

Attitudinal Stance and Code-Switching as Persuasive Tools in Malaysian Digital Activism: A Corpus-Assisted Discourse Analysis of Mobilisation Discourse

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the mobilisation discourse surrounding the Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions (BDS) movement on social media. It investigates the linguistic strategies employed by Malaysian influencers, identified as digital activists, focusing on their persuasive tactics. This research particularly examines attitudinal stance and code-switching in online mobilisation discourse. We consider how rhetoric may have evolved, or remained consistent, in the age of social media, algorithm surveillance, and digital technology. Employing a corpus-assisted critical discourse analysis methodology, which integrates corpus linguistics techniques with a critical discourse analysis approach, we examined 30 posts from Malaysian TikTok activists to understand the characteristics and features of the persuasive language used by them. The study found that these digital activists evaluate Israel mostly using judgment rather than affect or appreciation based on the attitude system. Additionally, code-switching was widely used, with motivations for marked code choice including avoiding social media monitoring, negotiating identities, and connecting with diverse groups. These activists also employed coded language and focused on information sharing rather than engaging in blatant criticism of the Zionist movement. This study argues that social media discourse, particularly digital activism responding to humanitarian crises like the genocide in Palestine, offers a significant area for understanding public mobilisation. By utilising corpus linguistics techniques, this research uncovers interesting language patterns and sheds light on language's crucial role in contemporary mobilisation and activism movements.

Keywords: corpus-assisted discourse analysis; attitudinal stance; code-switching; Tik Tok; digital activism

INTRODUCTION

Activism and the language used by activists have long been the interests of language researchers. There are different types of activism, including advocacy activism, political activism, and digital activism, among others (Adams et al., 2024; Christensen et al., 2024; Gardner et al., 2021; Hutter & Weisskircher, 2022; Ozkula, 2021). In this study, we focus on the examination of digital activism and the language that they use in the discourse. We refer to this particular discourse as ‘mobilisation discourse’ (Lustick & Shils, 2022) since we believe that the main reasons for activists to engage with their followers are to garner their support and mobilise them to take action in line with the cause they advocated for. We are particularly interested in examining the persuasive language and strategies they used for mobilising their followers.

This study's main interest is the rhetoric and persuasive strategies of Malaysian digital activists. In particular, the study focuses on two strategies: the attitude system from Martin and White's (2005) Appraisal theory, and code-switching, with a focus on the social motivations for code-switching in mobilisation discourse. While the first strategy (attitude system) is a well-known

persuasive tool examined by many (see discussion about persuasive strategies across time by Pelclová & Lu, 2018), the latter strategy, code-switching, is arguably less frequently explored in the context of persuasive rhetoric. However, code-switching has been examined in a number of advertising and music studies related to persuasive language (Bara, 2025; Luna & Peracchio, 2005; Metrouh & Mebtouche, 2022). We aim to explore its function in the language used by activists, focusing on the social motivation behind code-switching that occurs in the texts. Apart from these two main strategies, we discuss other linguistic strategies used by the activists in general.

While there are many activist movements, our focus for this particular study is on the Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions (BDS) movement. The BDS movement mainly promotes the boycott of certain products or companies linked to Israel. As such, the objectives of this study are to examine: 1) the attitudinal stance used by the Malaysian digital activists who mobilise the public for the BDS movement, and 2) the social motivation and function of code-switching. Additionally, we also aim to 3) explore the salient linguistic strategies used by the Malaysian digital activists in general. In order to carry out this study and achieve these objectives, we adopted Fairclough's critical discourse analysis assisted by corpus linguistics tools, including the UAM corpus tool, as well as the Lancsbox software. These tools were used to examine the nuances of persuasive strategies in mobilisation discourse for the BDS movement that took place on digital platforms such as social media. With the many facets of social media and its huge role in mobilising the BDS movement worldwide, this study investigated language used on social media platforms in order to enhance our understanding of the different resources used for digital social activism.

LITERATURE REVIEW

SOCIAL MEDIA MOBILISATION & SOCIAL ACTIVISM

Traditionally, social activists in the past took to the streets and public areas as a space to show and mobilise more support for a cause. Movements like the women's suffrage movement (Catt & Shuler, 2020) or the environmental movement (Grasso & Giugni, 2021) are some examples from the past. But this has shifted with the advent of technology, where digital activism is prevalent.

Digital activism, also known as cyberactivism, is “a form of activism that uses the Internet and digital media as key platforms for mass mobilisation and political action” (Fuentes, 2025, p. 1). Arguably, many of these digital activist efforts take place on social media. Tayebi (2013, as cited in Abimbade et al., 2022, p. 3) said that “social media can be used to target certain groups publicly and gain attention for specific causes using hashtags”.

According to Mohd Sofee et al. (2022), social activism is promoted through user-generated content. Social media is the number one medium to distribute information and to develop global solidarity (Christian, 2020, as cited in Mutmainnah, 2024). The BDS movement has been utilising the strength of social media to gather worldwide support and pressure nations and institutions to take action against Israel, which shows that social media is an instrumental medium in modern social movements (Mutmainnah, 2024).

BDS HISTORY & BACKGROUND

Historically, the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) movement was inspired by the anti-Apartheid struggle in South Africa (Barghouti, 2011, as cited in Awad, 2021). The BDS movement aims to isolate Israel politically and economically, similar to how international boycotts and sanctions contributed to the downfall of apartheid South Africa (Clark & Worger, 2013, as cited in Awad, 2021).

The BDS movement has carried out three strategies. First, they urged consumers to boycott products and corporations that have ties with Israel (Sutrisno, 2024). Second, they urged banks, arms manufacturers, and academic institutions to reduce and eliminate ties with Israel and its allies. Third, they make an effort to pressure the concerned countries to stop military trade and free trade agreements with Israel.

The motives behind the BDS movement agenda are to make sure "Israel complies with international law to end the colonisation and occupation of Palestine, to grant Palestinian citizens in Israel equal rights, and to implement the right of Palestinians to return to their land." (Awad, 2021, p. 363). The BDS movement not only wishes to hurt Israel economically, but it also aims "to dislocate hegemonic discourse that Israel is a progressive state" (Mohd Nor et al., 2021, p. 2730). Mohd Nor et al. (2021) also stated that the BDS campaign focuses on teaching people and building global support for Palestinian rights.

LINGUISTICS EXAMINATION OF BDS MOVEMENT & OTHER MOBILISATION DISCOURSES

Studies that have looked at the boycott movement following BDS include that of an Australian-based study by Etaywe (2024). The study focused on the topic of compassion in digital activism and found that compassion extends beyond emotional responses and emerges between natural characteristics and a value expressed through actions. Another study on BDS-related Facebook pages and Twitter found that there was a lack of emotional connection and interactivity on the pages attributed to unique political and rhetorical constraints (Hitchcock, 2016).

Interestingly, David Hirsh (2007, as cited in Cannon, 2019), a pro-Israeli researcher, claimed to have found at least five key linguistic strategies used by the BDS movement. The first strategy found is "explanatory flattening", where BDS is accused of generalising all Zionism as the same without consideration of different points of view and changes through the ages. The second strategy is "methodological idealism," where he claimed that the BDS movement presents itself as morally correct, while Israel is the opposite of it. The third strategy is what Hirsh called the "internationalist view of the world", meaning that the countries of the world are either an oppressor or the one being oppressed. Hirsh claims that it falsely labels Israel as the main imperialist force and Zionism as an antagonist. The fourth strategy is "criticism of Israel with the objective of demonising it", where Hirsh claimed it is a form of antisemitism when criticising Israel. The fifth strategy is related to the fourth strategy, and it is called "The Livingston Formulation," where Hirsh claimed that both techniques enable hatred towards Israel that leads to antisemitism.

In an increasingly interconnected world, proficiency in multiple languages has become essential for effective global communication (Anthoney et al., 2025). The practice of code-switching has emerged as a key feature of competent multilingual communication. Since we are particularly interested in examining code-switching, we provide the definition of code-switching in this section as well. According to Myers-Scotton (1993, p. 1), "the alternation of languages (codes) during a single discussion is called code-switching." The term "code-switching" is used to

refer to the use of two or more linguistic varieties in the same conversation (Morais, 1995). “Code-switching (CS) refers to the mixing, by bilinguals (or multilinguals), of two or more languages in discourse, often with no change of interlocutor or topic” (Poplack, 2001, p. 2062). Traditionally, code-switching is examined in a classroom setting or an educational setting (e.g. Anisah & Nasrullah, 2023; Darwis, 2024). Beyond that, code-switching has been examined in face-to-face service encounters (Be et al., 2022), political discourse (Moody & Eslami, 2020), and, in the context of our study, activist discourse on social media (Farag, 2023; Fourcade, 2021). According to Myers-Scotton (1993), the model identifies four types of code choice: unmarked code choice, marked code choice, exploratory code choice, and sequential unmarked code choice. For the purposes of this study, we focus specifically on the marked code choice, which occurs when a speaker deliberately selects a linguistic code that deviates from the socially expected norm, often as a strategic move to assert identity, align with particular groups, or challenge established conventions.

With regard to the examination of code-switching in mobilisation discourse, some research was carried out in the past. One study in particular by Fourcade (2021) examined contemporary youth activists and their language on social media. She found that code-switching is used as a tool to converge with the national audience when using the national language, and a strategic move to converge with the global audience when using the English language. Similarly, Ali et al. (2024) analysed Instagram posts of four Pakistani transgender activists and revealed that their language practices involved innovative linguistic and textual strategies, one of which was code-switching. In another study, Riboni (2024) investigated videos by a Chinese YouTuber on transracial adoption and found that the YouTuber explicitly used the term code-switching in one of her videos to describe the need to adjust her language or speaking style when engaging with various ethnic backgrounds. Building upon the insights and gaps identified in the literature review, the following section outlines the data collection procedure and analytical framework used in this study.

METHODOLOGY

OVERVIEW OF DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURE

We adopted the definition of an influencer from Enke and Borchers (2019), who said that anyone who creates inspiring content can build a following and become an influencer. To the researchers' knowledge, there is no fixed number of followers, likes or engagement scores that a person must get before being identified as an influencer. For practical purposes, in our study, we identify an influencer based on the number of likes; that is, the person is considered an influencer in our study if she/he has at least 500 likes for the post. For the purpose of data collection, we identified our data following these parameters:

- i. The data must be a TikTok video (content) produced by a Malaysian
- ii. The video must be liked by at least 500 users
- iii. The influencer in the video must talk about product(s) to be boycotted OR about the boycott movement
- iv. The influencer should use either Malay, English, or a mix of both languages
- v. The videos must be published after the event of October 7th, 2023.

With regards to the first parameter, our decision to focus on TikTok videos is based on statistical data that there were more than 28.68 million TikTok users in Malaysia in early 2024 (Kemp, 2024). The last parameter, concerning the production time of the video, is situated within the context of the events of October 7, 2023, which marked the onset of the Israel–Gaza war that remains ongoing in 2025 (Johnston, 2025). We argue that this event also sparked yet another phase of the BDS movement globally, riling up activists, including those from Malaysia, to increase their call for boycott and other activities.

While collecting the data, a very important observation was made: many popular videos about BDS and the boycott movement by some influencers were deleted at the time of data collection, and to some extent, their TikTok accounts were also blocked and deleted from the platform. As such, this study only covered some samples that were collectable at the time of this study, between 2024 and 2025. In this study, all selected videos were downloaded using Glitx.com, a free, web-based tool that facilitates the easy downloading of content from various social media platforms, including Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and TikTok, without requiring software installation or user registration. Then, using another website called Descript (Mason, 2025), a transcript from every video downloaded was generated. A total of 30 videos were collected for this study. Table 1 provides a detailed breakdown of these videos, using a pseudonym for each influencer to protect their identity. Since these influencers primarily engaged in activism activities related to the BDS movement, the phrase 'digital activists' or 'activists' will be used to refer to them throughout this study.

TABLE 1. Overview of data and source

No	Activist	English and/or Malay	Likes	Word count
1	Leila- 02.11.2023	Both	267, 000	623
2	Leila- 11.12.2023	Both	72, 000	414
3	Leila-01.11.2023	Both	43, 800	602
4	Leila- 30.12.2023	English	42, 500	393
5	Leila- 14.10.2024	Both	32, 100	460
6	Leila- 6.10.2024	Both	28, 200	1232
7	Rose- 17.12.2023	Both	1, 918	160
8	Rose-30.04.2024	Both	101, 800	123
9	Rose- 22.03.2024	Malay	186, 900	186
10	Rose- 5.12.2023	Both	968	149
11	Rose- 8.3.2024	Both	922	206
12	Rose- 14.3.2024	both	1, 033	204
13	Dexter- 24.6.2024	Both	40, 200	422
14	Dexter- 21.5.2024	Both	28, 800	605
15	Dexter-10.12.2023	Both	69, 000	395
16	Dexter- 5.12.2023	Both	6, 414	450
17	Dexter- 9.7.2024	Both	9, 607	201
18	Dexter- 22.7.2024	Both	20, 900	3698
19	Jansen- 22.10.2023	Both	42, 000	83
20	Jansen- 30.10.2023	Both	44, 000	90
21	Jansen-10.12.2023	Both	96, 400	93
22	Jansen- 15.11.2023	Both	8, 595	166
23	Jansen- 29.10.2023	Both	9, 873	153
24	Jansen- 13.5.2024	Both	6, 451	123
25	Alexei- 22.10.2023	Both	2, 788	333
26	Alexei-5.4.2024	Both	34, 800	767
27	Alexei- 13.3.2024	Both	21, 900	334
28	Alexei- 13.6.2024	Both	15, 500	433
29	Alexei- 14.4.2024	Both	742	266
30	Yoyo- 16.11.2024	Malay	86, 800	149
TOTAL			1,323,911	10, 183

From Table 1, the number of words calculated from the speech-to-text transcription can be seen. The length varied between videos and between activists. In terms of language use, many of the activists use both Malay and English, with only three videos utilising just one language (video numbers 4, 9 and 30). The language preference of one language over the other is a matter of individual style. For example, Leila uses more English compared to Malay phrases or clauses, while Rose uses more Malay, rather than English. The fact that these activists use code-switching led us to examine it as one of the components in our examination of persuasive strategies.

ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK

This study utilised corpus-assisted critical discourse analysis (CDA). The CDA element is informed by the Fairclough 3-dimensional model, consisting of text-level analysis, discourse practice level of analysis and sociocultural practice level of analysis as shown in Figure 1.

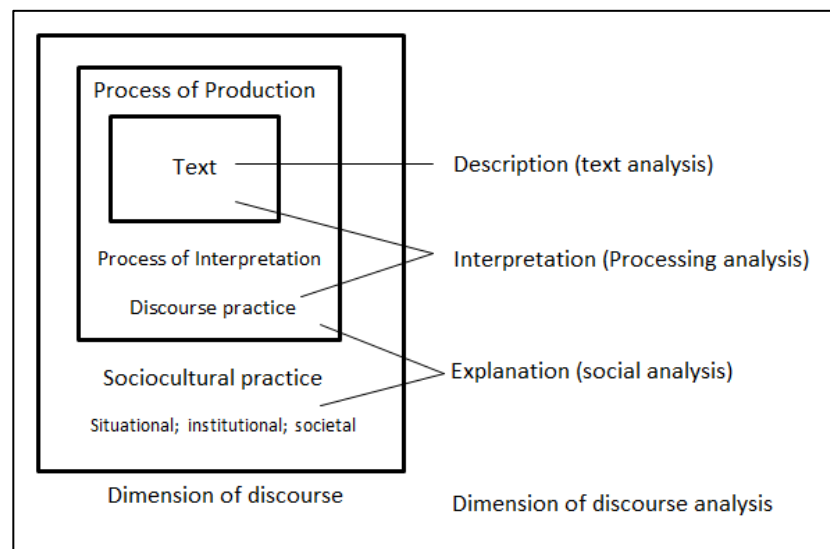


FIGURE 1. The 3-dimensional model by Fairclough (1995, p. 98)

The text-level analysis mainly focuses on the examination of persuasive strategies, focusing on appraisal (attitude system) and code-switching. In this paper, we have adopted the appraisal framework by Martin and White (2005) from Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) to examine the constructions of attitudinal meanings in the BDS movement corpus and the social motivation for code-switching in the marked code choice category based on Myers-Scotton's markedness model (1993).

At this level as well, corpus tools, including the UAM corpus tool and the Lancsbox version 5.0, were used to assist various levels of textual analysis. This involves: i) identification and tagging of attitudinal stance and code-switching functions using the UAM corpus tool, ii) examination of contexts surrounding the identified items to determine patterns, and iii) determining the salience of patterns found using Collocational Analysis using Lancsbox. Lancsbox has better visualisation and embedded statistical calculation, especially for collocations and hence the switch between tools.

In analysing the attitudinal stance, the study employed Martin and White's (2005) appraisal framework. The attitude component under the appraisal system is divided into three primary categories: affect (emotional manifestations), judgement (behavioural assessment based on social standards), and appreciation (assessments of events and objects) (Martin & White, 2005). Martin and White (2005) state that attitudinal resources are necessary for negotiating communal ideals and enhancing group identities. The attitudinal system by Martin and White (2005) is summarised in Table 2. Table 2 also includes the description of the attitudinal system as shown in the UAM corpus tool:

TABLE 2. Attitudinal system used for the analysis

System	Description of system (Martin & White, 2005)	Sub-categories (UAM Corpus Tool)	Example from data
Affect	Demonstrating emotional response and feelings.	un/happiness dis/satisfaction in/security dis/inclination *un/usualness	Dissatisfaction: I feel like using a tragedy like this for marketing purposes is beyond distasteful.
Judgement	To evaluate behavior that lead to rules and regulation	normality capacity tenacity propriety veracity *unclear	Abnormality: ..some Malaysians are totally disconnected with what's happening in the genocide
Appreciation	"estimating the value of entities or processes, which serves as proposition about criteria and value"	reaction composition social valuation	Reaction: And <i>dia orang punya stand tu sangatlah kuat walaupun itu adalah brand negara dia orang sendiri.</i> Translation: And they have a strong stance even if the brand is from their own country.

Table 2 shows the attitudinal system used for the analysis. In the category of affect, which relates to emotional responses, a number of subcategories were outlined in the UAM Corpus tool based on Martin and White's (2005) categorisation. An example was also added to show how we identified a clause or sentence as a type of dissatisfaction. For this particular example, the subcategory of dissatisfaction is further categorised into displeasure. The details of this further branching of subcategories are presented in Figure 2. This Figure is embedded in the UAM corpus tool following the Martin and White (2005) framework with our additions of some categories, including un/unusualness, unclear, ambiguous, self and other. These categories were added manually as a minor adaptation for the purpose of analysis.



FIGURE 2. Attitude system in the UAM Corpus Tool with minor adaptation

Next, we examined the marked code choice of code-switching from Myers-Scotton's markedness model and determined the social motivations of the marked code choice. According to Myers-Scotton's (1993) model, there are four types of code switching, namely 1. unmarked choice code-switching, 2. marked choice code-switching, 3. sequential unmarked choice code-switching, and 4. exploratory choice code-switching. However, in this study, we only focus on one type, which is the marked code choice. Marked code choice occurs when a person's way of speaking is not influenced by society's particular customs.

In this paper we focus on the speakers' use of marked code choice rather than other categories because compared to other categories, the marked code choice category stood out due to the fact that the speaker is assumed to make a conscious effort to code switch due to certain social motivations such as "renegotiation of identities or relationships" (Myers-Scotton, 1993, as cited in Beiler, 2021, p. 111). For example, as mentioned before, young activists code-switch between the national (i.e. Malay) language and English when they reconverge to either a local or global audience on social media (see Fourcade, 2021). Many studies have also solely focused on examining marked code-choice rather than other categories (e.g. Luna & Peracchio, 2005; Mahmood & Ali, 2021).

The marked code choice is driven by a variety of social motivations. In a Pakistan-based study about fashion magazines, motivations for code-switching, including reprimand, expansion, emphasis, humour, clarification, confirmation, and finding difficulty in words, were identified (Mahmood & Ali, 2021). In a study about trilingual music, the discourse function of code-switching or motivation for using code-switching is "to assert identity, signal solidarity, or negotiate power dynamics" (Bara, 2025, p.130). The social motivation of the code-switching may also be multiple, rather than just one for a single switch, indicating the complex nature of code-switching and its role in different discourses.

FINDINGS

OVERVIEW OF FINDINGS

In this section, findings related to attitudinal stance are presented. By utilising the UAM Corpus tool version 6.0, we derived descriptive statistics on the overall distributions of the appraisal systems, which are presented in the following tables.

TABLE 3. Distribution of attitude types in the data

Attitude type	Frequency	Percentage
Affect	28	26.1
Judgement	78	73
Appreciation	1	0.9
TOTAL	107	100 %

The results in Table 3 indicate that judgment is the most used attitudinal stance, followed by affect. Appreciation is hardly used at all, with only one instance in our data. The breakdown of the number of attitudinal stances used by individual activists is presented in Table 4 below.

TABLE 4. Distribution of attitudinal stance in the data according to activists

Num.	Activist	Word count	Instances of the attitude system	Total
1	Leila- 02.11.2023	623	20	58
2	Leila- 11.12.2023	414	16	
3	Leila-01.11.2023	602	8	
4	Leila- 30.12.2023	393	1	
5	Leila- 14.10.2024	460	7	
6	Leila- 6.10.2024	1232	6	
7	Rose- 17.12.2023	160	2	7
8	Rose-30.04.2024	123	1	
9	Rose- 22.03.2024	186	0	
10	Rose- 5.12.2023	149	2	
11	Rose- 8.3.2024	206	2	
12	Rose- 14.3.2024	204	0	
13	Dexter- 24.6.2024	422	3	19
14	Dexter- 21.5.2024	605	1	
15	Dexter-10.12.2023	395	8	
16	Dexter- 5.12.2023	450	3	
17	Dexter- 9.7.2024	201	2	
18	Dexter- 22.7.2024	3698	2	
19	Jansen- 22.10.2023	83	0	11
20	Jansen- 30.10.2023	90	5	
21	Jansen-10.12.2023	93	4	
22	Jansen- 15.11.2023	166	2	
23	Jansen- 29.10.2023	153	0	
24	Jansen- 13.5.2024	123	0	
25	Alexei- 22.10.2023	333	0	11
26	Alexei-5.4.2024	767	3	
27	Alexei- 13.3.2024	334	4	
28	Alexei- 13.6.2024	433	3	
29	Alexei- 14.4.2024	266	1	
30	Yoyo- 16.11.2024	149	1	12
Total		10, 183	107	107

Table 4 shows the distribution of the attitude system, namely judgment, affect or appreciation, among activists. It is clearly shown that Leila uses attitude the most compared to other activists. In some of the videos, no instances of attitudinal stance were found at all. The number and frequency of attitudinal stances vary with different activists and are perhaps dependent on the topic being discussed as well. Looking further into the attitude category of judgment and its subcategories, some types of judgment are more prominently used than others, as illustrated in Table 5.

TABLE 5. Frequency distributions of judgement

Judgement	Frequency	Percentage	Definition	Example
Normality	15	19.2	Assessments on how special or unusual the behaviour of the person is in their state. e.g. natural, familiar, fashionable, celebrated, V.S. artificial, poseur, eccentric, peculiar, odd, etc.	<i>... bila diaorang buat kerja- kerja VODOH macam ni.</i> (... when they pull stunts like this).
Capacity	15	19.2	Assessments of competence and ability, such as skilled, genius, knowledgeable, brilliant, versus stupid, dull, ignorant, clumsy, etc.	<i>... kita as consumer, kena betul-betul peka dengan apa yang companies- companies yang kita support buat.</i> (...we as consumers must be vigilant about what the companies we support are doing.)
Tenacity	4	5.1	Assessment of psychological disposition wrt determination and resolve, e.g plucky, brave, resolute, reliable, loyal, hard-working, V.S. cowardly, reckless, hasty, impatient, etc.	But I have to come to terms with it because that is the risk of me voicing out what I see...
Propriety	38	48.7	Assessments of ethical or moral standing. 'How far beyond reproach' is the behaviour or person's state, such as good, fair, just, generous, charitable, kind, or V.S. immoral, corrupt, arrogant, greedy, etc.	...if you want to take it seriously, this is disrespect
Veracity	6	7.7	Assessment regarding the person's truthfulness or honesty, dependent on social contextual values, e.g. credible, candid, direct, sincere, V. S deceitful, liar, manipulative, devious, etc.	Their apology is so weak.
Unclear	0	0		
TOTAL	78	100 %		

As shown in Table 5, propriety (lack of ethics) (38 instances or 48.7 %) is the most prominently used type of judgement, followed by capacity and normality. Often, the targets of judgment about propriety are companies or individuals that show support directly or indirectly with Israel. Targets for normality (abnormality to be precise) are sometimes the same companies or individuals, but at other times, the targets are Malaysians who are not eager to participate or who discourage others' participation in the boycott movement. Next, the frequency distribution of affect is presented in Table 6.

TABLE 6. Frequency distributions of affect

Affect	Frequency	Percentage	Definition	Example
Un/Happy	6	21.4	Evaluates as two different types of happiness/ unhappiness; i.e. negative and positive happiness, the first relates to the dimension misery (-ve) — cheer (+ve), the second relates to a dimension antipathy (-ve) — affection (+ve)	Okay, actually I'm quite happy <i>sebab banyak juga</i> brand favourite I. (Okay, actually I'm quite happy because lots of my favourite brands)
Dis/Satisfaction	9	32.1	Evaluates via two sub-types of dis/satisfaction, i.e. negative - positive satisfaction: the first is along the dimension ennui (-ve) — interest (+ve), the second displeasure—pleasure	I am shocked, I am outraged.
In/Security	5	17.9	Evaluates along two dimensions of -ve and +ve security: dis/quiet and dis/ trust	<i>Kita takut jadi macam ni.</i> (We are afraid it will become like this)
Dis/Inclination	6	21.4	Assessments as to the desirability attached to any object, person or undertaking, e.g. keen, long for, wish to, versus wary, disinclined, unwanted	I used to quite like Zara, although they are still a fast fashion brand that I could accept, but obviously, now I can't.
Un/Usualness	2	7.1	Evaluates along two dimensions of -ve and +ve usualness. The feeling evoked when something does (not) fit the normal pattern of things.	<i>I rasa pelik. Kenapa? Kenapa brands kena bat benda yang tak masuk akal macam ni?</i> (I find it strange. Why? Why do brands have to do things like this that don't make sense?)
TOTAL	28	100 %		

Table 6 shows that when it comes to affect, the activists express a lot of emotion in the dis/satisfaction category, with many instances of them blatantly showing how they are dissatisfied with how some companies operate in relation to their link to Israel.

TABLE 7. Distribution of positive and negative attitude

Attitude- Polarity	Frequency	Percentage
Positive- attitude	16	15
Negative- attitude	90	84.1
Ambiguous	1	0.9
TOTAL	107	100 %

Regarding judgment and affect, many of the instances identified fall under negative categories, as shown in Table 7. As shown in Table 7, negative attitudinal stance has a total of 90 instances (or 84.1 %) compared to the positive attitudinal stance of both judgement and affect. However, this is expected given that the aim of the boycott is to paint a negative image of Israel-related products/companies. Furthermore, the activists are very direct with their expression of emotion and judgment, as shown in Table 8.

TABLE 8. Explicitness

Explicitness	Frequency	Percentage
Inscribed	91	85
Invoked	16	15
TOTAL	107	100 %

Inscribed refers to how the speaker is being direct in saying or expressing judgment or emotion (Martin & White, 2005). On the other hand, invoked implies an indirect meaning to judgment/appreciation/affect. Despite the direct expression, the statements by the activists are not too provocative, perhaps part of their strategy to avoid shadow-banning, content removal, access restrictions, live-streaming bans, interaction restrictions, or even permanent account banning from the TikTok platform (Chambers, 2024). We argue that activists who capitalise on followers and earn income from product affiliation have to adopt a different approach to language strategies promoting BDS to their followers.

Next, the analysis of social motivations of the marked code choice is presented below. The number of videos has been reduced to just 27 (videos 4, 9, and 30 were excluded) instead of 30 because the three videos are presented in one language, either Malay or English. This indicates that approximately 90% of the videos are presented in more than one language, mainly English and Malay.

TABLE 9. Distribution of marked code choice of code switching among activists

Num.	Activist	English and/or BM	Instances of marked code choice	Total
1	Leila- 02.11.2023	Both	7	23 (25.3%)
2	Leila- 11.12.2023	Both	2	
3	Leila-01.11.2023	Both	4	
5	Leila- 14.10.2024	Both	2	
6	Leila- 6.10.2024	Both	8	
7	Rose- 17.12.2023	Both	2	5 (5.5%)
8	Rose-30.04.2024	Both	1	
10	Rose- 5.12.2023	Both	0	
11	Rose- 8.3.2024	Both	0	
12	Rose- 14.3.2024	both	2	
13	Dexter- 24.6.2024	Both	12	49 (53.8%)
14	Dexter- 21.5.2024	Both	15	
15	Dexter-10.12.2023	Both	3	
16	Dexter- 5.12.2023	Both	4	
17	Dexter- 9.7.2024	Both	5	
18	Dexter- 22.7.2024	Both	10	3 (3.3%)
19	Jansen- 22.10.2023	Both	0	
20	Jansen- 30.10.2023	Both	1	
21	Jansen-10.12.2023	Both	2	
22	Jansen- 15.11.2023	Both	0	
23	Jansen- 29.10.2023	Both	0	11 (12.1%)
24	Jansen- 13.5.2024	Both	0	
25	Alexei- 22.10.2023	Both	1	
26	Alexei-5.4.2024	Both	3	
27	Alexei- 13.3.2024	Both	2	
28	Alexei- 13.6.2024	Both	2	91
29	Alexei- 14.4.2024	Both	3	
Total			91	

Table 9 shows that the marked code choice can also be considered as a stylistic preference of the digital activist. This is because, among the five activists examined in Table 9, only two extensively used marked code choice in their TikTok videos, i.e. Dexter (49 instances/53.8%) and Leila (23 instances/25.3%). The remaining activists used no more than three marked code choices in each of their videos and sometimes did not use them at all (see Jansen and Rose). Between Dexter and Leila, the types of motivations for marked code choice are also vastly different. Leila is driven by different types of motivations when code switching, including expansion, emphasis and clarification. Meanwhile, Dexter is consistently driven by a type of social motivation for code-switching, i.e. to avoid algorithm detection, which will be explained later.

Table 10 shows categories of social motivations for code-switching (marked code-choice). Whilst a code switch can be motivated by multiple social motivations at the same time, we only considered the most likely motivation and hence identified only one motivation for each instance or code switch.

TABLE 10. Types of social motivations for code-switching (marked code choice)

Types	Frequency	Percentage	Description	Example
Expansion	2	2.2	Expanding the idea further with either examples or more points	<i>Kononnya kita tak boleh survive tanpa American conglomerate.</i> (As if we cannot survive without an American conglomerate.)
Clarification	9	9.9	Clarifying the reason for something	That is why <i>boikot bukan niat dia untuk</i> destroy but to amplify our voices. (That is the aim of boycotting is not to destroy but to amplify our voices.)
Identity-marking	2	2.2	The statement made delineates a particular identity of the writer	So <i>I rasa macam</i> why do I have to tempt faith, why do I have to cross God. (So I feel like why do I have to tempt faith, why do I have to cross God.)
Emphasis	20	22.0	The switch creates impact and places emphasis on a particular point.	So New Balance <i>memang ada</i> direct ties <i>dengan</i> is not real. (So New Balance does have direct ties with is not real.)
Emphasise-Emotion	5	5.5	The switch creates impact and places emphasis on a particular emotion	I am shocked, I am outrage. <i>I terkejut sangat-sangat...</i> (I am shocked, I am outrage. I am so surprised...)
Renegotiation-of-relationship	1	1.1	The switch serves as a textual marker of the author's ongoing deliberation or internal uncertainty regarding the nature of their relationship with the other party.	And Leila <i>mengaku</i> that I had no idea about the history of Marks & Spencer as a retail chain. (And I do admit that I have no idea about the history of Marks & Spencer as a retail chain.)
Showing-solidarity	2	2.2	The switch shows solidarity with another party.	<i>I dengan platform kecil I, I buat apa yang I boleh buat untuk</i> the Palestinian people. (Me with my small platform, I do what I can for the Palestinian people.)
Reconverge-to-local-audience	1	1.1	The switch indexes the author's reconvergence (or accommodation) to the local audience.	<i>Kalau kau orang punya timeline tak penuh dengan apa yang berlaku dekat Palestin,</i> you guys have to freaking fix your timeline <i>doe</i> . (If your timeline is not filled with what happened in Palestine, you guys have to freaking fix your timeline.)

Finding difficulty with words	2	2.2	The author uses certain words in English because he/she finds it difficult to explain in another language.	And on top of that, the gas lighting as if <i>apa yang I cakap ni macam akan meruntuhkan orang Melayu</i> . (And on top of that, the gaslighting, as if what I said would ruin Malay people.)
Avoid algorithm detection	47	51.6	A word or phrase is used to avoid algorithm detection	<i>Kita start dengan famous fashion brand yang pro is not real dulu</i> . (We will start with a famous fashion brand that pro is not real)
TOTAL	91	100		

Based on Table 10, the most frequent social motivations for code-switching are to avoid algorithm detection (51.6%), followed by emphasis (to emphasise a point) (22%). The rest of the types are less than 10%. With regards to the social motivations of avoiding algorithm detection, out of the 47 instances found, 46 instances are found in Dexter's videos, and all refer to one phrase *it's not real*. For this particular phrase, we also identified it as a type of humour or mockery towards Israel, saying that it is not a real country. This will be further elaborated on in the discussions of the findings.

DISCUSSIONS OF FINDINGS

In this section, the findings are discussed under two main themes: 1. call to action, and 2. linguistic resilience. To support our analysis, we have extracted evidence from the corpus using collocational analysis, concordances, and n-grams.

THEME 1: CALL TO ACTION

The first theme is the 'call to action' theme. As the name suggests, we identified instances where activists used language to urge their followers to perform specific actions. The most common call to action was to boycott products. For example, one activist stated: *Cetaphil ini pun antara produk yang kena boikot* (Cetaphil is one of the products that we have to boycott). While most of these calls to action were neutral in tone, some were categorised as a type of negative judgement (attitudinal stance) when they came together with negatively laden words, as shown in Table 11.

TABLE 11. Instances of call to action categorized as negative judgement (concordance)

Pretext	Word	Posttext	English translation
... sebab kita dah cuba elak daripada brand- brand	boikot	ini, tapi takut terkena juga. Kalau kau orang nak...	...because we tried to avoid these boycott brands, but we might accidentally purchase it.
..., Coca- cola adalah salah satu benda yang you kena	boikot	gila- gila. Sebenarnya dah banyak kali lah saya...	..., Coca- cola is one of the things you need to boycott aggressively.
... rasa macam saya perlu teruskan untuk buat video	boikot	ni. Walaupun sebenarnya saya tengok orang macam...	... feel like I need to continue making boycott videos.
Sebab orang macam kau orang semua yang mana tak	boikot	ni. Sebab apa? Kalau orang boikot Pepsi sahaja...	Because of people like you who refuse to boycott. Because why?
...brain. As expected, ramai yang memperlekehkan isu	boikot	. Sebab dia orang rasa yang perbuatan ini akan mer...	As expected, a lot of people underestimate the boycott issue.
...rang sendiri explain dekat Leila yang dorang mula	boikot	company ni sebab company ni tak memberi hak kepa...	... they explained to me that they started boycotting the company because the said company does not grant the rights towards....
Sembang tentang	boikot	ini, ubat gigi Colgate yang kita pakai tiap- tiap...	Talking about boycotts, Colgate toothpaste that we use every day...

From Table 11, the phrase, *you kena boikott gila-gila* (you need to boycott aggressively) was identified as a negative judgment of proprietary, as it evaluates how the said product is ethically compromised due to its support for Israel, and as such should be avoided at all costs. In the data, the word boycott is widely used in its Malay form rather than English form (*boikot*, freq. 53, *boycott* freq. 6). The call to action used in English is shown in Table 12.

TABLE 12. Concordance of the word boycott

Pretext	Word	Posttext	English Translation
Haï guys, <i>hari ini</i> I nak update about the brands to	boycott	<i>list sebab sebelum ini</i> I pernah listkan fashion	Hi guys, today I want to update about the brands on the boycott list because before this I had listed fashion...
Palestinian themselves actually called for a Zara	boycott	. <i>Ini disebabkan</i> one of the owners of Zara actually...	Palestinian themselves actually called for a Zara boycott. It is because one of the owners of Zara actually....
... <i>apa yang terjadi</i> , obviously they called for a	boycott	, they're so disappointed, like I am right now	...obviously they called for a boycott, they're so disappointed, like I am right now.
<i>Kita dah guna</i> all these years. And if we	boycott	all of these things, for example phone. Macam ma...	We had used all these years. And if we boycott all of these things, for example phone...
What I'm trying to say is that we want to	boycott	things, <i>kita buat apa yang kita mampu</i> . I know it'...	What I'm trying to say is that, if we want to boycott things, we do what we can or are capable of.

In Table 12, only lines 2 and 3 are actually instances of a call to action. In the remaining lines, the word is used to explain things regarding the boycott movement and process. Even though there are many instances of the word 'boycott' in the data, not all of them are related to a call to action. However, when they are, a call to action is done using an active sentence structure. For example: ...*Palestinians themselves actually called for a Zara boycott* (line 2, Table 12). The phrase *kena boikot* (need to boycott) is one of the most frequent n-gram patterns found in the data, as shown in Table 13. This shows yet another way a call to action may be formed, possibly in an active sentence:

TABLE 13. N-gram results of the data (*kena boikot*)

1	2	Frequency	Range %
is	not	28	20.00
ini	dia	23	56.67
orang	punya	21	16.67
dia	ada	19	30.00
pro	is	18	16.67
it's	not	18	20.00
lepas	itu	17	20.00
i	tak	17	20.00
tak	nak	14	26.67
apa	yang	14	33.3
dekat	israel	13	16.67
brand	under	13	20.00
dan	juga	13	20.00
kita	tak	13	20.00
tak	ada	13	30.00
of	the	13	26.67
this	is	13	16.67
orang	tak	13	16.67
you	guys	13	23.33
brand	yang	12	23.33
kategori	kuning	12	13.33

ini	adalah	12	40
sebab	dia	12	33.33
yang	kita	12	30.00
orang	yang	12	23.33
Brands	under	11	6.67
yang	dia	11	33.33
kena	boikot	11	30.00
want	to	11	13.33

Interestingly, when we look at the opposite of the action to boycott, namely to support, we found an unexpected narrative pattern. Out of the 34 instances of the word ‘support’, only one refers to supporting local products as an alternative to the ones on the boycott list: ...*dan juga kita boleh support produk-produk local and buy Muslim* (...and we can support local and buy Muslim products). Instead, many instances of the word ‘support’ implied potential people or companies to be boycotted. The word ‘support’ in this case actually collocates with Israel, as shown in Table 14 and Figure 3.

TABLE 14. Instances of the word support in the data

Pretext	Word	Posttext	English translation
..... so that we who do not know will continue to	support	them. And <i>kau orang kena faham ya</i> , as an so that we who do not know will continue to support them. And all of you need to understand, okay, as an...
... <i>apa yang dibuat oleh Wexner ini adalah dia</i>	support	<i>gila- gila punya Israel ni.</i>	So, what do Wexner do is that he is a biggest Israel supporter.
... dan tukar kepada alternatif lain yang tak	support	<i>kepada Israel...</i>	...and switch to a different alternative that does not support Israel...
... <i>tapi pada bila dilihat kembali, rupanya dia still</i>	support	<i>kepada israel sebab dia donate kasut kepada Israel...</i>	... but when we take a look again, they actually still support Israel because they donated shoes to Israel...
<i>Bayangkan waktu itu dia</i>	support	<i>kepada Israel ini dengan supply kasut kepada Israel...</i>	Imagine at that time they supported Israel by supplying shoes to Israel....
... <i>kita cuba bangunkan di Malaysia ini untuk saling</i>	support	<i>kepada saudara kita yang berada di Palestin...</i>	... we try to develop in Malaysia to always support our brothers in Palestine.
... <i>kategori kuning pula. Maknanya dekat sini yang tak</i>	support	<i>Is not real directly, tapi ada pro Is not real ...</i>	... in the yellow category. Meaning here is that it does not support is not real directly but has a tie with is not real...
... yang macam kita tahu, Donatella Versace memang	support	Bella Hadid kan when she posted about watermelon...	... just like we know, Donatella Versace supported Bella Hadid when she posted about watermelon...
... brand under kategori kuning ini dia tak directly	support	It's not real tau. Tapi dia ada pro It's not real...	...and the yellow category does not directly support Is not real, okay. But they have ties with Its not real...
Sebab donatella Versace memang	support	Bella Hadid, tapi I baru found out yang owner r...	Because Donatella Versace does support Bella Hadid, but I just found out that owner
... ini kepada tiga kategori. Satu memang directly	support	Israel, yang ini kita panggil kategori merah.	.. this in three categories. First, directly support Israel, this one we call the red category.
Okay, yang under kategori merah yang directly	support	Israel ini, kepala dia dalam dunia fesyen ini t...	Okay, the one under red category that supports israel directly, their head leader in the fashion world is ...
Lepastu under LVHM ini pula yang paling kuat	support	Israel ialah Chanel tau yang dah bagi donation...	Then, the brand under LVHM that strongly supports Israel is Chanel, which has already donated...

... So no, CEO Tory Burch	support	Israel dan dah bagi donation sebanyak 150 ribu US...	So no, Tory Burch does support Israel and already gave a donation of as much as 150 thousand US...
Authentic Brands Group publicly	support	and bagi donation to it's not real. Puma pun ada ...	Authentic Brands group publicly supported and gave donations to It's not real. Even Puma had...
American Eagle ada show public	support	for Israel. Skeches owner dia Zionist, Timberland...	American Eagle had shown public support for Israel. Sketches owner is a Zionist,...

Except for lines 1 and 6, the rest of the concordances of the word support illustrate how TikTok activists pointed to the complex relationship between Israel and many influential people and companies across the financial, fashion and cosmetics industries. The word 'support' is commonly associated with positive meanings. However, in this specific discourse, its function has shifted to a highly negative one. Digital activists utilise the term to create unfavourable associations between various entities and Israel. By establishing these linkages, they implicitly call for a boycott of these individuals and companies. Figure 3 shows a collocational map and table generated from Lancsbox 5.0 software for the word 'support'.

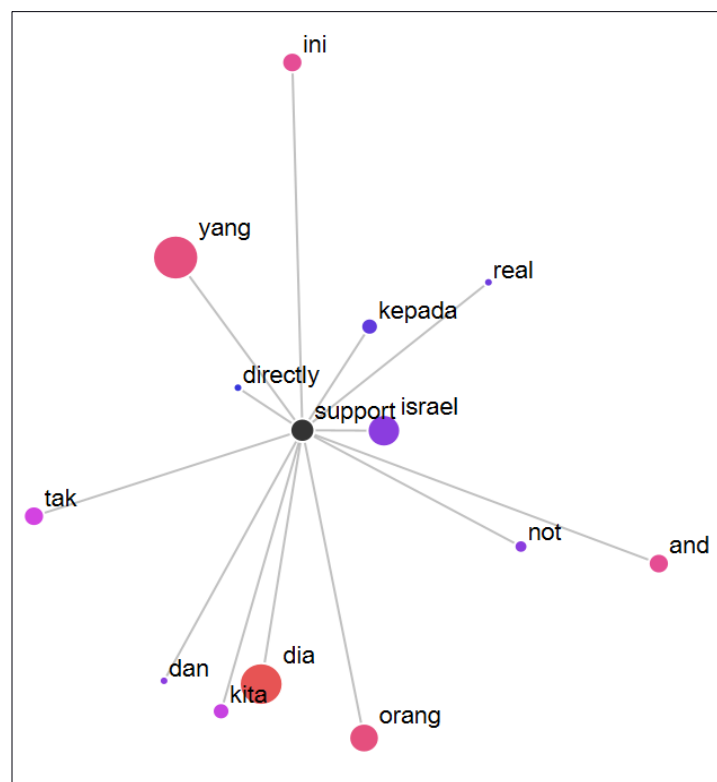


FIGURE 3. Collocational map for the word support

TABLE 15. Collocational analysis of the word support

support x					
support		Hits: 34 (3,326.81)	Texts: 17/30	Collocates: 178	
Freq. (collocation) ≥ 5...				13	
Collocate	Distribution	Freq. (colloc)	Freq. (corpus)	Log Dic	MI
directly		5	7	12.0	7.7
kepada		7	36	11.7	5.9
israel		12	66	11.9	5.8
real		5	46	11.0	5.0
not		6	66	10.9	4.8
yang		17	215	11.1	4.6
dan		5	66	10.7	4.5
tak		8	119	10.7	4.3
kita		7	110	10.6	4.3
dia		16	253	10.8	4.2
orang		11	215	10.5	3.9
ini		8	194	10.2	3.6
and		8	196	10.2	3.6

Based on Table 15, the word ‘support’ is found in 17 texts (57%) out of the 30 texts collected. And whilst it only occurs 34 times in the corpus, it collocates strongly with the words ‘directly’ and ‘Israel’, shown by both MI score and Log Dice score. And the word *Israel* appears on the right-hand side of the word ‘support’, usually in such patterns: *support Israel* or *support to/kepada Israel*.

In the call to action theme, both instances of ‘boycott’ and ‘support’ are sometimes used to direct social media users’ attention toward two goals: influencing their consumer behaviour by calling for a boycott of products or companies or changing their perspective on certain people or companies from positive to negative. While the latter is more implicit, it portrays a more nuanced strategy that allows activists to achieve two goals simultaneously: 1. Avoiding direct implication by people or companies by implying instead of directing, and 2. achieving their goal of persuading or influencing followers to boycott the products/people.

SOCIAL MOTIVATIONS TO CODE SWITCHING IN CALL-TO-ACTION THEME

The word boycott was found to be used after the call to action was made, specifically to elaborate on the consequences of the boycott movement. This was identified as a marked code-switch move by a number of activists, where the change of code from Malay to English was used to emphasise the consequence or objective of the boycott movement.

TABLE 16. Instances of marked code choice emphasising consequence

Original Transcript	English Translation
Arab League <i>boikot waktu itu</i> company PepsiCo. So <i>dia</i> delay <i>pembukaan dia</i> . <i>Nampak eh kesan boikot ini</i> , it can prolong and even they can make those companies suffer. That is why <i>boikot bukan niat dia untuk</i> destroy but to amplify our voices	At that time, the Arab League boycotted PepsiCo company. So they delayed their opening. See how boycotting gives impact, it can prolong and even they can make those companies suffer. That is what the intention of the boycott is not to destroy but to amplify our voices.

Based on Table 16, the activists switched from Malay to English towards the end of the sentence, probably for the purpose of: 1. emphasising their point about the result of the boycott movement, 2. making the point stand out by using a different language, and 3. increasing credibility and persuasiveness by using a global language like English, especially when arguing that a boycott is effective. The last point about how code switching to English increases credibility and persuasiveness was also found in another study by Luna and Peracchio (2005). In their study about slogans, a higher persuasive effect was identified when the slogan code switched from the local language (minority language) to the global language (majority language).

As such, in the theme of call to action, the code switch from Malay and English is quite prevalent, especially in making a point that stands out at the end of the sentence. Considered as a marked code-choice, such a switch plays a role in increasing the persuasive power of the speaker, especially when speaking with the local audience. In the next section, the second and final theme is presented.

THEME 2: LINGUISTIC RESILIENCE

Linguistic resilience is the second theme, and it contributes to our understanding of the more complex layers of linguistic tools used by the activists. In this paper, we conceptualise linguistic resilience as instances or manifestations of a language user's ability to allow language to operate effectively in highly challenging environments by adapting various linguistic strategies.

One of the most interesting instances of linguistic resilience is the coded language used to identify Israel and Palestine. For example, the word Israel is coded as 'is not real' by the activist known as Dexter. As mentioned before, this phrase is also identified as a marked code choice of code switching with the social motivations of avoiding algorithm selection, humour and mockery. The phrase 'not real' occurs 46 times in our data, all from Dexter, with the variation of 'is not real' and 'it's not real'. Some instances are shown in Table 17.

TABLE 17. Instances of 'not real' in the data

Left	Node	Right	English Translation
...merah yang memang pro is	not real.	Kategori kuning yang ada investors...	...red category that is pro is not real. Yellow category that has investors...
...Rock yang memang pro is	not real.	So coach ini tak boleh	...Rock who is pro is not real. So coach...
...about beauty products pro is	not real	pula. I rasa video ini	...about beauty products that is not real. I think this video...
...all know pun pro is	not real.	So brands Unilever macam Axe...	... all know that the pro is not real. So Unilever brands such as Axe...
...and M pun pro is	not real	and barru- baru ni dekat Morocco	...and M also pro is not real and lately at Morocco...
...and Mauritz pun Pro is	not real	you guys. Macam H and...	...and Mauritz also pro is not real.

In Table 17, you can see that Dexter discusses brands or companies that are pro-Israel or support Israel. Thus, the aim is similar to an implicit call to action to boycott these brands. The use of such coded language for Israel, we argue, has two functions: 1. to avoid auto detection by social media providers that might ban the account for frequently mentioning Israel, and 2. to create a sense of word play that Israel is not a real country. Hence, 'it is not real' is a clever wordplay that is also very political at the same time.

Another activist, by the name of Jansen, chose a code name for Israel as shown in the following excerpt:

Original transcript: *Nak tanya Watson Guardian tak ada kaitan dengan si Iz tu kan, risaulah juga sebab kita dah cuba elak daripada brand-brand boikot ini, tapi takut terkena juga.*

English translation: Just want to ask if Guardian and Watson have anything to do with that Iz. Of course, we worry because we had been trying to avoid these boycotted brands, but we fear that we might have mistakenly purchased them.

This is the only example of the code name *Si Iz* used in the data. He asked sarcastically whether Watson or Guardian, two very popular Malaysian cosmetic stores, are affiliated in any way with Israel. *Si Iz* is a very Malaysian way of calling someone, especially someone whom people gossip about. The use of *Si*, in some way, also shows how scandalous and how ethically questionable the person is. This code name humanises Israel, but in a negative sense.

Next, activists used the word *tembikai* to refer to Palestine. *Tembikai* is a Malay word that refers to the watermelon. Only two activists, Dexter and Leila, used the word *tembikai* when referring to Palestine. Dexter also used the English word *watermelon* in one of his videos. Watermelons have been used until now as a symbol of struggle, national identity, and as a form of solidarity with the Palestinian (Arfan & Salam, 2024). It all started when the Israeli occupation continued to ban Palestinian flags from being publicly displayed. And because the colours of the Palestinian flag are similar to a cut of watermelon fruit, it has become a symbol of resistance and solidarity used by Palestinians and their supporters throughout social media (Arfan & Salam, 2024). Three instances of the word *tembikai* used by the influences are shown in Table 18.

TABLE 18. Concordance of the word *tembikai* (Watermelon)

Left	Node	Right	Translation
...saja brand yang memang pro	<i>tembikai</i>	<i>tau. Tapi yang itu...</i>	...brands that are Pro watermelon okay.
...support apa yang berlaku dekat	<i>tembikai.</i>	<i>Dalam leadership visit tu, Leila..</i>	...support what happens at Watermelon. In that leadership visit, Leila...
...orang itu bukan hanya bedil	<i>tembikai.</i>	<i>Habiskan Lebanon, Yaman, Iran, semua...</i>	...they not only attack watermelon. They are also attacking Lebanon, Yaman, Iran and all...

The use of "is" is "is not real", *tembikai*, or *Si Iz* can be labelled as algospeak. According to Steen et al. (2023), TikTok content creators can use algospeak through information delivery, TikTok captions, and hashtags in their videos. Algospeak is a form of netspeak that uses abbreviations, misspellings, or word replacements (Steen et al., 2023). Using algospeak might help bypass the TikTok surveillance system so that followers can still understand the information given.

Apart from algospeak, some activists like Dexter have a colour-coded system in which he categorises products to red, yellow and green: red (the product/company must be boycotted because the product/company supports Israel), yellow (suspicious due to their link to Israel, so discretion is advised), green (acceptable to be purchased). In this sense, the use of colour codes is considered part of a coded language, as people who are unfamiliar with the codes will not be able to know what is being talked about.

SOCIAL MOTIVATIONS TO CODE SWITCHING IN THE LINGUISTIC RESILIENCE THEME

Within the theme of linguistic resilience, switching between local language and selectively choosing clauses or phrases to be uttered in English shows the activists' way of navigating their identities as both Malaysians and digital activists concerned about global issues. A study by Metrouh and Mebtouche (2022, p. 100) mentioned that code switching "is more often considered a communicative strategy used by bilinguals or multilinguals for surpassing the limitations that may result from the static use of a single linguistic system". By using words commonly used by global activists, their engagement on social media could be increased. At the same time, when using Malay, they also engage closely with their target audience, i.e. Malaysians. An example can be observed in the following excerpt.

Original transcript: I am shocked, I am outraged. *I terkejut sangat-sangat sebab selama ini Leila tak tahu pun yang Marks and Spencer ada Zionist history.*

English translation: I am shocked, I am outraged. I am very, very shocked because all this time, Leila didn't even know that Mark and Spencer have a Zionist history.

In the excerpt from the activist Leila, there are two parts of what is considered a marked code choice. The first part consists of the first few sentences, where she shared her feelings three times: the first two in English and the last one in Malay. The motivation for doing this is twofold: first, to emphasise her emotions and second, to negotiate her identity as both Malaysian and a global citizen in light of the issue she raised in the second part – Marks and Spencer's Zionist history. The choice of the word Zionist rather than Israel also functions as a form of identity marking, signalling one who opposes Israel and Zionist.

Another element that contributes to the linguistic resilience theme is the ability to impart and discuss complex ideas. In the excerpt below, the idea of gaslighting is discussed implicitly, but the message is still conveyed:

Original excerpt: And on top of that, the gas lighting *as if apa yang I cakap ni macam akan meruntuhkan orang Melayu, akan meruntuhkan Malaysia...And I bernasib baik tahu sebab I ada banyak experience handle orang yang difficult, orang yang suka gas light ataupun basically man handle you untuk cakap yang dia betul.*
English translation: And on top of that, the gaslighting as if what I said is as if it will destroy the Malay people, it will destroy Malaysia. And I am lucky because I have had a lot of experience handling difficult people, people who always gaslight or basically manhandle you so that you will say that they are right.

In the excerpt, the concepts of gaslighting/gaslight and manhandling are complex as they lack a direct translation in Malay. Hence, the first motivation for code-switching to these English words is that the activist finds it difficult to find an equivalent in the local language. However, other motivations also come into play. First, the activist may be motivated to impart knowledge about these concepts to the local audience. Second, she might want to show her followers that when a person boycotts a company/product, they may face these challenges. Nevertheless, despite

finding it difficult to express her ideas in the local language, she uses English and combines it with an explanation in Malay. This is part of her effort to show her resilience through action and language use.

CONCLUSION

While the aim of traditional and contemporary activists in the digital era is similar – mobilising support for their cause – the language and content used are arguably different. This is due to the distinct social spaces they inhabit: one operates in a physical space, while the other navigates the digital realm of social media. Basic strategies like calling for action or knowledge sharing are similar for both types of activists. For digital activists, the repertoire of language and expression is limited due to constant monitoring, yet they can mobilise support (as seen from the number of likes). By utilising indirect language and complex persuasive strategies, activists and followers are accustomed to the nature of the digital sphere. As a result, they arguably become more sensitive to the subtle language nuances hinted at by these digital activists. Therefore, research into how language is used and has evolved within the social media and digital realms should continue. While this study focuses mainly on the use of verbal texts, in the future, researchers might want to investigate multimodality as well, as this might provide a holistic picture of language use by digital activists. This study has contributed to our understanding of the kind of persuasive language used by activists, as well as the social motivations for code-switching. While limited in some respects, it has nevertheless provided insights into the strategic linguistic adaptations necessitated by digital surveillance, which can be used to inform future research on online mobilisation discourse.

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