Article

Exploring Code – Switching Patterns in Junior High School Students' English Languange at MTs Amin Darussalam

https://doi.org/10.31004/jele.v10i5.1490

∗ Nurul Ramadhani, Yulia Arfanti[ab] [ID]

[12]Universitas Muslim Nusantara Al Washliyah, Indonesia

*Corresponding Author: ramadhanirul05@gmail.com

A B S T R A C T

This study investigates the patterns and functions of code-switching in English learning at MTs Amin Darussalam, Deli Serdang, North Sumatra. Using a qualitative phenomenological approach, data were collected through classroom observations, audio recordings, and interviews with eighth-grade students during the 2025/2026 academic year. The analysis followed Miles and Huberman's framework, focusing on data reduction, display, and conclusion drawing. Findings reveal three main types of code-switching: inter-sentential, intra-sentential, and tag switching, with inter-sentential switching being the most frequent. Teachers primarily used code-switching to explain lessons, clarify meanings, and manage classroom interaction, while students employed it to overcome vocabulary limitations and enhance self-expression. Tag-switching served to seek confirmation and maintain classroom rapport. Overall, code-switching was found to facilitate comprehension, build confidence, and create a supportive learning environment. The study concludes that code-switching is a natural and effective communicative strategy in bilingual classrooms.

Keywords: *Code-Switching, English Learning, Classroom Interaction, Bilingual Classroom, Junior High School.*

Check for updates

INTRODUCTION

Language is a tool of communication that enables us to express our thoughts and connect with others. Among the many languages in the world, English has become one of the most important. In Indonesia, English is considered a foreign language. In discussing English teaching and learning, experts often distinguish between English as a second language (ESL) and English as a foreign language (EFL).

Classroom interaction is inseparable from language and communication. Language plays a central role in human activities across various fields, serving as a medium for sharing messages and information. People need language to interact effectively and achieve communication goals. As Sirbu (2015) notes, language is an essential part of communication within society.

In Indonesia, English functions neither as a first nor a second language, but as a foreign language. Because of this status, the use of English is largely confined to classroom teaching and learning rather than daily life. Consequently, it is rare to find schools in Indonesia that use English as the primary medium of instruction.

Because students do not use English daily, they often lack confidence and struggle to understand. Ocak et al. (2013) and Humanera (2018) support this, noting that one main reason students fail to speak English is a lack of self-confidence. Another reason is that students believe they will not benefit from using English in daily school interactions. As a result, students rely on code-switching to communicate in different languages. However, due to limited vocabulary, they often switch languages to achieve understanding.

There are many cases of code-switching by both teachers and students in the classroom. Since the teachers are not native English speakers, they often face difficulties delivering materials entirely in English. Likewise, students often struggle to understand what the teachers say. For this reason, code-switching is commonly used by both teachers and students during classroom interaction.

In communicating, sometimes people do not just use one language. An interesting phenomenon is now often the case that many people make the transition (alternation) code, both of code (code switching) in communicating with others. The phenomenon of code switching can be seen either through electronic media and print media. In fact, if we examined closely, often occurrence of code switching and code mixes between speaker. People developed code-switching when learning a new language. (Spolsky, 1998).

Code switching is a normal phenomenon to make easier for discussing about particular topic in one language rather than another (Hoffman, 1991). Code switching is common practiced by the bilingual society as well as the students who are learning the foreign language from their surroundings. Code switching can be allowed and used such the way to enrich the skill of communication. Code switching can also function as a connector of speakers to give more understanding when they talk about their ideas. Therefore, there will be no any misunderstanding in that conversation.

Jacobson in Iqbal (2011) stated that by code-switching in the classroom students will acquire subject-appropriate vocabulary in first language 2 and second language, and none of the practical problems of other approaches will be present. However, this switching may not be done haphazardly or randomly. In order for it to be educationally effective, four crit

eria must be met; the first is the language must be distributed at an appropriate ratio of 50/50, the second is the teaching of content must not be conscious of his/her alternation between the two languages, and the third is the alternation must accomplish a specific learning goal. Code-switching instruction which does not meet these criteria Jacobson calls the "Unstructured Approach".

Richard and Schmidt (2012) cited on (Jamshidi & Navehebrahim, 2013), described code switching when a speaker makes a change from one language to another language. This change can occur when one speaker uses a language during a conversation, and the other speaker replies. However, switch in speaking during learning process must also pay attention to the context and the interlocutor who is invited to communicate. That's why English students often use code switching in English learning process.

From this problem, teacher can switch the language used in understanding material based on purpose and situation. When the students cannot understand the material, the teacher can switch the language. By using code switching in the teaching learning process, the teacher can use English first and switch to Indonesia to explain more of the material. When students have a positive perception of code switching, it can be concluded that they prefer teachers to switch languages because it makes it easier for them to understand the lesson and for an easy-going conversation without any misinterpretation

Based on those previous studies, the researcher finds that code switching is a weapon, a tool, an ice breaker and many other tools of convenience when communicating. Therefore, the researcher focused on investigating the use of code switching on the English teachers utterances in the classroom interaction by using Hoffman's theory. The researcher considered the types of code switching, how and why code switching used by the English teachers. Therefore, the researcher decided to conduct a research under the title: "Exploring Code – Switching Patterns In Junior High School Students' English Languange At Mts Amin Darussalam".

METHOD

This research method uses a qualitative approach with a phenomenological design to analyze the use of code-switching in English language learning in class VIII of MTs Amin Darussalam, Banda Selvia, Deli Serdang, North Sumatra, for the 2025/2026 academic year.

The research data were obtained from classroom observations, audio recordings, field notes, and interviews, focusing on student utterances during group discussions and presentations. Data collection techniques included direct observations without intervention, interviews to complement the results of observations, and recordings to ensure authentic data. Data analysis was conducted using the model of Miles and Huberman (1994) through stages of data reduction, data presentation, and drawing/verifying conclusions, while Poplack (1980) was used to identify types of code-switching and Gumperz (1982) to examine its communicative functions. To maintain the validity of the findings, the researchers applied source triangulation, member checking, thick description of the research context, and an audit trail that transparently documents the research process.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter consists of the research findings and their discussion. In the finding's selection, the researcher presents the data obtained from English classroom discussions. The results of the data analysis focus on the types of code-switching used by eighth grade students of junior high school, based on Hoffman's theory. The findings are divided into three parts, using audio-visual recordings as the source of data, and are further explained in the discussion.

Finding

In this chapter, the researcher presents the results of observations conducted using a video recorder to identify the types and functions of code-switching practiced by the teacher. The video recording was first transcribed into written form. The transcript was then examined to identify utterances that contained code-switching and to exclude those that did not. From this observantion, the researcher found that during classroom interaction, the teacher used three patterns of code-switching: tag-switching, intel-sentential switching, and intra-sentential switching. The observation and accompanying documentation were aimed at analysing the teaching and learning process and identifying patterns of code-switching.

Type of Cadel Switching (CS) The researcher analysed the types of code switching that was found in students' utterances. Heller, the total of number of the use types of code switching:

Table 1. Total of Number of the Use Types of Code Switching

No.	Pattern of Cadel Switching	Total
1.	Intel- sentential switching	52
2.	Intra- sentential switching	20
3.	Tag switching	7

The following data are some example of analysis on the type of code switching:

Inter-sentential Switching

It happened to clarify or translate the utterance from other language. The findings showed that the data of intelr-selntelntial switching was most common type of code switching with 52. The following are some elxamplels of intelr-selntelntial switching:

"the chair is green kursi itu warna hijau"

It was classified as intelr-selntelntial switching since the student speak in English then change the language into Indonesian

"anything else that want to try? Ada lagi yang mau melncoba ? its ok if you wrong miss can hellp you "gapapa kalau salah nanti miss bantu ko

the teacher used English then switched to Indonesian with the meaning of the sentence. The teacher wants to give another students chancel to try in front of the class, but if the students cannot do it the teacher will help them.

Intra- sentential switching

Inter-sentential code switching happens when a speaker switches from one language to another between sentences or clauses. The key point is that the boundary of the switch occurs after a sentence is completed, not inside the same sentence. The following conversation illustrates this phenomenon:

Teacher: "Anak-anak, hari ini kita akan belajar tentang adjectives, yaitu kata sifat. Adjectives are words that describe nouns."

The teacher switched from an Indonesian sentence to an English sentence. This is inter-sentential switching because the change occurs between sentences.

Student A: "Jadi Miss, contohnya seperti cantik, besar, atau pintar?"

Teacher: "Yes, very good. Beautiful, big, and smart are adjectives."

The teacher used two separate sentences: first in English (Yes, very good), then giving examples in English as well. Since the student spoke in Indonesian and the teacher replied with both languages, the clear shift across sentences shows inter-sentential switching.

Student B: Miss, how do I say "kelas ini nyaman" in English?

Here is the first inter-sentential code switching. The sentence starts in English (Miss, how do I say...) and then switches completely to Indonesian (kelas ini nyaman). The switch occurs between the sentences, not inside them.

Tag switching

Tag code-switching happens when a speaker inserts a short expression, tag, or interjection from one language into a sentence that is otherwise in another language. These tags are often words like "you know," "right," "kan," "kok," "loh," etc.

Student A: Miss, beautiful is adjectival, kan?

Explanation: The student uses English (beautiful is adjectival) but adds the Indonesian tag "kan" at the end for confirmation. This is Tag Code-Switching.

Teacher : Yes, that's correct. Beautiful describes a person, like Shel is a beautiful girl, loh.

Explanation: The teacher adds the Indonesian tag "loh" after the English explanation. "Loh" has no direct English equivalent, so it is an example of Tag code-Switching.

Student B: Miss, is smart also an adjective, right?

Explanation: The student uses Indonesian structural (kalau smart itu adjelctivel juga) but closes with the English tag "right." This is a bilingual tag-switching example.

Teacher: Exactly. Smart is also an adjective, kok. For example: My brother is smart.

Explanation: The teacher uses English but adds the Indonesian tag "kok" at the end to emphasize certainty. This is Tag Code-Switching.

Discussion

In this section, the researcher discusses the findings related to the types of codeswitching that occurred in classroom interactions between the teacher and students during English learning activities. The analysis is based on Hoffman's (1991) framework, which classifies code-switching into three categories: inter-sentential switching, intra-sentential switching, and tag-switching. The discussion also relates these findings to the communicative functions of code-switching in bilingual classroom contexts.

Inter-sentential switching occurs when a shift from one language to another takes place between complete sentences. This type of code-switching was frequently observed in the teacher's instructional discourse, particularly when introducing new concepts or clarifying meanings for students.

For example, the teacher stated: "Anak-anak, hari ini kita akan bellajar telntang adjelctivels. Adjelctivels arel words that delscribel nouns.

In this instance, the teacher first used Indonesian to introduce the topic and then switched to English in the following sentence to reinforce the key concept. The switch was pedagogically motivated: Indonesian was used to ensure students' comprehension, while English provided exposure to authentic use of the target language. According to Hoffman (1991), inter-sentential switching often occurs when speakers emphasize or restate information in another language for clarity or effect.

Another example was found in the interaction: Student: Miss, kalau 'rajin' dalam bahasa Inggris apa? Teacher: Diligent. Jadi kalau kita bilang, "Dia rajin," dalam bahasa Inggris menjadi She is diligent.

In this case, the student asked a question in Indonesian, and the teacher provided the explanation partly in Indonesian but completed it with an English sentence. This demonstrates

that inter-sentential switching functions as a bridge between the known (Indonesian) and the new (English), facilitating the learning process.

Thus, in this study, inter-sentential switching was primarily employed by teachers as an instructional strategy to balance comprehension and exposure. This finding is consistent with previous research (e.g., Sert, 2005; Musthafa, 2014), which highlights that teachers in bilingual classrooms often switch languages between sentences to scaffold students' learning.

Intra-sentential switching refers to code-switching that occurs within a single sentence or utterance, where elements from two languages are combined in one construction. This type was frequently observed in students' speech, reflecting their bilingual competence as well as their reliance on Indonesian for scaffolding.

For instance, one student remarked: "Miss, saya lupa submit my homework kemarin."

Here, the phrase submits my homework was inserted into an Indonesian sentence. The student rallied on the English academic term submit rather than its Indonesian equivalent, illustrating how intra-sentential switching often occurs when certain concepts are morel naturally or commonly expressed in the target language.

Another instance is found in the utterance: "Miss, itu contoh kalimatnya 'The tall boy is my brother,' ya?"

In this example, the student imbedded a full English clause within an Indonesian frame. According to Hoffman (1991), this type of switching requires greater linguistic competence, as speakers must maintain grammatical and semantic coherence while shifting between languages.

In the classroom context, intra-sentential switching appears to serve both cognitive and social purposes: cognitively, it allows students to practice and test their English within familiar Indonesian structures; socially, it reflects the shared bilingual identity of the class. these findings echo Poplack's (1980) observation that intra-sentential switching is common in environments where bilingual speakers fell comfortable integrating two languages seamlessly.

Tag switching occurs when short expressions, fillers, or tags from one language are inserted into an utterance in another language. This type of code-switching was frequently observed in both teacher and student interactions.

Examples include: "Today well will learn about adjectives, ya. "Beautiful is adjective, kan?

The use of ya and kan in these sentences does not alter the grammatical structural but adds pragmatic value by sleeking agreement or emphasizing meaning. Hoffman (1991) notes that tag switching is the simplest form of code-switching, often used unconsciously in bilingual discourse.

Code-switching functions as a confidence builder for students. Sometimes some students are reluctant to express their opinions because of limitations in mastering English. This requires students to enclose their first language in speaking. Some experts believe that having language alternation in interaction would greatly impact the students' self-effacing, such as their confidence level and motivation. This is consistent with Petrology's and Boyle's (2013) assertion that motivation, friendship, security, and confidence are all aided by L1 in the learning and instructing process.

Moreover, code-switching is also useful for teachers and students as a time savers and handling tool during the learning process. Usually, students cannot comprehend intricate concepts and notions if elucidated in the Target Language. By code switch, teachers save time using students' L1. Fatimah (2007, as cited in Fitriani, 2021) believed that code-switching is a suitable teaching strategy for effectively learning. It can be used when classes are challenging to handle, improving understanding, especially with students who struggle academically, saving time, and helping teachers manage the demands of the curriculum, getting a belter response, fostering intimacy and a lively classroom environment.

Lastly, using code-switching effectively bridges good communication and interpersonal relations with the students in the classroom. The data collected showed that teachers perceived code-switching as a useful medium. It provided easel of communication in the classroom, helped bridge the gap between students and the instructor, and helped them better understand

the terms and concepts in lelssons (Azlan and Narasuman, 2013). This is cohelrelnt with thel statelmelnt 61 dellivelreld by Qing (2010) and Widia (2015) that codel-switching hellps to crelatel a morel supportivel, elncouraging linguistic elnvironmelnt that elnablels telachelrs to elstablish good communication and intimatel rellations with thel studelnts.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the findings of this research, it can bel concluded that code-switching is a natural and frequent phenomenon in junior high school English classrooms. The study revealed three main types of code-switching: inter-sentential, intra-sentential, and tag switching. Inter-sentential switching was primarily employed by teachers to explain lessons, give instructions, and clarify meanings in order to support students' understanding. Intra-sentential switching, on the other hand, was commonly used by students when they mixed Indonesian and English within a sentence as a strategy to overcome vocabulary limitations and express ideas morel clearly. Meanwhile, tag-switching appeared in both teachers' and students' interactions, functioning as a tool to seek confirmation, soften commands, and maintain a friendly classroom atmosphere. Overall, the presence of code-switching in the classroom did not hinder the learning process; instead, it served as a communicative strategy that supported comprehension, facilitated participation, and enhanced the effectiveness of teaching and learning English.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

REFERENCES

Alkassim, R. M. (2016). Comparison of convenience sampling and purposive sampling. American Journal of Theoretical and Applied Statistics, 5(1), 1-4. 10.11648/j.ajtas.20160501.11

Al Azzawi, Q. O., Sadoon, M. M.., & Mahdi, H. H. (2018). Code switching and Code mixing: A sociolinguistic study of Senegalese international students in Iraqi colleges. Journal of University of Babylon for Humanities, 26(3), 112-122.

Al Hayelk, R. (2016). Arabic-English code-mixing by Jordanian university studelnts. http://researchdirect.westernsydney.edu.au./islandora/object/uws:36867/datastrea m/PDF/download/citation.pdf.

Al Heety, N. H., & Al Abdely, A. A. (2016). Types and functions of code switching in the English language used by Iraqi doctors in formal settings. International Journal of Advanced Research and Review, 1(8), 10-18. https://www.ijarr.in/Admin/pdf/125.pdf

Ansar, F. A. (2017). Code switching and code mixing in teaching-learning process. Journal Tadris Bahasa Inggris, 10(1), 29-45. https://ejournal.radenintan.ac.id/index.php/ENGEDU. Journal of English Language, Literature, and Teaching 2, no. 1 (2018): 39.

Aini, Nur. "Universitas Mitra Indonesia Nur Aini Bahasa Indonelsia Sebagai alat Media Komunikasi Sehari-Hari," n.d.

Ajiza, Masrurotul. "Penggunaan „ Code - Switching " Dalam Pelmbelajaran Bahasa," 2022, 219–21.

Baker, C. 2006. Foundations of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism. Canada: Multilingual Matters Ltd.

Brown, D.H. 2001. Teaching by Principle: An Interactive Approach to Language

Baker, C. 2006. Foundations of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism. New York: Multilingual Matters LTD. Barnes, 2008. Exploratory talk for learning. Exploring talk in school. Los Angeles, London, New Delhi: SAGEL, 1-5

Burden, P. 2001. Whelm do native English speakers and Japanese college students disagree about the use of Japanese in the English conversation classroom? The Language Teacher, April 2001. [Online] Available: http://www.jaltpublications.org/tlt/articlels/2001/04/ burden. Accessed on 2015-08-28. Pedagogy. White Plains, NY: Pearson Education-Longman.

Burns, A. (2010). Doing Action Research in English Language Teaching: A Guide for Practitioners. Routledge.

Cook, V. (2001). Using the first language in the classroom. Canadian Modern Language Review, 57(3), 402–423.

Cantone, K. F. 2007. Code-Switching in Bilingual Children. Dordrecht: Springer.

Chloros, P. G. 2009. Code-Switching. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Cook, V. 2001. Second Language Learning and Language Teaching. London: Arnold.

Drelkurs, R & B. Gunawan. 1982. Maintaining Sanity in the Classroom: management Technique. New York: Harper Collins Publishing.

Edi Suwandi. 2016. Teacher's Code Switching in Classroom Interaction At SMKN 1 Makassar. Thesis Not Published. Makassar: State University of Makassar.

Ellis, R. 1999. Learning A Second Language Through Interaction. Amsterdam: John Benjamin's.

Gulzar, M. A. 2010. Classroom Discoursal in Bilingual Context: Effects of Code switching on Language Learning in Pakistani TELFL Classroom. Dissertation. Islamabad: National University of Modern Language

Hamers, J. F. and M. H. A Blanc. 2004. Bilinguality and Bilingualism (2nd ELd). New York: Cambridge University Press.

Rahimi, A. & Eftekhari, M. 2011. Psycholinguistics Code Switching in Iranian University Classroom Context. The Journal of Language Teaching and Learning, (online) Vol.1, No 54-56 http://www.jltl.org/jltl/. Accessed on 2015-08-28.

Rezvani, E., & Rasekh, A. E. 2011. Codeswitching in Iranian Elementary ELFL Classrooms: An Exploratory Investigation. www.ccselnelt.org/ellt English Language Teaching Vol. 4, No. 1 (23); March. Published by Canadian Canter of Science and Education.

Richard, J. And Schmidt, R., 2002. Dictionary of language teaching and applied linguistics. London: Pearson Education.

Lin, A. M. Y. (2013). Classroom code-switching: Three decades of research. Applied Linguistics Review, 4(1), 195–218. https://doi.org/10.1515/applirelv-2013-0009

Macaro, E. (2005). Codeswitching in the L2 classroom: A communication and learning strategy. In EL. lurda (ELd.), Non-native language teachers: Perceptions, challenges, and contributions to the profession (pp. 63–84). Springelr.

Poplack, S. (1980). Sometimes I'll start a sentence in Spanish y termini eln Española: Toward a typology of code-switching. Linguistics, 18(7-8), 581–618.

Sert, O. (2005). The functions of code-switching in ELLT classrooms. The Internet TELSL Journal, 11(8). Retrieved from http://itesj.org/Articles/Sert-CodeSwitching.html

Skiba, R. (1997). Code-switching as a countenance of language interference. The Internet TELSL Journal, 3(10). Retrieved from http://itesj.org/Articles/Skiba-CodeSwitching.html

Safirah, A. (2021). Applying Code-switching Strategy in English Language Classroom at the Secondary School (A Mixed-Method Study). Skripsi. UIN Syarif Hidayatullah.

Safithry, N Anita. 2018. Assessment Teknik Tells dan Non-Tells Suluh: Jurnal Bimbingan Dan Konseling

Schmidt, Anastasia. (2014). Between the Language: Code-Switching in Bilingual Communication, Anchor Academic Publishing

Section, Code Switching Performed by Junior High School Students in English Class: The Case of the First Year Student of Smp Negeri Kragan, Kabupaten Rembang in the Academic Year of 2009/2010

Exploring Code – Switching Patterns in Junior High School Students' English Languange at MTs Amin Darussalam

Silaban, Suardani, Tiarma Intan Marpaung, (2020). "An analysis of code-mixing and codeswitching used by Indonesia lawyers club on TV One", JELTAFL (journal of English teaching as a foreign language), volume 6, Issue 3.

Sugiyono. 2018. Meltode Penelitian Kuantitatif, Kualitatif, dan R&D. Bandung: Alfabeta.

Sugiyono (2019). Meltode Penelitian Kuantitatif, Kualitatif, dan R&D. Bandung: Alphabelt.

Spolsky, B. 1998. Sociolinguistics. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Syam, U.K. elt al. (2018). Code Mixing and Code Switching in the Classroom Interaction at SMA Negeri 2 Takalar. IOSR Journal of Humanities and Social Science (IOSR-JHSS), 23(7), pp. 95-99.