LET: Linguistics, Literature and English Teaching Journal
||Volume||16||Issue||2||Pages||261-292||2026||
|P-ISSN: 20869606; E-ISSN: 25492454|
Available online at: http://jurnal.uin-antasari.ac.id/index.php

The Use of Tutor's Code-Switching in English Classrooms and Its Implications for Students' English Language Acquisition

Mutiara Citra Dewi
dewi.mutiaracitra1103@gmail.com
Nani Hizriani
nanihizriani@gmail.com
UIN Antasari Banjarmasin

Khairatunnisa
khairatunnisaicha@gmail.com
STAI Rasyidiyah Khalidiyah (Rakha) Amuntai

Article History:

Received: 22 July 2026
Accepted: 21 August 2026

Corresponding Author:

khairatunnisaicha@gmail.com

Keywords:

Bilingual education; Code-switching; Classroom interaction; English language acquisition; Second language learning

Abstract

Code-switching, the alternation between two or more languages within a conversation, is a common phenomenon in bilingual and multilingual classrooms, yet in Indonesian EFL settings such as UPB (*Unit Pengembangan Bahasa*) UIN Antasari Banjarmasin where students bring varying levels of English proficiency into a shared non-formal language unit the specific ways tutors use code-switching and how students perceive its impact remain underexplored, making this context a relevant site for closer investigation. This study examines the use of teachers' code-switching in English language classrooms and its implications for students' English language acquisition, drawing on sociolinguistic and second language acquisition theories to explore how code-switching functions as a pedagogical tool to facilitate learning. Using a qualitative descriptive approach, data were collected through classroom observations and interviews with an English tutor and 10 students at UPB UIN Antasari Banjarmasin. The findings reveal that teachers frequently switch between English

and Bahasa Indonesia to clarify concepts, explain grammar rules, introduce new vocabulary, and encourage student participation; while code-switching aids comprehension, excessive use may hinder students' exposure to the target language, and students acknowledge its benefits but also express the need for more English immersion to improve their proficiency. The study suggests that code-switching should be strategically employed to scaffold learning while gradually promoting English as the primary medium of instruction, with further research recommended to examine the long-term impact of code-switching on language acquisition across different proficiency levels.

INTRODUCTION

Language serves as a crucial medium of communication, enabling speakers to convey their ideas, opinions, and emotions, talk about themselves, ask questions, and organize their ideas through spoken or written discourse. This sets human communication apart from that of animals. According to Nasution & Tambunan, (2022), interaction with humans depends largely on language as a communication tool. Humans are able to communicate their thoughts, feelings, desires, and experiences to others through language.

There are thousands of languages across the world, and each is unique to its community. For example, the Banjar people speak *Banjarese*, which is understood only by other Banjar speakers. Similarly, Sundanese people speak Sundanese, and people understand each other due to their shared language. On a broader scale, a Sundanese person and a *Banjarese* person can understand each other because they share a common national language (*Bahasa Indonesia*). The growing need for global communication has also encouraged individuals to learn additional languages beyond their native tongue. As a result, multilingualism has become increasingly prevalent. Individuals proficient in multiple languages often experience enhanced communication abilities, allowing them to navigate different linguistic and cultural

contexts more effectively. In particular, bilingual and multilingual individuals can assume various linguistic roles due to their linguistic competencies.

The study of language within specific communities falls under sociolinguistics, a field that examines the relationship between language and society. Based on the statements "You are what you speak" and "You are what you eat," speakers see language as a representation of their social identity. Words have cultural reality and are used to convey knowledge, opinions, and attitudes that are common to the cultural group (Ramírez & Ibáñez, 2024). Sociolinguistics integrates sociology (the study of society) and linguistics (the study of language). Andrus (2024) stated that an interdisciplinary field called sociolinguistics investigates the complex interrelationship between language and society, looking at how social factors affect language use, variation, and change.

Sociolinguistics also examines the factors contributing to bilingualism and multilingualism, which have become widespread phenomena for various reasons. These include living in multilingual societies where speakers of minority languages must learn the dominant language, migration to regions where a different language is spoken, and formal language learning in academic settings. In such contexts, bilingual speakers frequently engage in code-switching, defined as the alternation of two or more languages within the same conversational episode.

Key topics in sociolinguistics include multilingualism, bilingualism, interference, diglossia, code-switching, and code-mixing. In countries like Indonesia, where multiple languages are spoken, most people are bilingual or multilingual. For instance, Indonesians typically speak both their local language and Bahasa Indonesia as the national language. Additionally, many Indonesians learn foreign languages, such as English. Bilingualism and multilingualism are increasingly understood as the equal mastery of two or more languages. Ideally, individuals who speak multiple languages do not experience linguistic interference. Linguistic interference occurs when elements of one language influence another, leading to phonological, morphological, lexical, or syntactic deviations. This happens when someone switches languages, unintentionally using features of one language in another.

Diglossia is the term used to describe a situation in which two speech types are utilized within a single speech community. There is minimal overlap between the domains in which the two speech types are utilized, as each variety is utilized in distinct domains. Ferguson (1959) defines diglossia as:

> *"Diglossia is a relatively stable language situation in which, in addition to the primary dialects of the language (which may include a standard or regional standards), there is a very divergent, highly codified (often grammatically more complex) superposed variety, the vehicle of a large and respected body of written literature, either of an earlier period or in another speech community, which is learned largely by formal education and is used for most written and formal spoken purposes but is not used by any section of the community for ordinary conversation."*

Thus, this might be the reason why diglossia has often been noted as a factor in language shift. Diglossia can contribute to language shift, particularly in communities where a minority language is in a Diglossia relationship with a more dominant language.

Nowadays, English has become the most widely spoken and studied foreign language across the globe, including in Indonesia. English has become the primary language of international communication, playing a central role in education, business, science, and technology. As the world becomes increasingly interconnected, proficiency in English is no longer simply an advantage but an essential skill for students seeking academic and professional opportunities. In Indonesia, English is taught as a foreign language (EFL) at both secondary and tertiary levels (Sukyadi, 2015). However, because English is rarely used in everyday communication, students have limited opportunities to practice the language outside the classroom (Meisani, 2014). For many learners, the classroom is the only place where they are consistently exposed to English. This makes the teacher's role especially important in creating meaningful learning experiences while ensuring that students receive sufficient exposure to the target language.

Although some primary schools in Indonesia provide English instruction, the majority of students start studying the language when they attend junior high school

at the age of twelve [need a source for this exact figure e.g. Sukyadi, (2015), or a Ministry of Education curriculum document]. They will have studied English for at least three years by the time they graduate from junior high. Students study English for three more years in senior high school, for a total of six years of English instruction. During lessons, Bahasa Indonesia is frequently utilized in place of English because it is the native tongue of both teachers and students.

Teaching English in an EFL classroom is rarely straightforward. Students come to class with different levels of proficiency, varying vocabulary knowledge, and different levels of confidence in using English. These differences become particularly noticeable when teachers explain complex grammar, introduce unfamiliar vocabulary, or encourage students to participate in classroom discussions conducted entirely in English. In response to these challenges, many teachers rely on a range of instructional strategies to make lessons more accessible. One of the most common is code-switching, or the practice of alternating between English and students' first language during classroom interaction (Gumperz, 1977; Hoffmann, 1991). In Indonesian classrooms, this usually Gumperz, (1977), involves switching between English and Bahasa Indonesia to help students better understand lesson content, and teachers and students generally perceive it as beneficial for classroom communication (Nurhamidah et al., 2018).

In English classrooms, the teacher's goal is to teach English, while students aim to learn the language by engaging in listening, reading, writing, and speaking activities. Although English is typically the language of instruction, there are times when the language switches between English and Bahasa Indonesia. This phenomenon is known as code-switching. Code-switching can occur in various situations. In a classroom, it is more complex because it operates on multiple levels. Teacher-student communication is not only about exchanging ideas but also about understanding the language itself. When teachers explain content in English, students often interpret it in their native language to ensure understanding, especially when teaching grammar. Teachers may also use Bahasa Indonesia to check students' comprehension of new vocabulary. The choice of language often depends on the task or activity being performed in the classroom (Rindal, 2024).

For many teachers, code-switching is not simply a matter of convenience. It is often a deliberate teaching strategy used to support learning. Teachers may switch languages to explain difficult concepts, clarify grammar rules, introduce new vocabulary, give instructions, or check students' understanding. Used strategically, code-switching can reduce confusion and help students connect new information with what they already know. Rather than replacing English, it can serve as a bridge that allows learners to gradually build confidence and participate more actively in classroom activities.

At the same time, the use of code-switching continues to generate debate among language educators. Some researchers argue that using students' first language creates a more supportive learning environment by reducing anxiety and improving comprehension, especially for learners with limited English proficiency. Others, however, caution that excessive reliance on the first language may reduce students' exposure to English and encourage dependence on translation instead of developing the ability to think directly in the target language. Since regular exposure to meaningful English input is considered essential for second language acquisition, striking the right balance between English and the students' native language remains an important pedagogical challenge.

Code switching refers to the alternation between two or more languages or dialects during communication. This alternation can range from using a single word to switching between full sentences or conversations. It occurs in bilingual or multilingual settings, where the speakers may have different levels of proficiency in each language. The reasons behind code switching depend on the speaker's goals and the context of communication (Panhwar & Buriro, 2020). In addition to switching between languages, code switching can also refer to changes in style within the same language, such as switching between formal and informal speech.

Code mixing, on the other hand, involves the integration of linguistic elements from two or more languages within a single sentence or utterance. This is different from code switching, which occurs between sentences or in larger conversation chunks. Code mixing includes the combination of words, phrases, and even grammatical structures from different languages (Rosita, 2013).

Although code-switching and code-mixing are related phenomena, this study specifically adopts code-switching as its analytical focus because the two terms operate at different linguistic levels. Code-switching refers to the alternation between languages across sentences, clauses, or larger conversational units, where each language segment remains grammatically complete and communicatively distinct (Poplack, 1980). Code-mixing, in contrast, involves the insertion of words, phrases, or grammatical elements from one language into the structure of another within a single sentence, often blending the two systems at the lexical or morphological level (Rosita, 2013).

The data observed in this study, the tutor completing an explanation in English before elaborating further in Bahasa Indonesia, or switching between full utterances to clarify meaning, reflects language alternation occurring between conversational turns and sentences rather than the embedding of foreign lexical items within a single grammatical frame. This pattern aligns with code-switching as defined by Poplack's, (1980) typology of tag-switching, intra-sentential, and inter-sentential switching, making code-switching the more accurate term for describing the tutor's language practices in this classroom.

Rather than asking whether code-switching is simply good or bad, recent studies have shifted the discussion toward understanding how teachers use it and under what circumstances it becomes most beneficial. Classroom language choices are rarely random. Teachers constantly adjust their language according to lesson objectives, students' proficiency levels, and the immediate needs of the classroom. Understanding these decisions can provide valuable insights into how code-switching supports or in some cases limits students' opportunities to develop their English proficiency.

Studies conducted in multilingual classrooms have likewise demonstrated that strategic code-switching can positively support students' learning experiences. Panhwar & Buriro, (2020) argued that carefully planned language alternation can reduce learners' anxiety and improve classroom participation without necessarily limiting English language development. Likewise, Rindal, (2024) emphasized that teachers' language choices are influenced by immediate instructional needs rather

than fixed language policies, suggesting that effective teachers continuously adjust their language use according to classroom circumstances.

Although these studies collectively demonstrate that teacher code-switching serves important pedagogical functions, several gaps remain that the present study seeks to address. Muñoz, (2006) examined code-switching functions primarily in relation to age and the general rate of foreign language learning, without focusing specifically on how these functions operate within a single, sustained classroom relationship over time. Liu et al., (2024) investigated code-switching within AI-driven conversational tutoring systems rather than human teacher-student interaction, meaning their findings may not fully capture the nuanced, spontaneous language choices that occur in a live classroom setting. Meanwhile, Panhwar & Buriro, (2020) offered a broad theoretical overview of code-switching approaches rather than an empirical classroom investigation, and Rindal, (2024) examined language choice in general L2 classroom contexts without specific attention to the Indonesian EFL setting or to non-formal language units such as UPB.

Furthermore, while previous research has explored either teachers' or students' perspectives on code-switching, few studies have combined classroom observation with interviews from both the tutor and multiple students within the same research site to examine how code-switching functions are enacted in practice and how they are simultaneously perceived by learners. This study addresses these gaps by providing an empirically grounded, context-specific investigation of tutor code-switching at UPB UIN Antasari Banjarmasin, triangulating observational and interview data from both the tutor and students to examine not only the pedagogical functions of code-switching but also its perceived implications for students' English language acquisition in an Indonesian tertiary, non-formal EFL setting.

Understanding how tutor code-switching operates within a specific EFL context such as UPB UIN Antasari Banjarmasin matters for both theoretical and practical reasons. Theoretically, most existing studies on teacher code-switching have been conducted in general classroom contexts or technology-mediated settings rather than in non-formal, tertiary-level Indonesian language units, leaving a gap in context-specific understanding of how and why code-switching occurs in programs

like UPB. Practically, since UPB serves students with varying English proficiency levels who rely heavily on classroom exposure due to limited English use in daily life, insights from this study can inform how tutors in similar non-formal language programs balance comprehensible instruction with meaningful English exposure. This is particularly relevant given that excessive or unstructured code-switching risks limiting students' opportunities to develop independent English proficiency, making an empirically grounded understanding of when and how code-switching supports learning valuable for improving tutor training and instructional design in comparable EFL settings.

Teacher Code-Switching in English Language Classrooms

Code-switching, defined as the alternation between two or more languages within a single conversation or interaction, is a common phenomenon in bilingual and multilingual communities (Panhwar & Buriro, 2020). In educational contexts, however, code-switching extends beyond everyday communication and serves as an instructional strategy that teachers intentionally employ to facilitate learning. Rather than reflecting a lack of proficiency in the target language, teacher code-switching is increasingly viewed as a pedagogical resource that helps learners understand lesson content, participate in classroom activities, and develop language skills (Liu et al., 2024).

The role of code-switching in English as an English Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms has received considerable attention over the past two decades. Traditional language teaching approaches often promoted an English-only environment, arguing that maximum exposure to the target language would accelerate language acquisition. More recent studies, however, suggest that exclusive use of English is not always the most effective approach, particularly in classrooms where learners have limited proficiency. Instead, strategic use of students' first language can make classroom communication more accessible while maintaining meaningful opportunities for English learning (Rindal, 2024).

In Indonesia, where English is learned primarily as a foreign language, teachers and students commonly share Bahasa Indonesia as their first language. This

shared linguistic background creates opportunities for teachers to switch between English and Bahasa Indonesia when necessary. Such instructional decisions are often influenced by students' language proficiency, lesson objectives, and classroom dynamics rather than by teachers' inability to communicate in English. Consequently, code-switching has become a common instructional practice in Indonesian EFL classrooms, particularly when teachers need to clarify meaning, provide explanations, or ensure students' understanding (Panhwar & Buriro, 2020).

At UPB UIN Antasari Banjarmasin, code-switching emerged as a recurring and largely intentional feature of classroom interaction rather than an incidental slip between languages. The tutor primarily alternated between English and Bahasa Indonesia, with only minimal use of *Banjarese*, most frequently when clarifying lesson content, explaining grammatical structures, introducing unfamiliar vocabulary, providing individual support to students, and emphasizing key information during instruction. This switching occurred both during whole-class explanation and in one-on-one interactions, and was more frequent when students showed visible difficulty understanding a concept in English alone. Students, in turn, tended to respond in Bahasa Indonesia particularly when the tutor's own language use shifted between the two languages, suggesting that the tutor's code-switching directly shaped students' language choices during classroom discourse.

Types of Code-Switching

One of the most widely accepted classifications of code-switching was proposed by Poplack (1980), who identified three major types: tag-switching, intra-sentential switching, and inter-sentential switching.

1. Tag-switching

   Tag-switching occurs when speakers insert short expressions or discourse markers from one language into an utterance that is primarily spoken in another language. Because these expressions are grammatically independent, they can be inserted without disrupting sentence structure (Poplack, 1980). In classroom interaction, teachers frequently use English expressions such as okay, right, or well while speaking Bahasa Indonesia. For example, in

English, common tags are “you know” or “you mean.” Example: "Banyak remaja masa kini sudah berani berpakaian seksi... *you know*...mengikuti *trend* katanya."

2. Intra-sentential switching

   Intra-sentential switching refers to language alternation within a single sentence. This type requires relatively high bilingual competence because speakers must maintain grammatical accuracy while integrating two languages into one utterance (Liu et al., 2024). Teachers often employ intra-sentential switching when introducing new English vocabulary while simultaneously explaining its meaning in Bahasa Indonesia. Example: "*If* kita terus membiarkan diri kita didera *emotionally* maka akan menyebabkan *stress*."

3. Inter-sentential

   Inter-sentential switching occurs between complete sentences, allowing teachers to deliver information in English before repeating or elaborating on it in the students' first language. This form is frequently observed in EFL classrooms because it enables teachers to maximize English exposure while ensuring that essential information is clearly understood (Panhwar & Buriro, 2020). “*I am nervous*. Buku yang saya pinjam dari *library* tidak ada. Sudah saya *search* di meja belajar *but I can’t find it*. *Maybe* hilang.”

Although identifying structural types of code-switching is important, classroom researchers increasingly argue that understanding the instructional purposes behind language alternation provides greater insight into teachers' pedagogical practices (Muñoz, 2006). Agree with Hizriani, (2017) Indonesia students frequently engage in the practice of code-switching between Bahasa Indonesia and English in classroom or written message.

Pedagogical Functions of Teacher Code-Switching

Although code-switching has been widely recognized as a common phenomenon in bilingual and multilingual classrooms, teachers do not switch languages randomly. Their language choices are often influenced by instructional

objectives, students' language proficiency, and the immediate needs of the classroom. Consequently, researchers have identified several pedagogical functions of teacher code-switching that facilitate communication, enhance students' comprehension, and support the teaching and learning process. One of the most widely cited classifications was proposed by Muñoz (2006), who identified six major functions of teachers' code-switching in language classrooms. These functions are discussed below, together with findings from more recent studies that support their pedagogical significance. According to Muñoz (2006), teachers' code-switching serves several important functions in the language classroom. These functions support both teaching and learning and are not always used consciously by teachers.

The first function is *topic switch*, in which teachers alternate between the target language and the students' first language depending on the lesson content. This commonly occurs when explaining complex grammatical concepts or introducing unfamiliar material that may be difficult for learners to understand entirely in English. Recent research supports this function, suggesting that brief explanations in the first language reduce students' cognitive load and allow them to focus on understanding the target grammatical concepts rather than struggling with the language of explanation itself (Liu et al., 2024).

The second function is the *affective function*, which involves using the students' first language to build rapport and create a supportive classroom environment. Teachers may switch languages to praise, encourage, comfort, or motivate learners, making them feel more confident and willing to participate in classroom activities. This function is particularly beneficial for learners who experience anxiety when communicating exclusively in English. By reducing psychological barriers, strategic code-switching can increase students' willingness to ask questions, express opinions, and participate actively in classroom discussions (Panhwar & Buriro, 2020).

Another important function is the *repetitive function*, in which teachers repeat or clarify explanations and instructions in the students' first language to ensure comprehension. After presenting information in English, teachers may restate

key points in Bahasa Indonesia to minimize misunderstanding. Similarly, code-switching plays an important role in classroom management, such as giving instructions, organizing group activities, explaining assessment procedures, and maintaining classroom discipline. Using the students' first language in these situations helps prevent confusion and ensures that valuable instructional time is not lost due to misunderstandings (Rindal, 2024). Nevertheless, excessive repetition through translation may cause students to rely on their first language instead of paying attention to the target language.

Muñoz (2006) also identify *teacher's linguistic competence and insecurity* as a function of code-switching. Teachers may occasionally switch to the students' first language when they cannot immediately recall a word or expression in the target language. In such situations, code-switching helps maintain the flow of communication and prevents unnecessary interruptions during classroom instruction.

Another function is *ease of expression*. Teachers may switch languages when certain ideas, expressions, or concepts are more accurately or efficiently conveyed in one language than the other. This enables teachers to communicate their intended meaning more clearly without sacrificing the effectiveness of instruction.

Finally, *translation* serves as an important function of teachers' code-switching. Teachers frequently translate unfamiliar vocabulary, phrases, or expressions into the students' first language to facilitate comprehension and support vocabulary acquisition. Strategic translation enables learners to connect new language forms with existing knowledge while reducing unnecessary confusion during the learning process (Liu et al., 2024).

Although code-switching serves a variety of pedagogical, managerial, and affective functions, researchers caution against excessive dependence on the students' first language. While code-switching can facilitate comprehension, reduce anxiety, and support classroom interaction, overreliance on translation may reduce students' exposure to meaningful English input and discourage them from processing the target language independently. Therefore, most scholars recommend

that code-switching should function as temporary instructional scaffolding rather than replacing English as the primary medium of instruction (Rindal, 2024).

While these functions demonstrate the pedagogical value of teacher code-switching, researchers consistently caution against excessive dependence on the students' first language. Frequent translation and unnecessary switching may reduce students' motivation to process English independently and decrease opportunities for meaningful exposure to the target language (Rindal, 2024). Consequently, most scholars recommend that code-switching should function as temporary instructional scaffolding rather than replacing English as the primary medium of instruction. When used strategically and purposefully, code-switching can facilitate learning while still promoting students' development of English proficiency.

Teacher Code-Switching and Second Language Acquisition

The relationship between teacher code-switching and second language acquisition can be explained through several complementary theoretical perspectives. Krashen's Input Hypothesis (Hajimia et al., 2020) proposes that language acquisition occurs when learners receive comprehensible input that is slightly beyond their current level of proficiency. Kasan et al., (2019) also explained The process by which people, whether classified as adults or children, learn and become proficient in their first and other languages is referred to as language acquisition. From this perspective, teacher code-switching may increase the comprehensibility of English input by briefly clarifying unfamiliar vocabulary or difficult concepts without interrupting the learning process. Rather than replacing English exposure, the first language serves as temporary support that enables learners to understand messages they might otherwise miss.

Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory (Vygotsky, 1997) provides another useful framework for understanding teacher code-switching. According to Vygotsky, learning occurs through social interaction with more knowledgeable individuals who provide instructional support within learners' Zone of Proximal Development. In this context, teacher code-switching can be viewed as a form of scaffolding that enables students to complete learning tasks beyond their current linguistic ability. As

learners become more proficient, this support can gradually be reduced, allowing greater independence in using English.

Long's Interaction Hypothesis, (1996) further emphasizes that language acquisition develops through meaningful interaction and negotiation of meaning. During classroom communication, learners often seek clarification, request repetition, or confirm understanding. Strategic code-switching can facilitate these interactions by preventing communication breakdowns while maintaining students' engagement in English learning.

A central question in EFL pedagogy is not whether teachers should use students' first language, but when and how much. Taken together, these theoretical perspectives suggest that code-switching is most effective when it is used selectively and purposefully. Rather than competing with English, the students' first language functions as instructional support that helps learners access, process, and eventually produce the target language more effectively. Viewed this way, code-switching is not an obstacle to English acquisition but a temporary scaffold one that, when withdrawn gradually as proficiency develops, can support rather than delay students' progress toward independent English use.

These theoretical perspectives are closely related to the concept of language transfer in second language learning. Humans are seen as active learners, bringing their previous knowledge, skills, beliefs, and concepts into new learning situations. This background influences what they notice, how they interpret things, and how they organize new information, affecting their ability to reason, solve problems, and acquire new knowledge. When a person's knowledge of one language affects their learning of another language, this is known as language transfer (Odlin, 1989).

Language transfer can occur at the beginning of the learning process, as students apply what they already know to new situations. In short, all learning involves transfer from previous experiences, including language learning. This transfer can be helpful or problematic depending on the similarities or differences between the two languages involved (Odlin, 1989).

As students develop their language skills, they also learn to think in the target language. The more proficient they become in thinking directly in the foreign

language, the better they are at processing and using it for communication. However, there can still be gaps in proficiency, especially in speaking and writing. Often, students use the structure of their native language while speaking in the target language, even inserting native-language words into their sentences. This suggests that they might be thinking in their native language and translating it into the target language.

This process of thinking in the native language while producing or understanding target language utterances is important for understanding language acquisition. It can reveal how deeply the learner is engaging with the target language. Learning a language is a gradual, ongoing process that develops as the learner matures. Motivation plays a key role in this process, with research showing that a teacher's support can significantly impact a student's success. A learner-centered approach, where the teacher provides the materials and environment for learning, can be very effective.

However, not all learners benefit from the same methods. For instance, there can be differences in motivation between schoolchildren and adult learners, especially when it comes to why they are learning a new language. Integrative motivation, the desire to connect with the culture of the target language, can be particularly relevant when discussing code-switching.

Teachers can motivate students by modeling the use of the target language and showing enthusiasm for the learning process. Teachers play a vital role in motivating students to avoid using their mother tongue, especially during speaking activities. To help students stay motivated and avoid relying on their native language, teachers should ensure that tasks are at an appropriate level of difficulty, making sure the language required is simple enough for students to use fluently and confidently without hesitation.

These concepts are particularly relevant in multilingual contexts such as Indonesia. A notable example of a multilingual society is Indonesia, an archipelagic nation with diverse linguistic communities. Most Indonesians are at least bilingual, possessing proficiency in both their regional language and Bahasa Indonesia. Additionally, due to formal language education, many Indonesians acquire

proficiency in foreign languages, particularly English. Consequently, code-switching occurs not only between regional languages and Bahasa Indonesia but also between Bahasa Indonesia and English, which serves as the primary foreign language taught in Indonesia.

This phenomenon of code-switching is not limited to informal settings but is also prevalent in educational settings. For instance, in Indonesian schools, English and Bahasa Indonesia are frequently used interchangeably during English lessons. This linguistic alternation is performed not only by students but also by teachers, who play a significant role in the code-switching process. The motivations behind code-switching, however, differ between students and teachers. While students tend to switch to their native language to facilitate comprehension, teachers often utilize code-switching to foster student engagement and encourage the use of the target language. Notably, teachers may not always be consciously aware of their code-switching behaviors and the potential pedagogical implications.

METHOD

The researchers used descriptive qualitative to explore language use in English classroom and its implication for students. Qualitative research employing descriptive methods is a the process for examining the state of a group of people, an object, a condition, a system of ideas or a class of events in the present (Rukajat, 2018). The goal of descriptive research is to produce a description, picture, or painting that is methodical, factually, and accurately regarding the facts, characteristics, and relationships between the phenomena under investigation, descriptive research aims to describe phenomena that occur in a real, realistic, actual, real, and current way (Rukajat, 2018).

Then, observation and interview are being the techniques of data collecting. The researchers came to the class to see the activity and took interview with the tutor and some students. During classroom observations, the focus was placed on identifying the specific situations where tutor engaged in code-switching and the reasons behind these instances. The researchers also took notes on classroom interactions to observe how the tutor's language choices might have influenced

students' English language acquisition. The next step is interviews aimed to understand the tutor's perspectives on tutor and students use of code-switching in the classroom. Qualitative data, which usually originates from sources like observations, interviews, and documents, is methodically arranged and summarized during the analysis process (Lim, 2024).

The methodology of Miles and Huberman (1994) highlights the continuous and iterative nature of qualitative data processing. These are data reduction for selecting, focusing, simplifying, abstracting, and transforming the "raw" data. Next data display refers to organizing and presenting the reduced data in a way that facilitates drawing conclusions. The last are conclusion drawing and verification, it's involves interpreting the displayed data and developing meaningful conclusions.

The participants of this research are the English tutor and the students of UPB (*Unit Pengembangan Bahasa*) UIN Antasari Banjarmasin group 21 in English class. UPB was selected as the research setting because it functions as a non-formal English language unit where students are grouped based on proficiency level following a placement test, and where tutors regularly rely on both English and *Bahasa Indonesia* to accommodate differences within these groups, making it a naturally occurring site for observing code-switching in practice. Purposive sampling was employed because the participants were intentionally selected based on their direct involvement in an English classroom where code-switching naturally occurred (Creswell & Poth, 2017). This sampling strategy enabled the researchers to obtain rich and relevant data concerning the phenomenon under investigation, since the tutor and students in this specific class had firsthand, ongoing experience with the very language practice this study set out to examine.

Data for this study were collected over a six-week period utilizing classroom observations and semi-structured interviews. As the primary data source, five 100-minute classroom observations were conducted to capture naturally occurring interactions without manipulating the instructional process. Detailed field notes were recorded during these sessions, focusing on the tutor's language choices, the specific situations prompting code-switching from English to Bahasa Indonesia, the

underlying pedagogical reasons for these choices, and the students' subsequent reactions across various activities. To complement these observations, semi-structured interviews lasting 15 to 30 minutes were audio-recorded, consented to, and transcribed verbatim. These interviews involved the English tutor, who discussed her motivations and the perceived impact of code-switching on learning, as well as ten selected students, who shared their perceptions regarding its utility in developing vocabulary, grammar comprehension, speaking confidence, and overall English proficiency.

The transcribed and observational data were analysed using the interactive model proposed by Miles & Huberman, (1994), which systematically progresses through data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification. During the data reduction stage, observation notes and interview transcripts underwent repeated readings to isolate, code, and group segments related to teacher code-switching into broader conceptual categories based on recurring patterns. Next, the data display stage involved organizing these codes into thematic matrices and descriptive summaries, allowing the researchers to compare findings across participants and clearly map the relationships between the tutor's actual classroom practices and the students' perceptions. Finally, in the conclusion drawing and verification stage, emerging themes were interpreted by continuously triangulating evidence between the observations and interviews, with the researchers routinely revisiting the raw data to verify interpretations, maintain consistency, and ensure all conclusions were robustly supported by the empirical evidence.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

During classroom observations, the focus was placed on identifying the specific situations where the tutor engaged in code-switching and the reasons behind these instances. The researchers also took notes on classroom interactions to observe how the tutor's language choices might have influenced students' English language acquisition. In addition to the observations, the students' interview was designed to gather further insights into how code-switching impacted their learning experience. The tutor interview was another essential component of the data collection process.

This interview aimed to understand the tutor's perspectives on her use of code-switching in the classroom.

Regarding the code-switching behavior of tutor, the researchers found that the tutor commonly switched between *Bahasa Indonesia* and English, with only minimal use of *Banjarese* in the classroom. Beyond instructional clarification, students also reported that the tutor switched to Bahasa Indonesia during routine moments such as opening the class and praising students' work, suggesting code-switching served a social and rapport-building function alongside its comprehension-related uses. Before turning to the specific functions this code-switching served, it is useful to first consider the broader classroom context in which these language choices took place, beginning with how the tutor structured and delivered her lessons.

The Tutor's Explanation

Primarily used the board and book as teaching tools. The tutor often used small group work, where students collaborated in groups. Students were most engaged when discussing their group work with other groups, but they seemed least engaged when the tutor was either sitting or standing still while delivering lessons, with limited movement around the classroom. During these observations, many students were not paying attention or participating in classroom discussions while the tutor remained seated or standing in one place.

Language Use in the Classroom

The tutor exhibited inconsistency in her use of English, which affected the students' language use. The students tended to respond in *Bahasa Indonesia*, especially when the tutor began lessons by switching between English and *Bahasa Indonesia*. Actually, the tutor was trying to be consistent in using English, particularly starting the lesson exclusively in English.

The Occurrence of Code Switching

Specific situations led to code-switching in the classrooms. The tutor employed code-switching primarily when students had difficulty understanding

certain concepts. The most common occurrence of code-switching was when tutor felt the need to explain something in more detail, often switching from English to *Bahasa Indonesia* to ensure better comprehension.

Summary of Code-Switching Functions and Data

Table 1. Summary of Code-Switching Functions and Data

No	Type/Function of Code-Switching	Form of Data	Explanation
1	Topic Switch (Muñoz, 2006)	Data 1 Tutor's utterance while explaining text types: "We have talked about the type of texts. Kalau kita lihat disitu apa yang paling banyak tenses-nya?..."	The tutor switched to Bahasa Indonesia when the lesson content became conceptually demanding. Viewed through Vygotsky's (1997) Sociocultural Theory, this reflects scaffolding within the student's Zone of Proximal Development, helping students grasp text structure beyond their current English ability.
2	Affective Function (Muñoz, 2006)	Data 2 Dialogue while checking a student's answer: "How many?" / (no answer) / "Betul berapa nak?"	The switch appeared to soften the correction and ease the student's discomfort after an initial non-response. This aligns with Long's (1996) Interaction Hypothesis, which emphasizes negotiation of meaning to sustain engagement despite communication breakdowns.
3	Topic Switch Grammatical Explanation (Muñoz, 2006)	Data 3 Tutor's explanation of tense: "Kalau itu explanation, ciri-ciri kalimat adalah simple present..."	The tutor alternated between English grammatical terms ("to be," "infinitive") and Bahasa Indonesia explanation, reflecting Krashen's Input Hypothesis (Hajimia et al., 2020) using the first language to make input comprehensible without halting instruction.

4	Translation Function (Muñoz, 2006)	Data 4 Tutor translating "crime": "Now who can translate into Bahasa Indonesia paragraph one? Crime apa nak?..."	The tutor directly rendered an unfamiliar English term into Bahasa Indonesia to secure comprehension, consistent with the Input Hypothesis (Hajimia et al., 2020), keeping new vocabulary within students' zone of comprehensible input.
5	Repetitive Function (Muñoz, 2006)	Data 5 Tutor repeating an explanation: "Nah, disana coba lihat. Coba Faisal..."	The tutor restated an English explanation in Bahasa Indonesia to reinforce understanding. However, overused repetition risks encouraging reliance on Bahasa Indonesia rather than independent processing of English (Rindal, 2024).

Code-Switching to Clarify Content

The tutor used code-switching when she needed to provide additional clarification on materials being taught. This often occurred when students struggled to grasp key points or terms, and the tutor switched to Bahasa Indonesia to emphasize these points more clearly.

When discussing the different types of texts, the tutor switched to Bahasa Indonesia to highlight the important features of the texts they were reading:

Data 1

Tutor:

We have talked about the type of texts. Kalau kita lihat disitu apa yang paling banyak tenses-nya? Berarti disana ada explanation kemudian ada analytical. Disini kalimatnya simple present. Kalau disini? Sama ya."

This excerpt reflects what Muñoz, (2006) identifies as the topic switch function, in which the tutor shifts to Bahasa Indonesia specifically when the lesson content becomes conceptually demanding. Viewed through Vygotsky, (1997) Sociocultural Theory, this switch can be understood as scaffolding within the student's Zone of Proximal Development, allowing the tutor to guide comprehension of text structure that would otherwise exceed the students' current English proficiency.

This pattern was also reflected in the tutor's own account during the interview. She explained that code-switching could support students' language learning, particularly when clarification was needed. The students' interview responses supported this view, as they reported that the tutor switched to Bahasa Indonesia to make her explanations easier to understand. Taken together, the classroom observations and both sets of interview responses point to the same conclusion: the tutor's use of code-switching for clarification was a deliberate and shared strategy, rather than an incidental shift between languages.

Code-Switching in One-on-One Interactions

The tutor was also less consistent with her use of English when interacting individually with students. In these moments, the tutor often switched to Bahasa Indonesia.

While checking a student's answer, the tutor switched to Bahasa Indonesia to make the student feel more at ease:

Data 2

Tutor: "How many?"

Student: (No answer)

Tutor: "Betul berapa nak?"

(Translation: "How many, dear?")

Student: "Nine."

Tutor: "Nine? Yang mana yang salah?"

(Translation: "Nine? Which one is wrong?")

This exchange illustrates Muñoz, (2006) affective function, as the tutor's switch to Bahasa Indonesia appears to soften the correction and reduce the student's anxiety after an initial non-response. This aligns with Long's, (1996) Interaction Hypothesis, which suggests that negotiation of meaning here, the tutor's effort to keep the student engaged despite an initial breakdown in communication is central to sustaining productive language interaction.Code-Switching in One-on-One Interactions.

In her interview, the tutor explained that she encouraged students to express their ideas in English even when their vocabulary was limited, rather than staying silent. This approach reflects the supportive and anxiety-reducing role that code-switching played in the interaction. Students' own accounts further supported this finding. They generally felt encouraged to speak English, while also appreciating that Bahasa Indonesia was available when they needed it. In this sense, one-on-one code-switching served as a safety net that helped students participate without taking away opportunities to practise English.

Code-Switching to Explain Grammatical Features

The tutor also used code-switching when explaining grammatical concepts, such as verb tenses and sentence structures. This was especially true when the tutor felt the need to ensure that the students fully understood the grammatical rules being discussed.

In this instance, the tutor used code-switching to explain the difference between simple present tense and continuous tense:

Data 3

Tutor:

"Kalau itu explanation, ciri-ciri kalimat adalah simple present. Dari paragraf pertama yang mana yang simple present-nya? Ada? Ciri-ciri simple present nya dimana? Ada 's'. Kalau yang ini kenapa ada 'ing'?"

Student: "Karena continue."

Tutor:

"Ini ada to be nya? Kalau continue ada to be nya. Kalau ini tidak ada to be berarti ini verb, yang ini kata kerja. Dua kata kerja yang berlawanan, harus salah satunya pakai 'ing' atau kita buat 'to pay' berarti disini tidak pakai 'ing' karena disini ada infinitive. Kalimatnya adalah simple present."

Similar to Data 1, this excerpt demonstrates the topic switch function (Muñoz, 2006), applied specifically to grammatical explanation. The tutor's rapid alternation between English grammatical terms ("to be," "infinitive") and Bahasa Indonesia explanation reflects Krashen's Input Hypothesis (as discussed in Hajimia et al., 2020), where the first language is used to make otherwise incomprehensible input accessible without halting the flow of instruction.

Students' interview responses further confirmed this pattern, particularly in relation to grammar explanations. They identified grammar as one of the situations in which the tutor regularly switched to Bahasa Indonesia. According to the students, this made it easier for them to understand English grammar and see how grammatical forms were used in sentences. This finding supports Krashen's argument that learners' first language can help make complex input more comprehensible without requiring them to move away from the target language entirely.

The tutor's broader interview responses also reflected this pattern. She explained that grammar was one of the areas which switching to Bahasa Indonesia was sometimes necessary to make sure students fully understood the explanation. For her, this was part of a broader effort to make challenging content more accessible before returning to English as the main language of instruction.

Code-Switching to Explain New Terms or Unknown Words

The tutor frequently used code-switching to introduce or explain unfamiliar terms or words to students. The tutor used code-switching to explain the meaning of the word "crime" to her students:

Data 4

Tutor: "Now who can translate into Bahasa Indonesia paragraph one? Crime apa nak? What's the meaning of crime? Kejahatan ya."

Here, the tutor is doing exactly what Muñoz, (2006) calls the translation function, in which the tutor directly renders an unfamiliar English term into Bahasa Indonesia to secure comprehension. Consistent with the Input Hypothesis (Hajimia et al., 2020), this brief translation likely served to keep the new vocabulary within the students' zone of comprehensible input, allowing the lesson to proceed without extended clarification.

This finding was also reflected in the students' interviews. They identified vocabulary explanation as one of the situations in which the tutor switched to Bahasa Indonesia and explained that this helped them learn and expand their English vocabulary. The consistency between the classroom observations and the students' own accounts suggests that this use of code-switching served a clear comprehension-supporting purpose rather than being a way to avoid using English.

The tutor's own account fills in the rest of the picture, in which she described vocabulary explanation as one of the recurring reasons she relied on Bahasa Indonesia, while emphasizing that she encouraged students to build independent vocabulary knowledge afterward through dictionary use and memorization practice.

Code-Switching for Clarity and Emphasis

The tutor also used code-switching when they felt the need to clarify or emphasize a point, often repeating an explanation in the native language. The tutor switched to Bahasa Indonesia to clarify her explanation about the tense used in an analytical text:

Data 5

Tutor:

"Nah, disana coba lihat. Coba Faisal. Miss tanya ini aja Faisal. Kalau analytical, tense nya simple present. Explanation tense nya juga simple present. Dan kalau kita lihat dari teks ini kebanyakanya adalah simple present. Kalau explanation ini simple present kemudian ada passive."

Then repeated the explanation in Bahasa Indonesia to make it clearer and emphasize the content being discussed.

This excerpt reflects the repetitive function (Muñoz, 2006), where the tutor restates an English explanation in Bahasa Indonesia to reinforce understanding. However, repeated translation of this kind, if overused, risks encouraging students to rely on Bahasa Indonesia rather than processing the English explanation independently (Rindal, 2024) a tension that points to the importance of using repetition selectively rather than routinely.

The tutor's interview responses offer a more nuanced view of this finding. Although she acknowledged that code-switching could support students' learning, she also stressed the importance of encouraging them to use English as much as possible. To promote greater independence, she used activities such as homework, memorization, and dictionary practice.

The students' responses reflected a similar tension. Some felt that switching to Bahasa Indonesia helped them develop their English, while others believed they learned more when they were required to use English consistently. Taken together, these perspectives highlight the balance the tutor had to maintain between providing support and giving students enough exposure to English. This reflects the pedagogical trade-off described by Rindal, (2024) between making input comprehensible and maintaining sustained engagement with the target language.

This study explored how teacher code-switching was implemented in an English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classroom at the *Unit Pengembangan Bahasa*, UIN Antasari Banjarmasin, and how students perceived its contribution to their

English language acquisition. The findings indicate that the tutor employed code-switching selectively and strategically throughout classroom instruction. The most common functions of code-switching were clarifying lesson content, explaining grammatical concepts, introducing unfamiliar vocabulary, providing individual support, and emphasizing important information during instruction.

The findings also show that students generally viewed teacher code-switching positively. Most participants perceived that brief and purposeful use of Bahasa Indonesia helped them understand lesson content, particularly when learning grammar and unfamiliar vocabulary, while also increasing their confidence to participate in classroom activities. At the same time, students emphasized that English should remain the primary language of instruction because regular exposure to the target language was considered important for developing English proficiency. This was reinforced by students' general attitudes toward classroom language use, as more than half expected English to be the primary medium of instruction and none expressed a desire for greater use of Bahasa Indonesia, underscoring their preference for consistent English exposure even as they acknowledged the value of occasional code-switching.

Overall, the findings suggested that teacher code-switching may function as an instructional scaffold that supports students' comprehension without replacing meaningful exposure to English. Rather than indicating that code-switching directly improves language acquisition, this study suggests that its careful and purposeful use facilitate classroom interaction, enhance students' comprehension, and support their learning experiences in EFL contexts.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

The findings suggest that code-switching in the EFL classroom is better understood not as a departure from English-medium instruction, but as a flexible pedagogical resource that can support learning when used selectively. In this classroom, the tutor mainly switched to *Bahasa Indonesia* to clarify difficult content, explain grammar and vocabulary, support individual students, and reinforce key

points. Students generally recognized and appreciated these functions, particularly when switching helped them understand complex language and participate with greater confidence. At the same time, their preference for English as the main language of instruction, along with the tutor's efforts to promote independent English use, points to an important balance between providing immediate support and maintaining meaningful exposure to the target language.

Overall, these findings offer a more nuanced view of code-switching in EFL contexts. Its value appears to depend less on how often it occurs than on why, when, and how it is used. When used strategically, Bahasa Indonesia can provide a temporary scaffold that helps students work through difficult content without taking away opportunities to use English. The issue, therefore, is not simply whether teachers should allow code-switching, but how they can use it purposefully while still encouraging students to develop greater independence in English. Rather than treating the two languages as competing choices, teachers may benefit from viewing Bahasa Indonesia as a resource that, when used judiciously, can support students' access to English and keep them engaged in the learning process.

Based on these findings, English teachers are encouraged to use code-switching strategically and purposefully according to students' learning needs and instructional objectives. English should remain the primary language of classroom instruction, while Bahasa Indonesia may be used selectively to clarify difficult concepts, explain complex grammar, introduce unfamiliar vocabulary, or provide support when communication difficulties arise. Such an approach may help balance comprehensible instruction with meaningful opportunities for students to use English.

For educational institutions, professional development programs may be beneficial in helping English teachers develop effective strategies for managing bilingual classroom interaction and making informed decisions about when code-switching is pedagogically appropriate.

Since the present study was based on classroom observations and interview data collected over a limited period, future research could employ longitudinal or mixed-methods designs to examine whether strategic teacher code-switching

contributes to measurable improvements in students' English language development over time.

REFERENCES

Andrus, R. (2024). Sociolinguistics: Investigating the Intersection of Language, Society and Power Structures. *Research & Reviews: Journal of Social Sciences*, *10*(3). https://doi.org/10.4172/JSocSci.10.3.004

Creswell, J. W., & Poth, C. N. (2017). *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing Among Five Approaches*. SAGE Publications.

Ferguson, C. A. (1959). Diglossia. In *WORD*. https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/00437956.1959.11659702

Gumperz, J. J. (1977). The Sociolinguistic Significance of Conversational Code-Switching. *Sage Journal*, *8*(2). https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1177/003368827700800201

Hajimia, H., Singh, M. K. S., & Chethiyar, S. D. M. (2020). Second Language Acquisition: Krashen's Monitor Model and The Natural Approach. *PEOPLE International Journal of Social Sciences*, *6*(3), 87–99. https://doi.org/10.20319/pijss.2020.63.8799

Hizriani, N. (2017). Written Code Switching: The Case of Indonesian Email Users. *LET: Linguistics, Literature and English Teaching Journal*, *2*(2), 84–90. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.18592/let.v2i2.1376

Hoffmann, C. (1991). *An Introduction to Bilingualism*. Longman.

Kasan, R. A., Fadillah, R., & Yusuf, M. (2019). Foundations of Second Language Acquisition: Strategies and Motivation of Banjarese Young Learners in Learning English as a Foreign Language. *LET: Linguistics, Literature and English Teaching Journal*, *9*(2), 265–301. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.18592/let.v9i2.15758

Lim, W. M. (2024). What Is Qualitative Research? An Overview and Guidelines. *Sage Journal*. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1177/14413582241264619

Liu, Z., Yin, S. X., & Chen, N. F. (2024). Optimizing Code-Switching in Conversational Tutoring Systems: A Pedagogical Framework and Evaluation. *Proceedings of the 25th Annual Meeting of the Special Interest Group on Discourse and Dialogue*, 500–515.

Long, M. H. (1996). The role of the linguistic environment in second language acquisition. In *Handbook of second language acquisition*. Academic Press.

Meisani, D. R. (2014). Conditions for teaching English to young learners:

Indonesian teachers' perspectives. *English Language Teaching Educational Journal*, *5*(2), 119–128. https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1377494.pdf

Miles, M. B., & Huberman, A. M. (1994). *Qualitative Data Analysis*. SAGE Publication.

Muñoz, C. (2006). Age and the Rate of Foreign Language Learning. In *Second Language Acquisition*. Cromwell Press Ltd.

Nasution, F., & Tambunan, E. E. (2022). Language and Communication. *International Journal of Community Service (IJCS)*, *1*(1), 01–10. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.55299/ijcs.v1i1.86

Nurhamidah, N., Fauziati, E., & Supriyadi, S. (2018). Code-switching in EFL classroom: is it good or bad? *Journal of English Education*, *3*(2), 78–88. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.31327/jee.v3i2.861

Odlin, T. (1989). *Language Transfer: Cross-Linguistic Influence in Language Learning.* Cambridge University Press. https://doi.org/http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781139524537

Panhwar, F., & Buriro, G. A. (2020). An Overview of Theories and Approaches to Code-Switching. *Internatonal Research Journal of Arts and Humanites (IRJAH)*, *48*(48). https://www.academia.edu/68641948/An_Overview_of_Theories_and_Approaches_to_Code_Switching

Poplack, S. (1980). Sometimes I'll start a sentence in Spanish Y TERMINO EN ESPAÑOL: toward a typology of code-switching 1. *Linguistics*, *18*, 581–618. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1515/ling.1980.18.7-8.581

Ramírez, A. G., & Ibáñez, J. (2024). The Geography of Language. In *Introduction to Human Geography*. Louis Pressbook.

Rindal, U. (2024). Explanations for language choice in the social context of the L2 classroom. *Modern Language Journal*, *108*, 846–865. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1111/modl.12960

Rosita, D. (2013). *The Analysis of Indonesian-English Code-Mixing Patterns in Indonesian Blogs*. https://www.academia.edu/5520142/The_Analysis_of_Indonesian_English_Code_Mixing_Patterns_in_Indonesian_Blogs

Rukajat, A. (2018). *Pendekatan Penelitian Kualitatif (Qualitative Research Approach)*.

Sukyadi, D. (2015). *The teaching of English at secondary schools in Indonesia* (1st ed.). Routledge.

Vygotsky, L. (1997). *Educational Psychology*. St. Lucie Press.