

## INVESTIGATING CODE-SWITCHING AMONG EFL STUDENTS DURING CLASSROOM PRESENTATION

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### Abstract

This study aimed to investigate the types of code switching and the factors influencing its use among EFL students during classroom presentations. Based on classroom observation, students frequently alternated between English and Indonesian when presenting their materials to the class. Therefore, it was considered important to examine the phenomenon using a code-switching framework within the EFL context. Using a qualitative descriptive method, three student presentations were selected as subjects for this study. The findings reveal that English Education students use several types of code switching driven by different motives. Intra-sentential switching emerged as the most dominant type, indicating that linguistic difficulties remain a major barrier to students fully using English in their speech. Another prominent factor was communication effectiveness, as students switched languages to clarify their messages to peers. Other types of code-switching and influencing factors occurred less frequently. These findings are significant for English Education students, as they provide empirical evidence of the importance of continuous English practice—not only for achieving fluency but also for enhancing clarity in speech delivery. Thus, code-switching should not merely be viewed as a sign of limited English proficiency, but also as a functional strategy to maintain fluency and communication during classroom presentations.

**Keywords:** *Code-Switching, EFL Students, Classroom Presentation.*

### INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, English has become global and has an impact on people around the world, enabling them to communicate in the language. In the digitalized global era, English in Indonesia is not only one of the subjects in the curriculum but has also become a determining instrument for the advancement of the economy, technology, and education. It functions as a lingua franca which enables Indonesian to take an active part in the global discourse. English in Indonesia is a Foreign Language. However, the importance of English proficiency is increasing as international professional and academic mobility increases. Therefore, International classes, which are fully delivered in English in many universities, are starting to emerge and thus bilingualism. Hibatullah (2019) noted that English could be used in non-English-speaking countries for academic purposes, especially in the process of learning English.

Code-switching is a natural phenomenon in a bilingual context. Code-switching refers to the instances where speakers shift between two or more languages or dialects in a particular

communicative event (Hoffmann, 2014). Fasold & Connor-Linton (2006) perceive code-switching as a deliberate and regulated language practice employed by bilingual individuals to attain communication objectives. In the context of classroom presentations, this phenomenon is not merely a reflection of students' linguistic limitations but can also be understood through sociolinguistic and communicative frameworks that emphasize its functional role in interaction. During presentations, students often engage in code-switching to clarify complex ideas, overcome difficulties in expressing themselves in the target language, and ensure that their message is effectively conveyed to the audience. Previous empirical studies have further indicated that code-switching can support comprehension, help maintain the flow of communication, and increase students' confidence when presenting in a foreign language classroom. Based on that issue, code-switching is extensively employed in EFL teaching and learning processes globally, where English is explicitly instructed. In the world of code-switching research, various countries are involved, including Türkiye (Horasan, 2014), China (Zhang, 2023), Poland (Gabryś-Barker, 2020), and Saudi Arabia (Alhourani, 2018). In addition to these countries, code-switching has been observed among Indonesian students enrolled in English as a foreign language (EFL) classes.

Particularly in Indonesian EFL (English as a Foreign Language) classes, it is common practice for teachers and students to code-switch for varying reasons: clarity, fluency, and more generally, to facilitate communication. To use an example of students giving a presentation: a student might begin talking easily in English, but will typically code-switch to Indonesian when they encounter a communication breakdown. This impediment may exist due to limited vocabulary, grammar problems, or confusion about how to explain a complicated concept in English. In simple terms, this type of conversation should not be taken as an indication of linguistic issues. Instead, the learner is making a planned and strategic decision. Based on Gabryś-Barker (2020), excluding the first language from the classroom can deprive students of a valuable resource. Supporting this argument, Perlina & Agustinah (2022) found in their study of Indonesian university students that most participants considered code-switching as a useful tool to help understanding, increase confidence, and foster engagement.

Code-switching in an educational setting has been widely investigated. Alhourani (2018) investigated the functions of code-switching used by bilingual Saudi students from a sociolinguistic perspective. The research identified four main communicative functions: quoting others' indirect speech to preserve the original message, showing prestige, changing topics, and expressing feelings. This research used a qualitative case study approach on four bilingual Saudi students. Wilda et al. (2023) investigated the forms and functions of code-switching in online EFL classroom interaction. The method they used was a qualitative case study. Kemaloglu-Er & Ozata (2020) investigated code-switching in group work in EFL classes. This research focuses on analyzing code-switching between peers in collaborative work.

The research discussed above focused on code-switching in an educational setting. Yet, they were set in a bilingual context in which English is a second language. Therefore, an investigation into how code-switching occurs in an academic setting where English is a foreign language needs to be explored further. In the English classroom presentation, students not only use English in communicating their ideas but also use more than one language. This research was conducted to identify the type of code-switching used by EFL students during classroom presentations and the factors influencing the switches.

As a bilingual community, Universitas Jambi students, especially those majoring in the English Education Department, often code-switch by using more than one language in their speech.

However, it is still rare to find research that focuses on the types of code-switching during classroom presentations and on the writer's perceptions of the factors that influence them. This is why writers are interested in examining code-switching in student presentations. As explained above, the purpose of this research is to explore the types of code-switching used by EFL students in the classroom and during presentations, and to identify the factors that influence code-switching during classroom presentations.

## METHOD(S)

This research used a qualitative approach with a case study design. This approach was used to describe code-switching phenomena in the context of classroom presentation without any intervention from the researchers (Creswell, 2016). The focus of this research is the linguistic forms of code-switching and the perceived factors that influence it. Twenty bilingual students were purposively chosen as the subjects of the research. They were students who were actively speaking English in class and taking courses that required presentations in English. The data were taken through direct observation and supported with video recording. The data were analyzed using an interactive model that included data collection, data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Result

#### 1. The types of code-switching used by EFL students in the classroom presentation

According to the data collected from participants, several types of code-switching are used by EFL students during classroom presentations.

Types of Code-Switching	Presentation 1	Presentation 2	Presentation 3	Total
Intra-sentential	9	16	2	27
Inter-sentential	-	-	-	-
Tag Switching	1	1	2	4

Table 1. The Frequencies of Code-Switching used by English Foreign Language Students

This data demonstrates that intra-sentential code-switching appears as the most prevalent type, accounting for a total of 27 occurrences across the three presentations. This finding suggests that students demonstrate a preference for switching languages within a single sentence rather than between sentences. Furthermore, it demonstrates a relatively flexible approach to language, allowing students to combine elements from two languages to maintain fluency during their presentations.

Conversely, tag switching manifested on four occasions, albeit with a lower frequency. This finding suggests that students primarily employed short phrases from another language for

interactive purposes, such as addressing the audience or managing the flow of communication, rather than conveying the main content of the presentation.

It is worth noting that inter-sentential code-switching was not evident in the data. This absence may indicate a tendency among students to avoid alternating between sentences, presumably because it requires a higher level of language proficiency. Intra-sentential switching is the preferred option, as it enables more subtle adjustments to the language without disrupting the presentation's flow.

## 2. Perceived factors that influence code-switching during classroom presentation by EFL students

The following is the distribution of perceived factors of code switching during students' presentations. Classroom observations were conducted to determine the factors underlying students' code-switching. 4 factors that emerged: language proficiency level, language difficulties, communication effectiveness, and comfort and confidence.

Table 2. The frequencies of influencing factors in code-switching among English Foreign Language students.

No	Factors	Presentation 1	Presentation 2	Presentation 3	Frequency	Percentages
1	Linguistic Difficulty	5	12	1	18	56,25%
2	Communication Effectiveness	2	4	2	8	25%
3	Comfort and Confidence	3	1	2	6	18.75%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>	10	17	5	32	100%

This data frequency indicates that linguistic difficulty is the most dominant factor influencing students' use of code-switching, accounting for more than 50% of cases. This finding suggests that many students encounter difficulties in selecting appropriate vocabulary and constructing effective sentence structures in English during presentations. Consequently, they tend to switch to Indonesian in order to maintain fluency and avoid communication breakdowns.

The second most common factor is communication effectiveness, at 25%. This finding suggests that students deliberately employ code-switching as a tactic to ensure that their messages are comprehensible to their audience. In this context, code-switching is not only attributed to linguistic constraints but also theorized as a strategic device employed to enhance clarity and mitigate misunderstandings during presentations.

Furthermore, comfort and confidence accounted for 18.75% of the variance. This finding suggests the potential involvement of psychological factors in language choice. It has been observed that students often opt for a more familiar language when they experience a decline in

confidence or seek to foster a more relaxed and interactive atmosphere during a presentation. Overall, the findings of this study suggest that code-switching in classroom presentations is influenced by a combination of linguistic limitations, communication strategies, and psychological factors. This makes it a functional and adaptive practice in the context of learning English as a foreign language.

## Discussion

The results of this study indicate that intra-sentential code-switching is the most frequently used type in student classroom presentations, followed by tag switching, while inter-sentential switching was not observed. This suggests that students tend to switch languages within a single sentence rather than between sentences. This pattern indicates that intra-sentential switching offers greater flexibility, thereby helping students maintain fluency and convey ideas more smoothly during presentations. Furthermore, the absence of inter-sentential switching in this study suggests that students tend to avoid more complex forms of language switching, which require a higher level of language proficiency. Instead, they prefer intra-sentential switching, which is more practical and easier to use during presentations.

These findings align with previous research that also found intra-sentential switching to be a common practice in the EFL context. A study by Wilda et al. suggests that lecturers in online EFL classrooms also prefer this type of code-switching, as it mainly emphasizes the lesson's main point. By doing so, the lecturer can ensure that students find it easier to understand the teaching and that classroom interaction is more active (Arifin, 2017).

In the presented data, intra-sentential switching happened in students' presentations as shown in the following extract:

### Extract

*"I'll continue our presentation how to get paid on YouTube to start learning money directly through on YouTube you have to applied 1000 subscriber and 4000 watch hour in the past year atau kamu tu harus punya 1000 subscriber dan 4000 jam tayang untuk dibayar di yt"*

This utterance exemplifies intra-sentential code-switching, in which the speaker alternates between English and Indonesian within the same utterance. The switch serves an explanatory function, allowing the speaker to clarify technical information related to YouTube monetization requirements in the first language to ensure audience comprehension.

The next most frequent type of code switching is tag switching, which appears to be the simplest way to switch between or among languages. It only requires a small portion of language change within a single sentence, and there is a low chance of grammatical mistakes in the speech produced. The parts that are changed and commonly are in the form of interjections, affirmations, discourse markers, or single content words usually do not change the grammatical structure of the main language but are used for pragmatic, emphatic, or rhetorical purposes. Habitual usage or the speaker's feeling of mixing the common terms of both languages is what tag-switching mainly indicates. The following data extract exemplifies such instances:

### Extract

*"Berarti stop ya, sir? Videonya, sir?"*

This utterance is an example of tag switching, as the English words *stop* and *sir* function as interactional markers rather than integral components of the sentence structure. The tags serve pragmatic purposes, such as managing turn-taking, expressing politeness, and maintaining smooth interaction between the student and lecturer during the presentation.

Regarding the factor indicating the influence of code switching, linguistic challenges emerged as the predominant factor, with subsequent effects on communication effectiveness, comfort, and confidence. This finding suggests that students frequently encounter challenges in articulating ideas in English, particularly in comprehension and sentence structure, leading them to revert to Indonesian.

Linguistic difficulty becomes the first factor underlying the code-switching phenomenon. It happens when students struggle to find appropriate words or grammar structures in English. So, they switched to Indonesian to keep talking and understanding each other. Here are some instances illustrating how code-switching helps speakers handle linguistic complexity:

#### **Extract**

*"...Salutation itu penghormatan, mam..yaaaah um"*

This instance of code-switching was classified as a language difficulty. The shift to English occurred when the speaker used the academic term 'salutation,' which was more commonly used in discussions of English texts or discourse. The subsequent use of Indonesian served to explain the meaning of the term, while the hesitation markers ("yaaaah, um") indicated difficulty in formulating the explanation fluently. Thus, code-switching was used to maintain speech continuity and ensure audience comprehension. Apparently, the fact that the majority of code switching is intra-sentential, and the linguistic difficulty as the most underlying reason for code switching, actually agree with one another. Intra-sentential switching does not require high linguistic competence compared to inter-sentential switching. This strengthens the assumption that linguistic difficulty is the main reason for code-switching during students' classroom presentations.

This finding corroborates earlier research that identified analogous causes of code-switching. For instance, research by Wilda et al. (2023) examined factors contributing to code-switching and found that language constraints influenced teachers' linguistic decisions. When teachers judged that some learning points needed reinforcement, they switched their code to Indonesian. This is done to make students understand the materials.

Moreover, the second factor is communication effectiveness. This suggests that code-switching is not invariably triggered by linguistic constraints. Students deliberately engage in language preservation to ensure their intended messages are comprehensible to their audience. The effectiveness of communication is the speaker's objective to ensure that their message is conveyed clearly and understood by the listener. Students often switch between English and Indonesian during class presentations, believing this will enhance comprehension, reduce ambiguity, or highlight important topics. This intentional use of code-switching aims to enhance the clarity and reception of the desired message.

#### **Extract**

*"I'll continue our presentation how to get paid on YouTube to start learning money directly through on YouTube you have to applied 1000 subscriber and 4000 watch hour in the past year atau kamu tu harus punya 1000 subscriber dan 4000 jam tayang untuk dibayar di yt"*

This utterance was categorized as communication effectiveness because the speaker deliberately switched from English to Indonesian to repeat and clarify crucial information regarding YouTube monetization requirements. The use of Indonesian was intended to ensure the audience fully understood the main message, rather than to compensate for language limitations or linguistic difficulties. As a result, the information became clearer and more accessible to all listeners. This finding relates to research by Panggabean & Wardhono (2017), which emphasized the use of communication strategies by EFL students. This finding suggests that code-switching can function as a strategy to enhance clarity and prevent misunderstandings.

The last influencing factor identified is comfort and confidence. The study indicates that psychological factors also affect language use. It was observed that students often resorted to more familiar language when experiencing feelings of uncertainty or anxiety during their presentations. Comfort and confidence are psychological variables that frequently influence language selection in bilingual or multilingual settings. When students feel more emotionally safe, they may turn to their own language (Indonesian), particularly during times of uncertainty, casual interaction, or informal talk. The next extracts show how students use code-switching to maintain a sense of comfort and confidence throughout their presentations.

#### **Extract**

*"Ada boardmarker ga? oh xie xie"*

This utterance is classified as comfort and confidence. The switch occurred when the speaker used a foreign expression (“xie xie”) as an interpersonal strategy to create a more relaxed and polite atmosphere. The use of a language other than Indonesian was not related to limited language proficiency or linguistic difficulty, but functioned to maintain comfort and self-confidence during spontaneous classroom interaction.

## **CONCLUSION**

In conclusion, this study found that intra-sentential code-switching was the most dominant type used by EFL students during classroom presentations, while tag-switching occurred less frequently and inter-sentential switching was absent. The predominance of intra-sentential switching indicates that students prefer to insert Indonesian elements within English sentences because this type of switching is more flexible and allows them to maintain fluency without interrupting the flow of their presentation. Tag switching, meanwhile, mainly functioned to manage interaction and maintain politeness during classroom communication.

The study also revealed that linguistic difficulty was the main factor influencing students' use of code-switching, followed by communication effectiveness, comfort, and confidence. Students tended to switch languages when they had difficulty finding appropriate vocabulary or sentence structures in English. However, code-switching was not used solely because of limited proficiency. In many cases, students intentionally switched to Indonesian to make their ideas clearer and easier for the audience to understand, or to create a more relaxed and confident atmosphere during the presentation. Therefore, code-switching should not be viewed merely as a weakness in English ability, but rather as a functional and strategic practice that helps EFL students communicate more effectively in classroom presentations.

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