of forming the social identity of border communities (Hall, 1997; Samovar, Porter, & McDaniel, 2010; Duek & Nilsberth, 2022).

## Analysis of Multilingual Communication from a Sociocultural Perspective

From the perspective of social and cultural communication, the multilingual communication practices of Central Java–West Java border communities show that language has functions far broader than merely serving as a tool for conveying messages. Language is not only used to exchange information, but also functions as a means of building social relationships, strengthening group solidarity, maintaining cultural values, and forming the social identity of a community (Littlejohn & Foss, 2011; Samovar, Porter, & McDaniel, 2010). Based on the literature reviewed, language use in border communities is part of a social process that enables individuals to interact effectively in environments characterized by cultural diversity. Thus, multilingual communication can be understood as a social practice that simultaneously contains cultural, identity, and social integration dimensions.

The phenomenon of multilingual communication that develops in the Central Java–West Java border area shows that language serves as a medium of social integration in multicultural community life. People from Javanese and Sundanese cultural backgrounds are able to build relatively harmonious interaction patterns through the ability to use various languages according to the communication contexts they face. This condition is in line with Liliweri's (2011) view that intercultural communication functions as a mechanism for building mutual understanding amid cultural differences. In the context of border communities, the ability to understand and use the language of other groups becomes an important social capital in creating harmonious and sustainable social relations.

The literature analysis also shows that multilingual communication practices are a form of social adaptation that develops in response to cultural diversity within society. According to Communication Accommodation Theory, individuals tend to adjust their ways of communicating, including their language choices, in order to gain social acceptance and build closeness with interlocutors (Giles, Coupland, & Coupland, 1991). This phenomenon can be seen in the life of border communities, who flexibly use Javanese, Sundanese, or Indonesian according to the communication situations they face. The ability to make such language adjustments shows that people have high social sensitivity toward others' cultural backgrounds, allowing communication to take place more effectively (Lafiana & Azeharie, 2023).

The community's ability to use several languages flexibly also reflects the presence of cultural tolerance and social openness in the life of border communities. Based on various studies of multilingual communities, the use of more than one language is often associated with individuals' increased ability to understand cultural differences and build social relations across groups (Duek & Nilsberth, 2022; Kusumaningputri, 2023). In this context, multilingual communication not only reflects the community's linguistic ability, but also shows its social capacity to manage the cultural diversity that exists in the surrounding environment.

From a sociolinguistic perspective, the use of different languages in different situations indicates a close relationship between language and the social structure of society. Fishman (1972) explains that language choice in multilingual communities is influenced by social domains such as family, education, work, and the community environment. This finding is relevant to the condition of Central Java–West Java border communities, which use Javanese, Sundanese, or Indonesian according to the interaction context taking place. Javanese tends to be used in familial and emotional relationships, Sundanese is used as a form of adaptation to certain social environments, while Indonesian is more dominant in formal and administrative communication.

From the perspective of social identity, multilingual communication practices show that the identity of border communities is dynamic and continuously formed through ongoing social interaction. The Social Identity Theory proposed by Tajfel (1981) explains that individual identity is formed through involvement in particular social groups, which then influences the way individuals behave and communicate. In border communities, social identity is not built solely through one dominant culture, but through intensive interaction between Javanese and Sundanese cultures. As a result, communities develop social identities that are more flexible and adaptive than those of communities living in culturally homogeneous environments.

Based on contextual reflection on the reality of border communities, language use often becomes a marker of situational identity that changes according to the interaction context. A person may display an identity closer to Javanese culture when in a family environment or a particular community, and then display an identity closer to Sundanese culture when interacting with other social groups. This condition shows that

the social identity of border communities is not fixed, but is continuously negotiated through everyday communication practices (Ting-Toomey, 2017; Hall, 1997).

This phenomenon can also be explained through the concept of hybrid identity proposed by Bhabha (1994). In border communities, cultural identity is not formed separately between Javanese and Sundanese cultures, but through processes of encounter, exchange, and adaptation between the two cultures. These processes produce a new social identity with distinctive characteristics that differ from the original cultural identities. The use of mixed languages, code switching, and code mixing found in the daily life of border communities is one manifestation of this hybrid identity (Rahmawati, 2022; Wahyuni et al., 2023).

In addition to representing identity, multilingual communication also functions as a mechanism for maintaining social cohesion in multicultural communities. Putnam (2007) explains that the ability to build social relations across groups is an important form of social capital in diverse societies. In the context of border communities, the ability to use various languages enables individuals to build wider social networks and reduce the potential for misunderstanding caused by cultural differences. Language therefore functions as a bridge that connects various social groups within the same interaction space.

The development of communication technology and digital media has further strengthened these dynamics. Recent studies show that multilingual communities are increasingly active in using various languages in digital spaces to express identity, build communities, and maintain social relations (Blommaert, 2020; Akfan, 2025). This phenomenon shows that multilingual communication not only persists in traditional social spaces, but also continues to develop in line with social and technological changes occurring in modern society.

Overall, the analysis shows that multilingual communication among Central Java–West Java border communities is a complex and multidimensional sociocultural phenomenon. Language functions not only as a communication tool, but also as a medium of social integration, a means of identity negotiation, an instrument of cultural adaptation, and a mechanism for forming social cohesion in multicultural communities. This finding strengthens the argument that border areas are social spaces that generate distinctive communication practices and cultural identities as a result of ongoing interaction between Javanese and Sundanese cultures (Duek & Nilsberth, 2022; Kusumaningputri, 2023; Hidayat, 2022). Thus, multilingual communication can be understood as a concrete representation of the ability of border communities to manage cultural diversity while maintaining social harmony amid ongoing social change.

## CONCLUSION

The multilingual communication practices of Central Java–West Java border communities constitute a sociocultural phenomenon formed through intensive interaction between Javanese and Sundanese cultures in everyday life. The findings show that people flexibly use Javanese, Sundanese, and Indonesian according to the communication context, social relations, and interactional needs they face. The practices of code switching and code mixing are inseparable from the communication patterns of border communities as forms of social and cultural adaptation in a multicultural environment. These findings show that multilingual communication functions not only as a means of conveying messages, but also as a medium of social integration that supports the creation of harmonious social relations amid cultural diversity.

In addition, language use in border communities represents a social identity that is dynamic, fluid, and continuously developing through ongoing social interaction. Language becomes a symbol of cultural identity, a means of identity negotiation, and a form of community adaptation to social change, including the development of communication technology and digital media. Although Indonesian is increasingly dominant in formal and digital spaces, Javanese and Sundanese are still maintained as markers of social closeness, group solidarity, and community cultural identity. Therefore, multilingual communication can be understood as a representation of the social identity of border communities, showing their ability to manage cultural diversity and maintain social harmony amid the dynamics of modern society.

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