



MULTILINGUAL PRACTICES IN THE EFL CLASSROOM: INVESTIGATING CODE-SWITCHING TYPES, FUNCTIONS, AND STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS

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Abstract

Code-switching, the practice of alternating between two or more languages within discourse, constitutes a significant pedagogical strategy in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) instruction. This study examines the types and pedagogical functions of code-switching employed by English teachers across five junior high schools in Pekanbaru, Indonesia. Utilizing a mixed-methods research design involving classroom observations, semi-structured teacher interviews, and student questionnaires, the study identifies three types of code-switching: intra-sentential, inter-sentential, and tag switching. The findings reveal that intra-sentential code-switching was the most frequently employed form. Teachers primarily used code-switching to elucidate difficult concepts, maintain classroom management, and foster interpersonal connections with students. Most students responded favorably, indicating that code-switching enhanced their comprehension and created a more supportive classroom environment. Nevertheless, some students expressed concern that excessive reliance on the first language might hinder their English proficiency. The study concludes that code-switching, when used judiciously, can serve as an effective pedagogical tool that facilitates both cognitive and linguistic development in EFL classrooms.

Keywords:

Code-switching,
Students' Perception,
EFL classroom, English
Language Teaching
(ELT), Classroom
interaction.

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INTRODUCTION

In multilingual environments, people use code-switching as a communication strategy to enhance mutual understanding. Speakers use language switching as a tool to overcome limitations in their vocabulary, grammar understanding, or comprehension abilities. Code-switching represents the normal way people communicate within bilingual communities (Zhang et.al, 2024). Researchers from linguistic studies, psycholinguistics, and educational fields examine code-switching to determine its effects on learning languages and cognitive processing while observing social interactions (Kheder, S., & Kaan, E, 2021). Research demonstrates that code-switching functions as a dynamic linguistic resource that fulfils different communicative demands and expresses people's cultural identities and social connections (Masruddin & Hamdany, 2022).

During EFL instructions, teachers are often unavoidable to use code-switching between languages to help students address language learning difficulties. Some educators regard code-switching as beneficial for learning enhancement and communication improvement, but other teachers express concerns that its excessive use might limit student exposure to English and negatively impact their linguistic abilities (Macaro, 2018). Limited English proficiency students benefit from code-switching because it enhances lesson clarity and comprehension (Wei & García, 2022). However, when students excessively depend on their first language (L1) in the classroom, their exposure to English decreases, potentially delaying their language acquisition and limiting their ability to develop fluency and confidence in English communication (Shinga & Pillay, 2021). It is important to understand how students feel about code-switching, as their opinions can impact how they participate in class and how well they learn (Perlina & Agustinah, 2022). For example, students who like code-switching may feel more comfortable and engaged in class, while those who do not may feel it prevents them from fully learning English (Kiaowanich et al., 2023). To get the optimal results, teachers need to find a balance in using code-switching, ensuring it helps without limiting students' exposure to English.

Code-switching is becoming an important teaching technique in the expanding corpus of research that examines methods to close this gap. EFL classrooms have frequently witnessed code-switching, which is the switching between two or more languages during a discourse (Wijaya et al., 2020). According to research by Zainil and Arsyad, (2021) this approach lowers anxiety, encourages active engagement, and aids students in understanding difficult subjects. Teachers regularly switch between Bahasa Indonesia and English to make sure students comprehend, explain vocabulary, and clarify concepts. (Cahyani et al., 2018).

The practice of code-switching has been widely explored in both sociolinguistics and language education, with research highlighting its various functions, implications, and effects on communication and learning. Researchers such as Cook (2001), Macaro (2005), and Atas U and Sagin (2021) emphasize its dual role as both a facilitator of comprehension and a potential barrier to immersion. Studies in EFL settings often categorize code-switching into three main functions: pedagogical, social, and managerial (Ferguson, 2003). Temesgen and Hailu (2022) further elaborate on its classroom applications, identifying facilitation, reiteration, and checking understanding as key roles of code-switching in teaching and learning.

Beyond its practical functions, Poplack's (1980) theoretical model categorizes code-switching into three specific types: tag-switching, inter-sentential switching, and intra-sentential switching. Inter-sentential switching takes place at the boundaries of sentences, where a



speaker switches languages after finishing a sentence. In contrast, intra-sentential switching occurs within a single sentence or clause, enabling language changes mid-thought. Tag-switching refers to inserting a single word or short phrase from another language, often for emphasis, clarification, or conversational flow. Poplack's model provides valuable linguistic insights, particularly in classroom settings where teachers and students frequently switch languages to aid communication and enhance understanding. Recognizing these different types of code-switching enables educators to assess whether it facilitates or potentially hinders language learning in multilingual classrooms.

Code-switching in educational settings has been widely studied, with researchers identifying various reasons for this practice. Teachers often code-switch to serve both pedagogical and social purposes. One primary motivation is topic switching, where educators alternate between languages to introduce or emphasize key subject content, making complex ideas more accessible to students. (Flyman-Mattsson & Burenhult, 1999). This approach helps learners grasp essential concepts without being hindered by language barriers. Additionally, code-switching plays an effective role in fostering a supportive and engaging classroom environment. Teachers create a space where learners feel at ease and are encouraged to participate by expressing empathy, building rapport, and reducing student anxiety. Another important function is repetition, where information is clarified or reinforced by presenting it in both the target language and the students' first language (L1), thereby improving comprehension for learners at different proficiency levels.

Building on these perspectives, Sert (2005) underscores that code-switching can be a strategic tool for enhancing both cognitive and emotional engagement, especially in multicultural classrooms. Similarly, Ferguson (2003) highlights its essential role in multilingual settings, where it helps educators manage linguistic diversity while fostering inclusivity. More recently, Munawaroh et al., (2022) Emphasize its significance in regulating classroom interactions, maintaining discipline, and addressing individual student needs. These findings illustrate the dual function of code-switching in education, serving both cognitive and social purposes, making it a valuable linguistic resource in diverse learning environments.

Students' perceptions of teachers' code-switching have been a focal point in recent literature, revealing a nuanced relationship between attitudes and the perceived benefits of this practice. According to Ellis (1985) students tend to respond positively to code-switching when it effectively supports their learning. For instance, they appreciate its ability to simplify complex content, making challenging material more accessible and easier to understand. Similarly, recent studies by Wang et al. (2022) Highlight that students recognize the value of code-switching in clarifying difficult concepts, particularly in linguistically diverse classrooms. Additionally, Al-Marzouki and Albeyali, (2024) found that students view code-switching as a helpful tool for fostering a supportive and inclusive classroom environment, which can reduce language anxiety and encourage greater participation and confidence in language learning.

However, students' perceptions are not uniformly positive. Excessive or unnecessary code-switching is often perceived as counterproductive because it decreases learners' experience of the target language and restricts chances for immersive learning experiences, which are crucial for effective language acquisition. (Maruf et al., 2023). Similarly, studies by Kapantzoglou et al. (2021) pinpoint that students sometimes see frequent code-switching as a hindrance to developing their target language skills. This duality highlights the importance of intentionality and balance in teachers' use of code-switching. When used thoughtfully and in appropriate contexts, code-switching can serve as an effective tool to improve understanding and foster a



supportive learning atmosphere (Jogulu, L. 2024). Conversely, overuse or misuse can undermine students' progress, emphasizing the need for educators to carefully align their strategies with learning objectives and classroom dynamics. (Ferguson, 2003).

Recent studies have provided a deeper and more refined perspective on the function of code-switching in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) context, highlighting its significance as an effective teaching strategy (Çelik, S. 2019). Studies demonstrate that when used strategically, code-switching can act as a scaffold in multilingual classrooms, helping to address comprehension challenges by offering tailored linguistic support that aligns with students' specific needs. (Hafid & Margana, 2022). This scaffolding enables learners to gradually transition from relying on their mother tongue to using the target language more confidently. The relationship between code-switching and student motivation reveals that when used thoughtfully, it can significantly enhance classroom participation and engagement. (Taufiq et al., 2022). By switching languages judiciously, teachers foster a more inclusive classroom environment, encouraging students to participate more actively in their learning process. Supporting these findings, recent research by Maruf et al., (2023) EFL teachers employ code-switching to enhance student comprehension, particularly among learners with lower language proficiency, facilitating understanding and communication. Code-switching involves alternating between languages or dialects during a conversation or interaction, and has been found to influence both teaching effectiveness and students' engagement. A study by Zaghloul and Altamimi (2023) emphasized that EFL teachers' code-switching in Saudi Arabia was perceived positively by students, as it helped clarify complex concepts and facilitated understanding in a non-native language classroom.

Similarly, research by Anindya et al. (2022) discussed that students appreciated their teachers' use of their first language (L1) as it made the learning process less intimidating and more accessible. However, while some students see code-switching as a helpful pedagogical tool, others may view it as a crutch that hinders full immersion in the target language. (Hafid & Margana, 2022). These divergent perceptions suggest that code-switching can be effective, but it requires careful consideration of context and the balance between L1 and target language use to avoid dependency. Recent literature highlights that effective code-switching can enhance learning outcomes when used strategically to bridge gaps in comprehension, yet excessive reliance on L1 might limit students' exposure to the target language (Gamelio & Raymundo, 2024).

This study aims to investigate the roles of teachers' code-switching in junior high school EFL classrooms and specifically, this research aims to answer the following question:

1. What types of code-switching are used in the classroom by English teachers in Junior High school?
2. What functions of code-switching are used in the classroom by English teachers of Junior High school?
3. What are the students' perceptions when their English teachers use code-switching in English lessons?



METHODS

Research Design

This research used an exploratory sequential mixed-methods design. According to Creswell & Plano Clark (2018), the exploratory sequential design is a mixed methods design in which the researcher begins by conducting a qualitative method and follows up with a quantitative method. In this design, the first step was collecting and analyzing qualitative data. Qualitative data were gathered through observation and interviews that explored participants' viewpoints on code-switching. The data were analyzed using thematic analysis. After that, the study proceeded with collecting and analyzing quantitative data that were built based on qualitative results (Creswell, 2012). The quantitative data collected were analyzed using descriptive statistical methods to highlight trends and frequencies. While the design required considerable time and coordination, it allowed for a more comprehensive understanding of the research topic.

Setting and Participants

The study targeted English teachers and students in junior high school in Pekanbaru. There are 166 junior high schools in Pekanbaru. The sample of this research was chosen by using purposive sampling. Purposive sampling is used based on the needs and objectives of the research; therefore, this is also called judgment sampling. (Leavy, 2017). Five English teachers from five different junior high schools were purposively selected to participate in this study. The selection was based on their teaching experience, professional competence, and active engagement in English language instruction, including their involvement in classroom innovations and extracurricular English activities. These characteristics made them ideal participants who could provide rich, insightful perspectives aligned with the study's objectives. In addition to the teachers, 30 students from each school were also included to obtain a broader understanding of classroom dynamics and learners' perceptions of teachers' language use.

Data Collection Method and Analysis

A triangulation strategy was employed to improve the validity and reliability of the findings. This strategy was supported by the necessity to record diverse perspectives and cross-verify data, eliminating bias and improving overall outcomes (Sugiyono, 2019). The study employed a mixed-methods approach to investigate code-switching in educational settings, utilizing classroom observations, video recordings, semi-structured interviews, and student questionnaires for data collection, followed by systematic analysis to address research questions comprehensively. Video recordings supplemented these by capturing 90 minutes of audio-visual footage from the same sessions with discreet cameras, allowing repeated reviews of interactions including non-verbal cues, while maintaining secure storage and privacy protections. Semi-structured interviews, lasting 30-45 minutes each, gathered in-depth insights from participants (teachers and students) selected via stratified sampling, using an interview guide with open-ended questions and probes, recorded and transcribed with participant validation options. Questionnaires provided quantitative data from 150 students through self-administered forms with Likert-scale and multiple-choice items, distributed in class or online, focusing on attitudes and impacts of code-switching, with anonymous responses and parental consent for minors. For analysis, qualitative data from observations and videos underwent content analysis with coding for themes like functions of code-switching and achieving inter-coder reliability, supplemented by descriptive statistics; interview transcripts followed Braun



and Clarke's thematic analysis framework for identifying perceptions and cross-case comparisons; questionnaire data was processed with manual for descriptive and inferential statistics, integrating open-ended responses with qualitative findings; overall, the iterative process triangulated methods to refine interpretations and yield holistic conclusions on code-switching dynamics.

FINDINGS

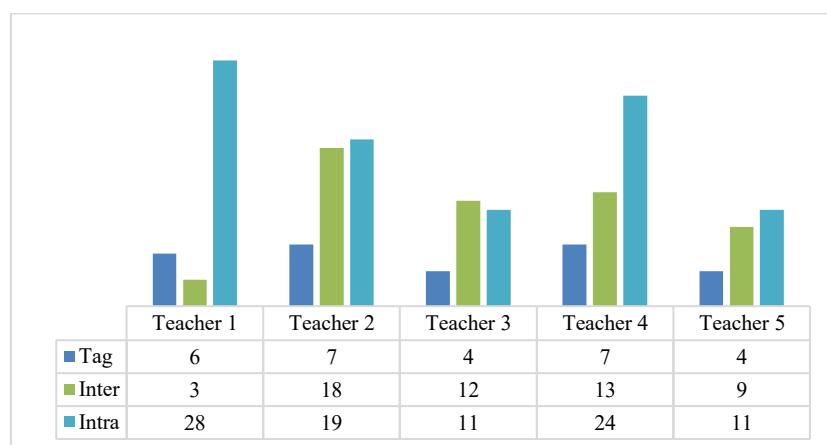
The findings on code-switching in EFL classrooms are organized into four key dimensions: frequency of use, types of code-switching, its pedagogical functions, and students' perceptions. Examining these areas collectively offers a comprehensive understanding of how code-switching contributes to both instructional delivery and learner engagement. Frequency data provide insight into how often teachers resort to code-switching during classroom interactions. The types of code-switching, namely intra-sentential, inter-sentential, and tag-switching, highlight the structural forms through which language alternation occurs. Each type serves distinct purposes, ranging from facilitating student comprehension and reinforcing key concepts to managing classroom behavior and building a supportive learning environment (Mubarak et al. 2023). Equally important are students' perceptions, which shed light on how learners interpret and respond to using multiple languages in their learning process (Vilakazi et al., 2024).

Frequency Types of Code-Switching

This study examines the code-switching patterns of five teachers in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classroom, focusing on their use of tag switching, inter-sentential switching, and intra-sentential switching, as depicted in Diagram 1. The analysis reveals distinct preferences and frequencies in their code-switching practices, reflecting varied approaches to facilitating communication in multilingual educational settings.

Figure 1

Types of Code-switching used by English teachers of Junior High Schools.



The analysis of code-switching patterns among the five teachers, as illustrated in Diagram 1, reveals distinct trends in their use of tag switching, inter-sentential switching, and intra-sentential switching during classroom interactions. The first teacher predominantly employed intra-sentential switching, with 28 instances, significantly outnumbering tag switching (6

instances) and inter-sentential switching (3 instances), while the second teacher also favored intra-sentential switching (19 instances), slightly exceeding inter-sentential switching (18 instances) and tag switching (7 instances). In contrast, the third teacher exhibited a preference for inter-sentential switching (12 instances), followed by intra-sentential switching (11 instances) and tag switching (4 instances), indicating a tendency to switch between sentences rather than within them. The fourth teacher, like the first and second, primarily used intra-sentential switching (24 instances), compared to 13 instances of inter-sentential switching and 7 instances of tag switching, while the fifth teacher also leaned toward intra-sentential switching (11 instances), closely followed by inter-sentential switching (9 instances) and tag switching (4 instances). Overall, intra-sentential switching emerged as the dominant form of code-switching for most teachers, except the third teacher, who favored inter-sentential switching, highlighting the diverse strategies educators employ in multilingual classroom settings.

The findings from the first research question reveal that all participating teachers incorporate intra-sentential code-switching during their English lessons. In EFL classrooms, code-switching generally appears in three main forms: intra-sentential, inter-sentential, and tag-switching. Among these, intra-sentential code-switching, where teachers alternate between languages within a single sentence, is the most commonly used. This approach allows teachers to blend the target and native languages smoothly, which helps clarify complex ideas while maintaining the natural flow of communication. Moreover, the frequency of its use varies among the teachers: Teacher One employed it 28 times, Teacher Two 19 times, Teacher Three 11 times, Teacher Four 24 times, and Teacher Five 11 times. These differences suggest that while intra-sentential code-switching is a shared strategy, each teacher adapts its use based on their individual teaching style, classroom context, or students' needs (Mubarak et al., 2023).

Tag Switching

Tag switching happens when a short phrase or word from one language is added to a sentence that is mostly in another language. This type of code-switching is user-friendly as it seamlessly integrates with the grammatical structure of the primary language, or L1 (Sagala, 2019). Tag switching often involves interjections or filler words, such as common English examples like "wow..., you know..., I mean..., all right..., okay..." The following example demonstrates how English teachers utilized tag switching during classroom instruction. Tag switching could be seen in Extract 1.

Extract 1:

10:39 S: Rambut coklat pendek (*short brown hair*)

10:43 T: Rambut warna coklat pendek, **okay**. (*short brown hair, okay*)

(*Transcript T1*)

10:39 T: Khairi belajar bahasa inggris setiap hari, For example ya. so that the activity, ini activitynya maksud kegiatannya disini belajar **okay**.

(*Transcript T2*)

29:29 T: Good night. Selamat tidur. Berbeda good night dengan good evening. Kalau good evening selamat malam, kalau good night selamat tidur **okay**.

(*Transcript T3*)



Tag-switching refers to the insertion of short phrases or tags from one language into a sentence that is primarily spoken in another language. In the context of this study, a common example is the use of the English word “*okay*” within an otherwise Indonesian sentence. This kind of insertion does more than simply mix languages; it reflects students’ everyday language use and taps into their familiarity with common English expressions. As a result, tag-switching can create a more relaxed and relatable classroom atmosphere. Moreover, it subtly reinforces a positive social or cultural nuance, helping communication feel more natural, engaging, and less formal, which can be especially effective in building rapport between teachers and students (Rahmani et al., 2022).

Inter-Sentential Switching

Inter-sentential code-switching happens when one clause or sentence is spoken in one language, followed by another clause or sentence in a different language. This type of code-switching is usually used to strengthen a point or provide additional emphasis. This type of code-switching is frequently used for repetition or emphasis. It can occur within the same language or as an alternation between speakers. (Chen & Liu, 2023). For this alternation to work effectively, the speaker must maintain continuity in both languages, ensuring they adhere to the grammatical rules of each. Below is an example of how English teachers employed inter-sentential switching during classroom instruction.

Extract 2:

1:08:15 T: Now you need to check again. Look again at your textbook. **Coba diperbaiki tadi yang masih belum cocok.** (*Try to fix what was not correct earlier.*)
(Transcript T1)

00:24 T: OK, I am good, thank you. Now we are going to discuss simple present. Now I would like to tell you what is the simple present, but before I am talking about simple present, I would like to ask you. Do you have a daily activity? **punya gak kebiasaan yang kalian lakukan setiap hari?**

(Transcript T2)

28:27 T: What do you say when you meet someone in the morning? **Apa yang kamu ucapkan kalau kamu jumpa orang di pagi hari?** (*What do you say when you meet someone in the morning?*)
(Transcript T3)

The teacher employed code-switching by repeating sentences or phrases in another language to enhance clarity. This strategy not only reinforced students’ comprehension but also ensured they fully understood the teacher’s questions. Furthermore, by presenting information in both languages, the teacher effectively bridged potential gaps in understanding. As a result, students were able to engage more confidently with the lesson content, fostering a more inclusive and supportive learning environment (Al-Marzouki & Albeyali, 2024).

Intra-Sentential Code Switching

Intra-sentential code-switching refers to the practice of alternating between languages within a single sentence. This type of code-switching is commonly regarded as a characteristic of highly proficient bilingual individuals, especially those who are fluent in both languages. (Deuchar, 2020). This type of code-switching reflects a deep familiarity with the grammatical and structural nuances of each language. For instance, English teachers may use intra-sentential



switching during lessons to clarify concepts, engage students, or bridge language gaps, showcasing their linguistic versatility and adaptability in the classroom. This research has demonstrated that intra-sentential code-switching serves as both a natural and strategic linguistic tool. For enhancing communication and learning in multilingual settings.

Intra-sentential switching could be seen in Extract 3.

Extract 3:

1:10:31 T: Ok, what about the lips? Look at the lips. **Kalau bibirnya tebal** (*if his lips thick*) what we call in English **tebal** (*thick*)?

(Transcript T1)

01:08 T: OK, but how you are talking with someone, **ketika kalian ingin berbicara dengan lawan bicara menceritakan kebiasaan**, so you have to using the simple present.

(Transcript T2)

41:02 T: I am fine. I am good. How is **life itu juga menanyakan kabar**.

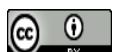
(Transcript T3)

Intra-sentential switching occurs when a teacher alternates between two languages within a single sentence. This strategy not only simplifies and clarifies the conversation but also makes it more accessible for students. Moreover, by seamlessly blending languages, the teacher maintains a natural flow of communication, ensuring that students can follow the discussion with ease. Consequently, this approach enhances both interaction and comprehension in the classroom, fostering a more supportive learning environment (Markhamah et al., 2023).

In junior high school EFL classrooms in Pekanbaru, teachers often employ intra-sentential code-switching, seamlessly blending elements of the native language with English within a single sentence. This approach goes beyond mere language mixing; it serves as an effective teaching strategy that enhances the accessibility of English instruction. By incorporating the native language, when necessary, teachers can clarify complex grammar points or unfamiliar vocabulary, making new concepts easier to grasp without overwhelming students. Additionally, this method keeps students engaged, particularly those who find English challenging, by reducing confusion and making lessons more relatable. When used with care, this method not only supports better understanding but also creates a more comfortable and encouraging classroom environment where students feel more confident to learn and use English (Kiaowanich et al., 2023).

Functions of code-switching

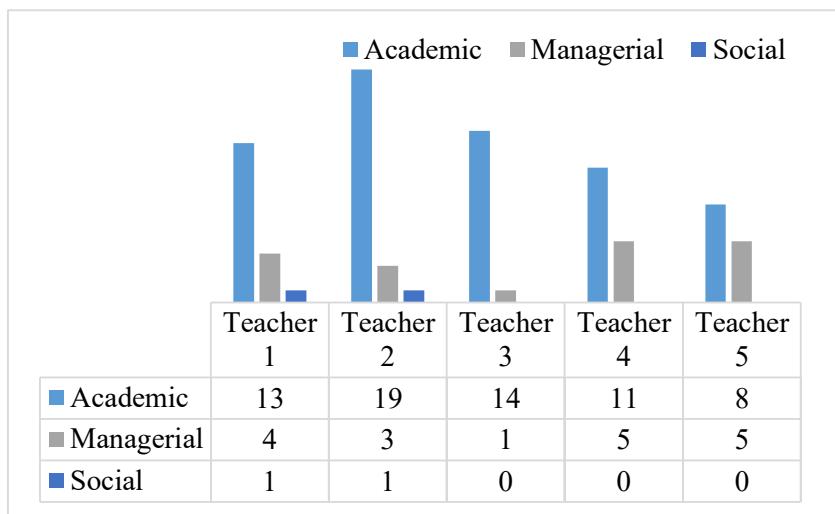
The researchers investigated how teachers employ code-switching in their speech by applying a thematic coding method based on Ferguson's (2003) framework, as cited in Temesgen and Hailu (2022). The initial step involved transcribing recorded classroom interactions. From these transcripts, instances of code-switching—defined as shifts between English and the native language were categorized into three primary functions: academic, managerial, and social. Academic functions included moments when teachers switched languages to clarify, explain, or elaborate on lesson content. Managerial functions are referred to using code-switching for classroom management purposes, such as giving directions or maintaining order. Social functions, on the other hand, were associated with building rapport and creating a more relaxed, inclusive classroom atmosphere. Each instance was coded manually. To ensure accuracy and consistency, the coding process was carefully reviewed and refined. In the final



stage, the researcher analyzed the frequency and patterns of each function to gain deeper insights into how and why teachers used code-switching during instruction.

Figure 2

Function of Code Switching



According to Figure 2, teachers primarily employ code-switching for academic purposes. They frequently alternate between languages to clarify complex concepts, elucidate difficult vocabulary, and ensure students fully comprehend the material being taught. Additionally, code-switching serves a critical role in classroom management. It facilitates the delivery of clear instructions, enables smooth transitions between activities, and helps maintain an orderly and focused learning environment. On a more personal level, code-switching supports social interaction too. It helps teachers connect with students by acknowledging their cultural backgrounds and creating a more welcoming, inclusive learning environment. Among all these functions, the academic use stands out as the most common, likely because it directly supports understanding and helps students stay engaged with the English language.

Findings related to the second research question indicate that most English teachers employ code-switching primarily for academic purposes. The managerial function emerged as the second most common use, while the social function was the least utilized in EFL classrooms. Teachers relied on code-switching as an instructional tool to help students comprehend challenging material, simplify complex concepts, and create a more effective learning environment. According to Temesgen & Hailu, (2022), this approach proves particularly useful in multilingual classrooms, where students often have different levels of English proficiency. In these settings, teachers commonly shift to the students' first language (L1) to clarify instructions or break down abstract ideas. Doing so not only makes the lesson easier to follow but also helps students connect more confidently with the material. As a result, the learning experience feels more approachable and less overwhelming for everyone in the room.

Students' Perceptions

In English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classroom, the practice of code-switching, where teachers seamlessly shift between English and the students' native language, such as Indonesian, has proven to be a valuable approach for enhancing understanding and making

learning more accessible. The following data reflects students' perspectives on how this strategy supports their comprehension of lesson topics, clarifies challenging vocabulary, and aids in grasping complex concepts, while also improving the efficiency of their learning experience. These findings highlight the significant role that thoughtful code-switching plays in creating an inclusive and effective educational environment for diverse learners.

Table 1

Percentage of Students' Perception of Code-switching for Subject Access

No	Statements Subject access	SA	A	N	DA	SDA
		%	%	%	%	%
1	When a teacher switches from English to Indonesian, I understand the lesson topic more easily.	73	20	7	0	0
2	The teacher's code-switching helps me understand new, difficult vocabulary.	40	51	9	0	0
3	I understand difficult concepts when the teacher teaches in English.	3	22	47	25	3
4	The teacher's code-switching makes me understand the lesson faster.	36	51	13	0	0

Statement 1, "“When a teacher switches from English to Indonesian, I understand the lesson topic more easily.” This student response highlights just how much of an impact code-switching can have on comprehension in an EFL classroom. In fact, the data strongly supports this view, 93% of students agreed with the statement, with 73% strongly agreeing and 20% agreeing. Only 7% were neutral, and none expressed disagreement. These numbers reflect a strong preference for the use of the native language as a support tool during English instruction. It seems that when teachers switch to Indonesian to explain difficult material, students feel more confident and find it easier to follow along. This reinforces the idea that strategic code-switching can be a powerful way to make learning more accessible and less intimidating.

Statement 2: The data indicates that most students find the teacher's use of code-switching beneficial for understanding new and challenging vocabulary. Specifically, 40% of students strongly agree, and 51% agree that this practice helps clarify difficult terms, demonstrating a high level of effectiveness in supporting vocabulary acquisition. Meanwhile, 9% of students remain neutral, suggesting that for a small portion, the impact of code-switching on vocabulary comprehension may vary. Overall, these results highlight the positive role of code-switching in making complex language more accessible for learners.

Statement 3 reveals a range of student opinions about their ability to understand difficult concepts when lessons are delivered entirely in English. Only a small portion of students, 3% strongly agreeing and 22% agreeing, feel confident in grasping complex material in this context. In contrast, nearly half of the respondents, about 47%, chose a neutral response, which may reflect uncertainty or varying experiences. What's particularly notable is that 28% of students reported difficulty, with 25% disagreeing and 3% strongly disagreeing that they could understand challenging content when taught in English. These findings suggest that relying solely on English in instruction might not be the most effective approach for many learners. It also underscores the value of using supportive strategies like code-switching to help bridge understanding and make learning more accessible.



Statement 4 shows that many students view the teacher's use of code-switching as an effective way to improve how quickly they understand the lesson. A substantial number of students, with 36 % strongly agreeing and 51% agreeing, feel that this strategy helps them grasp the material more efficiently. Only 13 % responded neutrally, indicating that very few are uncertain about its impact. These findings suggest that code-switching plays a valuable role in enhancing students' comprehension and contributes to a smoother, more accessible learning experience for the majority.

Table 2

Percentage of Students' Perception of Code-switching for Classroom Management

No	Statements		SA	A	N	DA	SD
			%	%	%	%	A
	Classroom management						
5	When the teacher code-switches, I can respond to the teacher well.	29	49	21	1	0	
6	The teacher's code-switching for the task instructions helps me understand the task better.	48	41	9	1	0	
7	I am able to concentrate on the teacher when the teacher switches from English to Indonesian.	57	35	7	0	0	

In Statement 6, most students say the teacher's use of code-switching really helps them understand task instructions more clearly. Nearly half, 48%, strongly agree, while another 41% agree that switching between languages makes the instructions easier to follow. A small portion, 9%, is neutral, which suggests that the impact of code-switching might not be the same for everyone. Only 1% disagree, showing that almost all students see it as a helpful strategy. Overall, these responses point to code-switching as an effective way to improve clarity when giving instructions.

Statement 7, the data clearly shows that most students are better able to concentrate when the teacher switches between English and Indonesian during lessons. A significant 57% of students strongly agree with this, while another 35% agree, indicating that code-switching plays a key role in keeping them mentally engaged. For many, hearing familiar language alongside English not only makes the content more accessible but also helps them stay focused and involved in the learning process. Only 7% of students report feeling neutral, suggesting that this method resonates well with the vast majority. Switching between languages seems to create a more relaxed and supportive classroom atmosphere, one where students feel more comfortable and confident following along. This bilingual approach appears to enhance both attention and understanding, making it easier for students to stay connected to the material and the teacher's instructions.

In Statement 8, the numbers show that code-switching really helps many students feel more confident about speaking up and taking part in class. Altogether, 63% say it has a positive impact, 23% strongly agree, and 40% agree that hearing both English and Indonesian encourages them to participate more. For these students, switching between languages seems to lower the pressure and make the classroom feel like a more comfortable, inclusive space. Interestingly, 35% remain neutral, which suggests that while code-switching boosts confidence



for a lot of students, it might not make a big difference for everyone. Only 2% disagree, showing that very few students feel negatively about this approach. Overall, it seems that using both languages in class creates a more supportive environment where students feel safer and more motivated to speak up.

Table 3

Percentage of Students' Perception of Code-switching for Interpersonal Relations

No	Statements	SA	A	N	DA	SDA
		%	%	%	%	%
8	Interpersonal relations					
8	The teacher's code-switching gives me the confidence to speak and participate in the class.	23	40	35	2	0
9	I feel comfortable during the process of learning when the teacher switches between English and Indonesian.	42	42	16	0	0
10	The teacher's code-switching makes the class less boring. So, I enjoy the lesson.	41	36	21	2	0

Statement 8: The data indicate that the teacher's use of code-switching significantly enhances students' confidence to speak and participate in class. A total of 63% of students (23% strongly agree and 40% agree) believe that code-switching positively affects their willingness to engage. However, 35% of students remain neutral, suggesting that its impact on confidence may differ among individuals. Only 2% disagree, highlighting that the overwhelming majority of students view code-switching.

Statement 9, The data shows that a significant majority of students feel more comfortable during lessons when teachers alternate between English and Indonesian. Specifically, 42% strongly agree and another 42% agree that code-switching increases their comfort in the classroom. Only 16% remain neutral, indicating that most students perceive this practice as helpful in fostering a relaxed and accessible learning atmosphere. These results underscore the positive role of code-switching in making students feel more at ease and supported throughout their learning experience.

Statement 10, The data shows that the teacher's use of code-switching contributes significantly to making the class more engaging and enjoyable. A combined 77% of students (41% strongly agree and 36% agree) feel that switching between English and Indonesian makes the lesson less boring. Only 21% remain neutral, and just 2% disagree, indicating that most students find code-switching a helpful strategy in maintaining interest and enhancing the overall learning experience. These results suggest that code-switching plays a key role in keeping students engaged and motivated during lessons.

DISCUSSION

This study focused on how English teachers in junior high schools in Pekanbaru use code-switching in the classroom and how students perceive teachers' code-switching. Specifically, it aimed to answer three research questions: what types and how frequently teachers use code-switching, what functions it serves, and how students respond to it. By addressing these



questions, the study sheds light on how code-switching can support both teaching effectiveness and student learning in EFL contexts.

To begin with, the findings from the first research question revealed that intra-sentential code-switching where teachers shift between English and the students' first language within a single sentence was the most commonly used form. This approach allowed teachers to explain difficult content while keeping the flow of communication natural and engaging. It was particularly helpful when students struggled with complex vocabulary or abstract concepts. Similar to what Blackburn and Wicha (2022) and Flores and Balmeo (2021) found, this type of code-switching enabled teachers to connect new material with students' existing knowledge, making learning more relatable and easier to digest. Furthermore, it facilitated the development of a more inclusive and supportive classroom environment, enabling students with diverse levels of English proficiency to effectively engage with and follow the lesson. As Ferguson (2003) pointed out, such practices reflect the multilingual nature of many classrooms and can help ease language-related anxieties. Moreover, when teachers demonstrated their own bilingual abilities through code-switching, it subtly reinforced the idea that being flexible with language is a strength, not a weakness (Sampurna, 2023).

Moving on to the second research question, the study found that teachers used code-switching mainly for academic purposes to help students better understand the lesson content. This was followed by managerial uses (such as giving instructions or organizing classroom activities) and, to a lesser extent, social functions like building rapport. These findings are in line with previous research by Fachriyah (2017), which also emphasized that code-switching is a useful strategy for improving students' comprehension, especially in classrooms where English is not the students' first language. As Temesgen (2022) notes, this strategy becomes particularly important in classrooms with varying levels of language proficiency. By switching to the students' native language when needed, teachers were able to clarify confusing instructions, simplify explanations, and keep students on track. This not only made the learning process smoother but also helped students feel less overwhelmed. At the same time, as emphasized by Temesgen and Hailu (2022), it is important for teachers to use code-switching mindfully supporting learning without completely relying on the first language, and always encouraging continued exposure to English.

Finally, in response to the third research question, the findings showed that students had a generally positive perception of their teachers' code-switching practices. Many students felt that it helped them better understand the lessons, especially when English explanations alone were not enough. Code-switching acted as a helpful bridge between the familiar and the unfamiliar, making complex topics easier to grasp (Ijudin, 2021). For students who were less confident in their English skills, this approach helped reduce anxiety and boosted their willingness to participate in class activities (Temesgen & Hailu, 2022). Furthermore, when teachers occasionally used the students' first language, it signaled empathy and understanding, which helped create a warmer and more comfortable learning environment. This emotional support encouraged students to stay engaged and motivated. As Chowdhury (2012) pointed out, such classroom practices can increase student interest and improve their overall learning experience.

In conclusion, this study highlights the meaningful role that code-switching, especially intra-sentential code-switching, can play in EFL classrooms. It not only helps students understand challenging content but also supports classroom interaction, inclusion, and confidence-building. These findings echo existing literature and underline the practical value of code-



switching as a teaching tool. From a theoretical perspective, the results support communicative and sociocultural approaches to language learning, where language use is adapted to meet learners' needs. Practically, teachers in multilingual settings are encouraged to embrace code-switching as a flexible and thoughtful strategy, used not excessively, but with a clear purpose.

Overall, the findings of this study remind us that language teaching is not only about delivering content, but also about connecting with learners. Code-switching, when used wisely, becomes more than just a tool; it becomes a bridge that brings students closer to the language they are trying to learn.

CONCLUSIONS

This study explored how five EFL teachers use code-switching in junior high school classrooms. The findings revealed that intra-sentential switching was the most commonly used type among the teachers. Although the use of inter-sentential and tag switching varied from one teacher to another, intra-sentential switching stood out as the dominant strategy. This suggests that teachers often mix languages within a sentence to clarify meanings or emphasize important points, especially when explaining complex material.

Moreover, the analysis showed that teachers code-switched for various purposes, academic, managerial, and social, with academic reasons being the most prominent. Teachers used code-switching to simplify difficult concepts, explain new vocabulary, and ensure students understood the lesson clearly. At the same time, it helped them maintain classroom order and create a more relaxed, inclusive environment that acknowledged students' cultural backgrounds and language experiences.

From the students' point of view, code-switching was generally seen as helpful and encouraging. Many students shared that switching between languages made lessons easier to follow and helped reduce the pressure of learning entirely in English. It also made them feel more confident and willing to participate in class, especially when facing difficult topics or unfamiliar terms. Code-switching does more than just aid comprehension; it helps build a more supportive learning environment.

Importantly, this study contributes to the field by filling a gap in the literature, particularly in understanding how code-switching functions in junior high school EFL classrooms. While previous research has touched on this topic in other contexts, few studies have looked closely at the specific strategies and student responses at this educational level. By focusing on both the types and purposes of code-switching and including students' voices, this research adds a deeper, more practical understanding of how language choice impacts classroom interaction.

Future research could explore how consistent exposure to code-switching affects students' long-term language development. It would also be valuable to compare code-switching practices across different school levels or regions to see how teaching approaches evolve. Overall, this study reinforces the idea that when used thoughtfully, code-switching can be a powerful tool for making learning more accessible, meaningful, and engaging in EFL classrooms.

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