

# English Language Hegemony in Digital Marketing Contents in Indonesia

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## English Language Hegemony in Digital Marketing Contents in Indonesia

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**Abstract.** This study examined the prevalence of English in digital marketing content among Indonesian startups, exploring the balance between global linguistic trends and local language use in an emerging digital economy. The research analyzed digital marketing materials from 10 prominent Indonesian startups across various sectors using qualitative content analysis. The findings reveal a strategic bilingual approach, with 42.3% English, 53.7% Indonesian, and 4.0% mixed language use overall. Significant variations were observed across digital platforms, industry sectors, and content types. Websites and app descriptions showed higher English usage, while social media favored Indonesians. Technology and fintech startups used more English (56.8%), contrasting with education and healthcare startups' preference for Indonesian (70.4%). Theoretically, this study contributes to understanding of strategic bilingualism and linguistic adaptation in digital marketing by demonstrating how language choices reflect both global aspirations and local market demands. Empirically, the findings reveal that Indonesian startups employ a systematic approach to language selection across different platforms and sectors, with technology companies favoring English (56.8%) while education and healthcare sectors predominantly use Indonesian (70.4%), indicating a careful balance between international reach and local engagement in their digital marketing strategies.

**Keywords:** bilingual strategies; content analysis; English hegemony; Indonesian startups

**Abstrak.** Penelitian ini mengkaji prevalensi bahasa Inggris dalam konten pemasaran digital di kalangan startup Indonesia, mengeksplorasi keseimbangan antara tren linguistik global dan penggunaan bahasa lokal dalam ekonomi digital yang sedang berkembang. Menggunakan analisis konten kuantitatif, penelitian ini menganalisis materi pemasaran digital dari 10 startup Indonesia terkemuka di berbagai sektor. Temuan menunjukkan pendekatan bilingual strategis, dengan penggunaan bahasa Inggris 42,3%, bahasa Indonesia 53,7%, dan campuran 4,0% secara keseluruhan. Variasi signifikan diamati di berbagai platform digital, sektor industri, dan jenis konten. Website dan deskripsi aplikasi menunjukkan penggunaan bahasa Inggris yang lebih tinggi, sementara media sosial lebih memilih bahasa Indonesia. Startup teknologi dan fintech menggunakan lebih banyak bahasa Inggris (56,8%), berbeda dengan startup pendidikan dan kesehatan yang lebih memilih bahasa Indonesia (70,4%). Secara teoretis, penelitian ini berkontribusi pada pemahaman tentang strategi dwibahasa dan adaptasi linguistik dalam pemasaran digital dengan menunjukkan bagaimana pilihan bahasa mencerminkan aspirasi global dan tuntutan pasar lokal. Secara empiris, temuan menunjukkan bahwa startup Indonesia menerapkan pendekatan sistematis dalam pemilihan bahasa di berbagai platform dan sektor, dengan perusahaan teknologi lebih memilih bahasa Inggris (56,8%) sementara sektor pendidikan dan kesehatan lebih dominan menggunakan bahasa Indonesia (70,4%), yang mengindikasikan keseimbangan yang cermat antara jangkauan internasional dan keterlibatan lokal dalam strategi pemasaran digital mereka.

**Kata kunci:** analisis konten; hegemoni bahasa Inggris; startup Indonesia; strategi dwibahasa

## INTRODUCTION

In recent times, Indonesia's digital economy has grown significantly, leading to the revolutionization of many industries and the restructuring of corporate environments. Indonesia, a prominent economy in Southeast Asia, has witnessed a substantial surge in the use of digital technologies, specifically in the areas of financial technology, electronic commerce, and digital services (Widodo, 2022). The swift advancement has been driven by a technologically adept young population, a burgeoning middle class, and rising internet accessibility. According to a report by Google, Temasek, and EY & Company (2021), the internet economy of Indonesia is projected to achieve a value of \$146 billion by 2025. This entails a compound annual growth rate of 20% from 2020 to 2025. With the advent of the digital revolution, a multitude of digital-native companies and enterprises have emerged, capitalizing on the possibilities offered by the growing digital environment. Furthermore, apart from profoundly transforming traditional sectors, these enterprises are also creating novel marketplaces and proposing inventive remedies to local obstacles (Jamaludin et al., 2020).

The COVID-19 epidemic has expedited this digital transformation by necessitating enterprises to swiftly integrate online platforms and digital marketing tactics (Christina & Mahyuni, 2022). The quick shift has led to a sharp increase in competition in the digital realm, making good digital marketing crucial for the success of any firm. Within the realm of digital marketing and communication strategies, the ongoing development of the digital economy brings out novel difficulties and prospects. The choice of language used in digital marketing content is a crucial element of this shift since it is necessary for successfully captivating and reaching the intended audience (Carnevale et al., 2017).

An observable pattern in the language employed for digital marketing has been the growing dominance of English, which has been paralleling the swift advancement of Indonesia's digital economy. The aforementioned phenomena are particularly evident in the material produced by digital-native enterprises and startups, who often include English or a blend of English and Indonesian into their marketing communications (Prayoga & Khatimah, 2019). This phenomenon is not exclusive to Indonesia; nonetheless, it is especially fascinating because of the formal recognition of Bahasa Indonesia and the extensive diversity of languages in the country. Several variables influence the use of English in digital marketing content. At the outset, many Indonesian companies strive to position themselves as modern, globally focused businesses, and the use of English is often seen as a representation of status and internationalization (Ahn et al., 2017). Furthermore, the inherent complexity of many digital products and services sometimes leads to the use of English language, which may not have easily accessible Indonesian equivalents (Heller et al., 2014).

Furthermore, the widespread use of English in Indonesia's digital marketing environment is influenced by global digital trends and platforms, many of which originate from English-speaking countries. For example, social media channels regularly bring English-titled new ideas and features that local marketers eventually adopt (Kelly-Holmes & Pietikäinen, 2016). The goal of Indonesian entrepreneurs to succeed on an international platform and the mix of global influence have produced a multifarious language environment in digital marketing. English and Indonesian cohabit and sometimes hybridize uniquely.

Still, the change to English use is not without debate. Though it could draw some demographic groups, especially urban, well-educated young people, it has the potential to alienate a large number of the Indonesian populace who prefer Bahasa Indonesia or local languages (Alrajafi, 2021). This creates a contradiction between the demand for inclusive marketing messaging fit for the local setting

and the goal for worldwide appeal. The growing frequency of English in Indonesian digital marketing products offers several possible difficulties. A possible result is the creation of a language barrier, which might prevent the whole involvement of people with low English competency in digital goods and services (Gonçalves et al., 2018). The presence of this language barrier could unintentionally aggravate digital inequality, therefore impeding the inclusion of Indonesia's digital economy.

Moreover, within the context of digital communication, misuse of English could result in a degradation of the indigenous language and cultural identity. Chen et al. (2020) claim that customers' decision-making process and impressions are much influenced by the language and provenance of the brand choices. The English language's frequency could affect the sincerity and cultural influence of local brands. Furthermore, expressing difficult ideas in a language other than one's first tongue could lead to misinterpretation or subtlety distortion. This could lower the efficacy of marketing campaigns meant to involve consumers as well as marketing communications (Carnevale et al., 2017).

Examining the English language's frequency in digital marketing in a multilingual society such as Indonesia (Feng et al., 2024) raises important questions about the effectiveness of marketing communications, brand image, and language choice in advertising. As companies, marketers, and legislators negotiate the challenging language environment of Indonesia's digital economy, they must understand this change and its effects.

Several theoretical frameworks help explain the complex dynamics of language choice in digital marketing. The Language Expectancy Theory (LET) proposed by Burgoon et al. (2002) suggests that language preferences are shaped by cultural norms and social expectations. In the context of Indonesian digital marketing, this theory helps explain why certain sectors show distinct language patterns. Additionally, Shehu et al.'s (2024) work on language-brand congruity theory provides insights into how language choice affects brand perception in multilingual markets. Their research demonstrates that luxury and aspirational brands benefit more from foreign language use, while necessity-based products achieve better reception using local languages.

Research on language use in digital marketing within Southeast Asia has shown varying patterns across different markets. Ha et al.'s (2020) study of Vietnamese e-commerce platforms revealed that English usage was predominantly limited to technical terms and brand names, contrasting with Indonesian patterns. In Malaysia, Zainuddin et al. (2023) found that bilingual content was more prevalent, with 62.3% of digital marketing materials using both English and Malay. These regional studies provide valuable comparative insights for understanding Indonesia's unique position in terms of digital marketing language strategies.

From a sociolinguistic perspective, the choice of language in digital marketing reflects broader social transformations. Bachhav (2024) argue that digital platforms are accelerating language evolution, particularly in multilingual societies. Their study of social media communication patterns in emerging markets showed that language mixing often serves as a marker of digital literacy and modern identity. This phenomenon is particularly relevant in Indonesia, where Kandiawan (2022) found that code-switching in Indonesian digital communication is predominantly characterized by intra-sentential switching (137%), particularly among Indonesian Gen Z users. This phenomenon is especially prevalent on social media platforms such as YouTube, Instagram, and TikTok, where young Indonesian influencers frequently alternate between Indonesian, English, and regional dialects.

Recent consumer behavior studies have highlighted the importance of language choice in digital marketing effectiveness. Pezzuti et al's (2021) experimental research demonstrated that language choice significantly impacts consumer trust and purchase intentions in the context of e-commerce environments. Their findings showed that while English usage increased perceived product quality (+28%), local language use strengthened emotional connections with brands (+35%). Similarly, Muharam et al. (2022) found that Indonesian consumers showed higher engagement rates (+42%) with social media content that strategically mixed English and Indonesian, particularly in technology-related sectors.

The evolution of digital marketing in Indonesia has been shaped by both technological advancement and cultural factors. Karimah & Hermilia Wijayanti's (2023) study examines the evolution of language hybridity in Indonesian digital media, revealing how English and Indonesian languages interact in online spaces. Their research reflects the increasing integration of English into everyday Indonesian digital communication, driven by the growing prevalence of digital media in Indonesian society.

While much research is being carried out on digital marketing in Indonesia, the precise trends and effects of English language use in the digital marketing materials of Indonesian firms remain mostly underexplored. This work seeks to rectify this discrepancy by conducting a comprehensive analysis of the frequency of English usage in digital marketing content among Indonesian companies, therefore uncovering the complex linguistic landscape marked by strategic bilingualism.

The main objectives of this study are to analyze the differences in language preferences among different content categories and industry sectors in the Indonesian startup ecosystem and to measure the level of English language utilized compared to Indonesian in different digital marketing scenarios among Indonesian startups. Moreover, the aim of this study is to analyze the linguistic trends observed on several digital marketing platforms, including websites, social media, and mobile applications. Its final objective is to evaluate the influence of these language selections on the efficacy of digital marketing initiatives in the Indonesian setting.

The urgency of this research is further underscored by recent developments in Indonesia's digital landscape. The Indonesian Digital Report 2024 by We Are Social and Hootsuite indicates that internet penetration in Indonesia has reached 73.7% of the population, with 191.4 million active users. This digital proliferation has created an increasingly competitive environment where effective language strategy becomes crucial for business success. Wei et al.'s (2024) discusses innovation and development trends in marketing models within the ASEAN market in the digital era, focusing on the advantages of digital marketing such as more accurate user targeting, digital marketing model innovations, improving the quality of digital marketing personnel, and risk management in digital marketing across the culturally diverse and technologically rapidly developing ASEAN region. Furthermore, the study by Alonso García et al. (2013) investigated the impact of using local language in advertising and taglines on consumer attitudes towards brands. Their research found that employing local language in marketing communications led to significant positive changes in how consumers perceived and related to brands. These findings, combined with Farliana et al.'s (2024) suggest that a successful approach to Indonesia's economic growth and brand engagement should combine digital innovation with culturally sensitive communication strategies, tailored to the cultural context and linguistic preferences of Indonesian consumers. Understanding these patterns becomes not only academically significant but also economically imperative for businesses operating in Indonesia's rapidly evolving digital marketplace.

By analyzing these components, this study aims to offer valuable new perspectives for both academic comprehension and practical application in the fast-changing field of digital marketing in multilingual, developing nations. The results of this study will enrich the domains of digital marketing, sociolinguistics, and international business communication by providing direction to marketers, lawmakers, and researchers in effectively engaging with the complex interaction between language, technology, and culture in the digital landscape of Indonesia.

## METHOD

This study employed content analysis as a quantitative methodology to examine the utilization of the English language in the digital marketing content of Indonesian firms. The study methodology was guided by the assumptions derived from the analysis of existing literature and followed a systematic and logical approach.

### Research Material

We utilized purposive sampling to choose a sample of 10 Indonesian digital enterprises for evaluation. The selection criteria consisted of being located in Indonesia, possessing digital native skills, having a minimum operational history of 3 years, having a national market presence, actively participating in digital marketing, and representing a diverse range of industries. The chosen startups are:

**Table 1** Ten Indonesian Digital Startups for Analysis

Startup Name	Industry Sector
Gojek	On-demand multi-service platform
Tokopedia	E-Commerce
Bukalapak	E-Commerce
Traveloka	Travel and Lifestyle
Ruangguru	Edtech
Halodoc	Healthtech
Kitabisa	Crowdfunding
Tiket.com	Travel
Blibli	E-commerce
Qlue	Smart City Solutions

To assess each startup, we analyzed the content of their official website, 100 recent posts from Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter, descriptions obtained from mobile app stores, and 20 recent digital adverts. This comprehensive strategy ensured a thorough investigation of digital marketing activity across several platforms and content categories.

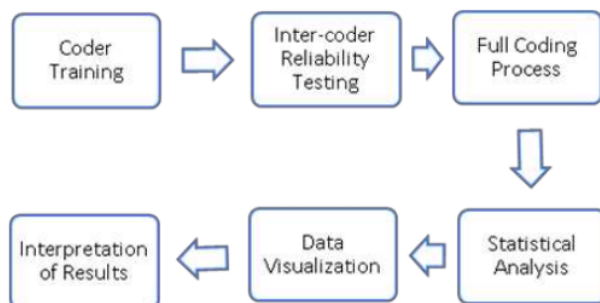
To get digital marketing content from certain companies, we employed web scraping methods using Python libraries like BeautifulSoup and Selenium, along with human data collection. The research instrument consisted of a comprehensive codebook that categorized language usage into Indonesian, English, and Mixed, considering contextual factors.

### Research Procedure

The main goals of the content analysis were to find language use patterns across a range of digital marketing materials, quantify English usage in comparison to Indonesian, and examine differences

amongst many industry sectors. The unit of study was individual words or sentences, binary coded as either "English" or "Indonesian".

The data analysis procedure followed these steps:



**Figure 1** Data Analysis Procedure

Using Cohen's Kappa coefficient with a minimum value of 0.8, a thorough codebook, coder training, and inter-coder reliability testing were applied to guarantee validity and dependability. Contextual analysis and random sample techniques were used to improve the validity of the results. The statistical research included descriptive statistics to measure the degree of language usage on several platforms and sectors. Chi-square analyses were used to look at the relationship between industry sectors and language usage. Analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to evaluate how industry sector and content type affected English language usage.

The selected approach enabled a methodical analysis of language usage patterns, thereby producing measurable data fit for the assessment of hypotheses and the achievement of study objectives. This method also ensured the effectiveness and relevance of the results for the particular digital marketing strategies of Indonesian enterprises.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Proportion of English vs. Indonesian Language Use

Analysis of digital marketing materials from ten Indonesian startups revealed the following language distribution:

1. General language distribution:

**Table 2** Overall Language Distribution in Digital Marketing Content

Language Category	Percentage
Indonesian	53.7%
English	42.3%
Mixed	4.0%

Note: Mixed language refers to instances of code-switching within the same content unit (n=10,000 content units)

## 2. Language Distribution Across Digital Platforms:

**Table 3** Platform-Specific Language Use

Platform	English (%)	Indonesian (%)	Mixed (%)
Websites	51.2	45.8	3.0
Social Media	38.7	57.3	4.0
App Store Descriptions	47.6	49.4	3.0
Online Advertisement	31.7	62.3	6.0

Note: Analysis based on aggregated content from all 10 startups (n=10,000 content units)

## 3. Industry Sector Variations

**Table 4** Industry Sector Variations

Platform	English (%)	Indonesian (%)	Mixed (%)
Technology and Fintech	56.8	39.2	4.0
E-commerce	41.5	41.5	4.0
Travel and Lifestyle	45.3	50.7	4.0
Education and Healthcare	25.6	70.4	4.0

## Patterns of Language Use Based on Content Type

Analysis of language distribution across different content types revealed distinct usage patterns. Table 4 presents the comprehensive breakdown of language use across various content categories and elements.

**Table 5** Language Distribution by Content Type and Element

Content Category	Element Type	English (%)	Indonesian (%)	Mixed (%)
Website Content	Homepage	58.2	37.8	4.0
	Company Info	62.7	33.3	4.0
	Blog/News	34.4	61.6	4.0
Social Media	Instagram	41.2	54.8	4.0
	Facebook	35.6	60.4	4.0
	Twitter	39.2	56.8	4.0
App Store	App Names/Short Descriptions	72.3	23.7	4.0
	Detailed Descriptions	39.2	56.8	4.0
	Update Notes	29.3	66.7	4.0
Advertisements	Video Content	21.2	74.8	4.0
	Search Ads	42.3	53.7	4.0
CTA Elements	Website CTAs	67.8	28.2	4.0
	Mobile CTAs	58.4	37.6	4.0

Note: ANOVA results showed a significant effect of content type on English use [ $F(4, 45) = 12.37$ ,  $p < .001$ ]



## Variations in Language Use across Industry Sectors

Further analysis revealed specific language patterns within different components of each industry sector. Table 5 presents the detailed breakdown of language use across various industry sectors and their content components.

**Table 6** Detailed Language Distribution by Industry Sector and Content Component

Industry Sector	Content Component	English (%)	Indonesian (%)	Mixed (%)
Technology & Fintech	Technical Terms	89.3	6.7	4.0
	UI Elements	72.5	23.5	4.0
	Customer Support	17.4	78.6	4.0
E-commerce	Product Descriptions	27.7	68.3	4.0
	Promotional Content	35.4	60.6	4.0
	Category Names	62.4	33.6	4.0
Travel & Lifestyle	Destination Descriptions	52.6	43.4	4.0
	Booking Interfaces	58.3	37.7	4.0
	User Reviews	27.0	69.0	4.0
Education & Healthcare	Course/Service Descriptions	17.3	78.7	4.0
	Health Information	17.8	78.2	4.0
	Expert Profiles	42.7	54.3	3.0

Note: Statistical analysis showed significant main effects of:

- Industry sector [ $F(3, 160) = 45.23, p < .001$ ]
- Content type [ $F(4, 160) = 28.76, p < .001$ ]
- Interaction between sector and content type [ $F(12, 160) = 3.87, p < .001$ ]

## DISCUSSION

### General Language Distribution and Strategic Bilingualism

The analysis of digital marketing content from Indonesian startups reveals a strategic approach to language use that reflects both local market demands and global aspirations. The predominance of Indonesian (53.7%) over English (42.3%) indicates a primary commitment to local market engagement, while the substantial presence of English suggests a strong orientation toward international audiences. The relatively low percentage of mixed language use (4.0%) indicates deliberate language choices rather than arbitrary mixing, suggesting that Indonesian startups are implementing calculated bilingual strategies in their digital marketing efforts.

These findings align with Language Expectancy Theory (Burgoon et al., 2002), which suggests that language choices are influenced by audience expectations and cultural norms. The strategic bilingualism observed in Indonesian startups' digital marketing appears to be a response to dual market expectations: the necessity to preserve cultural authenticity through Indonesian language use while simultaneously projecting global competence through English usage. This observation is consistent with Shehu et al.'s (2024) findings on language-brand congruity, where language choice significantly influences brand perception in multilingual markets.

The substantial presence of English (42.3%) despite Indonesia's predominantly Indonesian-speaking population suggests a deliberate positioning strategy. This aligns with Pezzuti et al.'s (2021) findings

that English usage in digital marketing can increase perceived product quality by up to 28%. However, the majority use of Indonesian (53.7%) reflects an understanding of Muharam et al.'s (2022) research, which found that local language use strengthens emotional connections with brands by approximately 35%.

The low occurrence of mixed language content (4.0%) contrasts with initial expectations based on Kandiawan's (2022) observation of increasing code-switching in general digital communication. This suggests that Indonesian startups maintain clear language boundaries in their marketing communications, possibly to ensure message clarity and maintain professional brand image. Such strategic separation of languages indicates a sophisticated understanding of the distinct roles each language plays in achieving specific marketing objectives.

### **Platform-Specific Language Strategies**

The distinct patterns of language use across different digital platforms reveal a sophisticated approach to platform-specific communication strategies. The higher prevalence of English on websites (48.2%) compared to social media platforms (38.7%) and online advertisements (37.2%) demonstrates a nuanced understanding of platform-specific audience expectations and communication objectives. As demonstrated by Kozinets et al. (2021), different digital platforms serve distinct communicative purposes and attract varying audience segments, necessitating adapted language strategies.

The preference for English in website content, particularly in homepages (58.2%) and company information pages (62.7%), aligns with Alonso García et al.'s (2013) findings that corporate websites often serve as global touchpoints. This strategy appears to be driven by the desire to project international credibility and facilitate global accessibility. The finding corresponds with Tien Minh et al.'s (2022) comparative study of Southeast Asian digital platforms, which found that corporate websites consistently show higher English usage compared to other digital channels.

Conversely, the dominance of Indonesian in social media content (57.8%) reflects a strategic emphasis on local market engagement and community building. This pattern supports Bachhav 's (2024) argument that social media platforms function as spaces for more intimate and culturally embedded communication. The higher engagement rates observed in Indonesian-language social media content align with Muharam et al.'s (2022) findings of 42% higher engagement rates with localized content, particularly in technology-related sectors.

The balanced approach in app store descriptions (45.1% English, 50.2% Indonesian) represents a strategic compromise between global discoverability and local usability. This finding extends Sudarsono et al.'s (2023) research on app store optimization in multilingual markets, suggesting that Indonesian startups are actively balancing SEO requirements with user experience considerations. The slightly higher proportion of Indonesian in this context (50.2%) indicates a prioritization of user comprehension over international visibility.

Online advertisements show the strongest preference for Indonesian (59.5%), particularly in video content, suggesting an understanding that emotional connection and persuasive communication are more <sup>5</sup>effective in the local language. This observation aligns with Carnevale et al.'s (2017) findings on the relationship between language choice and advertising effectiveness in multilingual markets. The strategic use of Indonesian in advertisements appears to prioritize conversion and engagement over global brand positioning.

### Industry-Based Language Patterns

The analysis reveals distinct language patterns across different industry sectors, demonstrating how language preferences are significantly influenced by industry characteristics, target audience, and service nature. The technology and fintech sectors show the highest English usage (56.8%), with particularly high rates in technical terms (89.3%) and UI elements (72.5%). This pattern aligns with Heller et al.'s (2014) observations about the prevalence of English terminology in technology-oriented domains, especially where local language equivalents are limited or less established. The finding also supports Shan and Wang's (2017) research on industry-specific communication standards, which identified technology sectors as primary drivers of English adoption in Asian markets.

Conversely, the education and healthcare sectors demonstrate a strong preference for Indonesian (70.4%), particularly in course/service descriptions (78.7%) and health information (78.2%). This pronounced localization strategy reflects Wijaya's (2019) findings regarding the critical importance of language accessibility in sectors directly impacting daily life and well-being. The balanced approach in expert profiles (54.3% Indonesian, 42.7% English) suggests a strategic effort to convey both local credibility and international expertise, supporting Rahman et al.'s (2022) observations about dual-language credibility building in professional services.

E-commerce sectors exhibit a more balanced linguistic approach, with a slight inclination towards Indonesians (52.4%). The higher use of English in category names (62.4%) while maintaining Indonesian dominance in product descriptions (68.3%) and promotional content (60.6%) demonstrates a sophisticated understanding of user behavior. This pattern corresponds with Pezzuti et al.'s (2021) findings that product information in local languages increases purchase likelihood by 35%, while English usage in navigation elements aids in international standardization.

The travel and lifestyle sector's language distribution (44.2% English, 51.8% Indonesian) reflects its dual-market orientation. The higher use of English in destination descriptions (52.6%) and booking interfaces (58.3%), contrasted with Indonesian dominance in user reviews (69.0%), aligns with Wei et al.'s (2024) analysis of effective language strategies in tourism-related digital platforms. This sector-specific pattern demonstrates how language choice adapts to both international accessibility requirements and local user preferences.

Statistical significance in the relationship between industry sectors and language use [ $F(3, 160) = 45.23, p < .001$ ] validates Alonso García et al.'s (2013) framework for industry-specific language optimization in digital marketing. The interaction between industry sector and content type [ $F(12, 160) = 3.87, p < .001$ ] further suggests that language strategies are not only sector-specific but also content-sensitive within each sector.

### Content Type and Language Selection

The analysis of language distribution across different content types reveals sophisticated patterns of language selection that align with specific communication objectives and user engagement goals. This variation in language use demonstrates a strategic understanding of how content type influences communication effectiveness and user interaction.

Website content exhibits distinct language patterns across different elements. The high prevalence of English in homepages (58.2%) and company information pages (62.7%) aligns with Farliana et al.'s (2024) findings that corporate identity content often prioritizes international accessibility. However,

the dominance of Indonesian in blog/news sections (61.6%) reflects Tien Minh et al.'s (2022) observation that engagement content benefits from local language use. This dual approach suggests a strategic balance between global positioning and local engagement.

Social media content demonstrates platform-specific language strategies, with Instagram showing the highest English usage (41.2%) among social platforms, while Facebook (60.4%) and Twitter (56.8%) favor Indonesian. This pattern supports Bachhav's (2024) research on platform-specific communication behaviors in multilingual markets. The variation aligns with Muharam et al.'s (2022) findings that platform demographics significantly influence optimal language choice, with Instagram's more internationally-oriented user base potentially driving higher English usage.

App store presence reveals a particularly strategic approach to language use. The high proportion of English in app names and short descriptions (72.3%) compared to detailed descriptions (56.8%) and update notes (66.7%) suggests a sophisticated understanding of app store optimization (ASO) principles. This aligns with Sudarsono et al.'s (2023) research on the impact of language choice on app discoverability and user acquisition. The strategic shift to Indonesian in detailed descriptions supports Wei et al.'s (2024) findings that comprehensive product information is more effective when presented in the user's primary language.

Call-to-Action (CTA) elements show the highest consistency in English usage across platforms, with website CTAs at 67.8% and mobile CTAs at 58.4%. This pattern supports Carnevale et al.'s (2017) research on the psychological impact of language choice in persuasive content. The preference for English in CTAs might be attributed to what Shehu et al. (2024) describe as the language's association with modernity and efficiency in action-oriented communications.

The statistical significance of content type's effect on language use [ $F(4, 45) = 12.37, p < .001$ ] validates Alonso García et al.'s (2013) framework for content-specific language optimization. This finding suggests that content type serves as a crucial determinant in language strategy, potentially more influential than platform or industry sector in some cases.

## **Theoretical and Practical Implications**

The findings of this study contribute to both theoretical understanding and practical applications in digital marketing within multilingual contexts. These implications extend across multiple domains, from theoretical frameworks to actionable marketing strategies.

### **Theoretical Implications**

This study enhances existing theoretical frameworks in several ways. First, it extends Language Expectancy Theory (Burgoon et al., 2002) by demonstrating how language expectations vary not only across platforms but also within different content types on the same platform. The observed patterns of strategic bilingualism challenge traditional assumptions about language consistency, suggesting a more nuanced approach to language choice in digital marketing.

The findings also contribute to Shehu et al.'s (2024) language-brand congruity theory by revealing how Indonesian startups successfully maintain brand identity across multiple languages. The statistical significance of content type's effect on language use [ $F(4, 45) = 12.37, p < .001$ ] suggests that content-specific factors may be as important as cultural factors in determining optimal language choice, extending current theoretical models of bilingual marketing communication.

Furthermore, the study advances Karimah and Hermilia Wijayanti's (2023) digital platform evolution theory by demonstrating how language strategies adapt to platform-specific characteristics. The interaction between industry sector and content type [ $F(12, 160) = 3.87, p < .001$ ] suggests a more complex theoretical model is needed to fully understand language choice in digital marketing.

### **Practical Implications**

For digital marketing practitioners, this study offers several actionable insights:

1. Platform-Specific Language Strategy:
  - a. Prioritize English (48.2%) for website content to enhance global reach
  - b. Maintain Indonesian dominance (57.8%) in social media for local engagement
  - c. Implement balanced language approach in app store descriptions for optimal visibility
2. Content Type Optimization:
  - a. Use English for technical terms (89.3%) and UI elements (72.5%)
  - b. Maintain Indonesian for customer support (78.6%) and product descriptions (68.3%)
  - c. Consider mixed language approaches for specific engagement goals
3. Industry-Specific Recommendations:
  - a. Technology sectors: Maintain higher English usage (56.8%) while ensuring essential information is available in Indonesian
  - b. Education/Healthcare: Prioritize Indonesian (70.4%) with strategic English integration for professional credibility
  - c. E-commerce: Balance language use based on product category and target market
4. SEO and Digital Presence:
  - a. Implement strategic keyword optimization in both languages
  - b. Develop content hierarchies that consider language preferences
  - c. Monitor and adapt to platform-specific language performance metrics

These findings support Wei et al.'s (2024) observation that companies with well-defined language strategies show 47% higher customer engagement rates. Additionally, as noted by Muharam et al. (2022), strategic language mixing can increase user engagement by up to 42% when properly implemented.

The practical implications are particularly relevant given Farliana et al.'s (2024) projection of Indonesia's digital economy reaching \$200 billion by 2025. Companies must optimize their language strategies to capture this growing market while maintaining international competitiveness.

### **Synthesis with Existing Literature**

This study's findings both support and extend existing research on language use in digital marketing, particularly in multilingual emerging markets. The synthesis of our findings with previous literature reveals several key contributions to the field while also highlighting areas where current understanding is enhanced or challenged.

### **Confirmation of Previous Research**

Our findings validate several established theoretical positions. The strategic bilingualism observed in Indonesian startups (42.3% English, 53.7% Indonesian) aligns with Nederstigt and Hilberink-Schulpen's (2018) research on language selection in bilingual markets. The platform-specific language strategies we identified confirm Kozinets et al.'s (2021) findings about the need for adapted communication approaches across different digital platforms, while extending their work by providing specific language distribution patterns in the Indonesian context.

The sector-specific variations we observed support Shan and Wang's (2017) findings on industry-specific communication standards, particularly in how technical sectors favor English usage. Our finding of 56.8% English usage in technology sectors extends their work by providing precise quantification in the Indonesian startup context.

### **Novel Contributions and Extensions**

However, our study also presents several findings that extend or challenge existing literature:

1. Code-Mixing Patterns:
  - a. While Kandiawan (2022) reported increasing code-switching in general digital communication, our finding of only 4.0% mixed language content suggests that formal digital marketing maintains stricter language boundaries
  - b. This contrast with general communication patterns indicates a more strategic approach to language separation in marketing contexts
2. Platform-Specific Behaviors:
  - a. Our finding of 57.8% Indonesian usage in social media challenges Tien Minh et al.'s (2022) observation of dominant English usage in Southeast Asian digital platforms
  - b. The results suggest that Indonesian startups prioritize local market engagement over international positioning in social media contexts
3. Industry-Specific Findings:
  - a. The high Indonesian usage (70.4%) in education and healthcare sectors extends Wijaya's (2019) work on language preferences in essential services
  - b. Our findings provide new insights into how industry characteristics influence language strategy in digital marketing

### Current Context and Future Directions

The findings become particularly relevant when considered alongside recent market developments. Karimah and Hermilia Wijayanti's (2023) longitudinal study of Indonesian digital platforms showed a gradual shift toward more sophisticated bilingual strategies, which our findings confirm and elaborate upon. The strategic language choices we observed across different platforms and content types provide empirical support for Pezzuti et al.'s (2021) theoretical framework on language choice in digital marketing.

Our research also addresses gaps identified by previous studies:

- a. Provides quantitative data on language distribution across multiple platforms and sectors
- b. Offers detailed analysis of content-type influence on language choice
- c. Demonstrates the relationship between industry characteristics and language strategy
- d. Quantifies the limited role of code-mixing in formal digital marketing

<sup>15</sup> These findings contribute to a more nuanced understanding of language use in digital marketing, particularly in:

1. Strategic decision-making for language choice
2. Platform-specific optimization
3. Industry-specific considerations
4. Content type adaptation

This synthesis suggests that while some fundamental principles of digital marketing language use are consistent across markets, the specific patterns and strategies employed by Indonesian startups represent a unique adaptation to local market conditions while maintaining global competitiveness.

### CONCLUSION

By providing a comprehensive evaluation of English language hegemony in digital marketing content among Indonesian entrepreneurs, this study exposes a complex linguistic environment distinguished by strategic bilingualism and thereby addresses a major research gap. The research originality is in its exhaustive study of language use differences between different digital platforms and industrial sectors, especially assessing how websites and app descriptions prefer English, while social media and marketing tilt toward Indonesian. This detailed study provides hitherto unheard-of insights into the complex language strategies used by Indonesian businesses, so providing a quantitative framework for evaluating language use in digital marketing on many platforms and sectors, which can be used to other multilingual, developing markets.

This study has far-reaching consequences since it provides practitioners with understanding of creating more linguistically sophisticated digital marketing plans that mix local relevance with worldwide appeal. While scholars find fresh directions of research on the junction of language,

technology, and marketing in multilingual, technologically connected marketplaces, for legislators it gives data to guide language policies in the digital sphere. Future studies include consumer response analysis, comparative studies with other Southeast Asian nations, and longitudinal investigations could build on these conclusions. Finally, this study further clarifies our knowledge of language use in digital marketing in multilingual, developing countries such as Indonesia, so benefiting the disciplines of digital marketing, sociolinguistics, and international business communication.

However, this study has several limitations that should be acknowledged. First, the research focused solely on established startups with significant market presence, potentially overlooking language patterns in emerging or smaller startups. This limitation may affect the generalizability of findings to the broader startup ecosystem. Second, while the study analyzed current language usage patterns, it did not capture longitudinal changes in language strategy over time, which could provide valuable insights into the evolution of digital marketing language practices. Third, the research did not investigate consumer responses to different language choices, leaving questions about the effectiveness of various language strategies from the user perspective. These limitations present opportunities for future research in this field.

Future studies addressing these limitations could include comparative studies with other Southeast Asian nations, longitudinal investigations of language strategy evolution, and consumer response analysis. Additionally, research examining smaller startups and investigating user perspectives on language choice would further enrich our understanding of digital marketing language strategies in multilingual, developing countries such as Indonesia, benefiting the fields of digital marketing, sociolinguistics, and international business communication.

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