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Code-Switching in EFL Speaking Classes: A Case Study of Students' Emotional Engagement

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A B S T R A C T

Code-switching is commonly used by lecturers in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classroom to facilitate comprehension and interaction, but its relationship with students' emotional engagement may depend on how and when it occurs. This study explored five EFL students' perceptions of lecturers' code-switching and its influence on emotional engagement at a private university in Southeast Sulawesi, Indonesia. Using a qualitative case study design, data were collected through classroom observations and semi-structured interviews. Observations documented lecturers' code-switching practices, while interviews explored students' interpretations and emotional responses. The data were analyzed thematically. The findings revealed that students valued code-switching when they encountered comprehension difficulties and preferred a balanced use of English and Indonesian. Appropriate timing supported understanding and reduced language anxiety, whereas excessive or poorly timed code-switching could undermine emotional engagement. These findings extend understanding of classroom code-switching by showing how students' emotional responses relate not only to lecturers' language choices but also to the frequency and timing of language shifts. Lecturers should therefore use Indonesian selectively to clarify difficult content while maintaining opportunities for meaningful English-speaking practice.

Keywords: *Code-Switching, EFL Speaking Class, Emotional Engagement, Frequency, Timing, Students' Perceptions*
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INTRODUCTION

English serves as a global language for international communication, intellectual exchange, and professional development (Grigoryeva & Zakirova, 2022). In higher education, it enables students to access international information, engage with academic resources, and develop professional competencies (Li, 2025). However, Indonesian EFL students often have limited opportunities to use English in everyday social interactions, particularly for authentic speaking practice outside the classroom (Darwanto et al., 2023). Consequently, the classroom plays an essential role in helping students develop their English proficiency, especially speaking skills, which remain challenging because they require learners to produce language spontaneously, communicate ideas clearly, and respond appropriately during interactions.

Speaking is considered the most difficult productive skill because students must comprehend language in real time, organize ideas swiftly, make grammatically correct utterances, and respond immediately (Wang et al., 2022). When speaking fully in English in EFL classrooms, many students feel anxious, frightened, afraid of making mistakes, and low self-confidence. A fear of negative judgment, insufficient English exposure, and negative self-perception often generate these feelings (Aini & Lubis, 2023). This suggests that students' emotional readiness and psychological comfort while learning affect speaking class achievement (Dewaele & Li, 2021).

Emotional engagement is crucial in speaking oriented EFL classes. Fredricks et al. (2004) define emotional involvement as students' feelings of Interest, enjoyment, comfort, happiness, boredom, anxiety, and classroom belonging. Because emotional support and

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positive classroom interaction significantly affect students' willingness to communicate and academic engagement, emotionally engaged students are more motivated, confident, and willing to participate in speaking activities (Li & Yongliang, 2023). However, pupils who are uncomfortable, anxious, or emotionally disconnected are more prone to retreat and participate less in class. Thus, students' speaking and learning experiences depend on emotional engagement.

One of the pedagogical strategies commonly used by lecturers to support students' emotional engagement is code-switching. According to Auer (1998), code-switching is not a random language shift, but a meaningful communicative practice that serves specific pedagogical and interactional purposes. In EFL speaking classes, Code-switching refers to the alternation between two languages, usually between the target language (L2) and the students' first language (L1), during classroom interaction. Lecturers often switch from English to Indonesian to explain difficult concepts, clarify instructions, provide feedback, emphasize important points, manage classroom interaction, and reduce students' confusion. This strategic language alternation can function not only as cognitive support but also as emotional scaffolding that helps students feel more secure, comfortable, and confident during speaking activities (Subon, 2021).

Several empirical investigations have indicated that lecturers' code-switching improves EL students' comprehension and emotional well-being. Code-switching in Indonesian EFL classes improved teacher student interactions, classroom environment, and social-emotional learning, according to Suganda et al. (2021). Munawaroh et al. (2022) found that instructor code switching reduced fear, enhanced motivation, confidence, and oral involvement. Student-centered research show that lecturers' code-switching helps students understand and feel supported. Fithriani (2021) discovered that university students found lecturers code-switching helpful in grasping lesson material and classroom comfort. Nhat et al. (2025) found that Vietnamese EFL students found code switching useful for lowering speaking fear and motivating oral interaction.

After all, some students and professors worried that excessive usage of the native language might diminish students' English exposure and harm long-term speaking growth (Lee et al., 2024). This suggests that code-switching might be beneficial or harmful depending on its implementation. Despite growing evidence that lecturers' code-switching can foster positive emotions and engagement, most previous studies have focused on the general benefits of code-switching rather than how students understand the frequency and timing of these practices in speaking classes. Few studies have examined whether students feel more emotionally supported when lecturers switch codes frequently or occasionally, or whether code-switching during explanation, correction, encouragement, or classroom management affects their emotional responses (Ningsih, 2021).

In speaking-oriented classes, where students are expected to actively produce language, the effectiveness of code-switching may depend not only on its presence but also on how often it occurs, when it occurs, and for what pedagogical purpose it is used. Frequent code-switching may help students feel more secure and confident, but excessive reliance on the first language may reduce students' exposure to English and weaken their speaking development (Hekmat et al., 2025; Rengur et al., 2025). Furthermore, limited attention has been given to the specific factors that support or hinder the effectiveness of code-switching in enhancing students' emotional engagement in university-level EFL speaking classrooms (Thi & Quyen, 2025).

This research gap is particularly important because speaking classes require not only linguistic practice but also emotional readiness and sustained participation. Without a clear understanding of how students perceive lecturers' code-switching practices, lecturers may rely too much on intuition rather than informed pedagogical decisions. As a result, code-switching may be used too frequently, too rarely, or at inappropriate moments, which can affect students' emotional engagement and speaking development (Zainil & Arsyad, 2021). Therefore, investigating students' perspectives on lecturers' code-switching becomes

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necessary to identify more effective strategies for balancing emotional support and target language exposure.

Based on these considerations, this study aims to explore how students understand the frequency and timing of lecturers' code-switching practices in EFL speaking classes and how these practices relate to their emotional engagement. In addition, this study seeks to identify the factors that support or hinder the effectiveness of code-switching in enhancing students' emotional engagement in Indonesian EFL speaking classrooms. Specifically, this research is guided by two research questions: (1) How do EFL students perceive the frequency and timing of lecturers' code-switching in speaking classes? and (2) What factors support and hinder the effectiveness of lecturers' code-switching in enhancing students' emotional engagement in EFL speaking classes?

METHOD

This study employed a qualitative approach that focused on developing a deep understanding of the phenomenon of code-switching by lecturers and how students understand these practices and perceive their influence on their emotional engagement in EFL speaking classes. A qualitative approach was chosen because this study aims to explore the meanings, perceptions, and subjective experiences of students related to pedagogical practices in the classroom, rather than measuring statistical cause-and-effect relationships. According to Creswell & Poth (2023), qualitative research is particularly appropriate when researchers want to understand how individuals interpret their experiences in specific social contexts. The research methodology employed was a case study, as the investigation took place within a particular setting, specifically EFL speaking classes at a private university in Southeast Sulawesi. Concentrating on a singular phenomenon: lecturer code switching and its impact on student's comprehension and emotional involvement in speaking class. A case study allows researchers to investigate a phenomenon in depth and within its real-life context (Baxter & Jack, 2008).

Respondents

The study was conducted during the even semester of the 2025/2026 academic year and involved second-semester students enrolled in EFL speaking classes at a private university in Southeast Sulawesi, Indonesia. Five students were selected through purposive sampling based on their experience with the phenomenon under investigation. Purposive sampling allows researchers to select participants who can provide relevant and information-rich accounts of the research topic. The inclusion criteria were: (1) active enrolment in a second-semester EFL speaking class; (2) attendance at least four to five speaking-class meetings in which the lecturer frequently used code-switching; (3) experience of emotional responses during speaking activities; and (4) willingness to participate in semi-structured interviews. These criteria ensured that participants had sufficient classroom experience to reflect on lecturers' language choices and their perceived relationship with comprehension, confidence, and emotional engagement.

Instruments

The instruments used in this study were classroom observation and semi-structured interviews. Classroom observations were conducted in two different speaking classes during the same semester to observe how lecturers implemented code-switching during speaking classes. The observations focused on the frequency, timing, and purposes of lecturers' code-switching, as well as students' visible responses during classroom interaction. In addition, the observations helped the researcher identify potential participants who met the purposive sampling criteria.

A semi-structured interview guide as the second one, developed based on the theoretical framework of this study. The interview questions were organized into two main sections: the first section focused on students' cognitive processing of lecturers' code-switching practices based on Information Processing Theory (Atkinson & Shiffrin, 1968); the

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second section focused on students' emotional engagement based on Fredricks et al. (2004), including indicators such as interest, enjoyment, comfort, confidence, anxiety reduction, and willingness to participate.

Procedures

Data collection was conducted through classroom observations and semi-structured interviews. During the first week, the researcher observed two EFL speaking classes to examine lecturers' code-switching practices and students' visible responses during classroom activities. Before conducting the observations, the researcher sought permission from the students to record or documents the classroom activities for research purposes. The observations focused on the frequency and timing of lecturers' code-switching, the classroom situations in which it occurred, and students' participation and apparent comprehension. The observation findings also helped the researcher identify potential participants for the interviews.

Following the classroom observations, semi-structured interviews were conducted with five student participants. Before each interview was audio-recorded, the researcher explained the purpose of the interview and asked whether the participant was willing to participate and agreed to the audio recording. Participants were informed that their participation was voluntary, that they could decline to answer any question, and that they could withdraw from the interview at any time without penalty. The interviews explored students' perceptions of lecturers' code-switching and its relationship to their understanding and emotional engagement during EFL speaking activities. The collected observation notes and interview transcripts were subsequently analysed thematically to address the research questions.

Data Analysis

Data analysis employed thematic analysis, as this method enables the researcher to identify, analyse, and interpret patterns of meaning within qualitative data (Clarke, 2021). The analysis process was conducted systematically, beginning with data familiarization through repeated reading of the interview transcripts and reviewing the classroom observation notes, followed by initial coding, theme searching, theme reviewing, and theme naming. The coding process was carried out manually using an inductive approach, meaning that themes and categories emerged from the interview data, with classroom observations providing contextual support. To ensure the trustworthiness of the data, this study applied member checking by sharing summaries of the interview transcripts or preliminary interpretations with selected participants to confirm the accuracy and clarity of the researcher's interpretations.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The findings of this study are presented according to the two research questions. The findings from the classroom observations and semi-structured interviews revealed three major themes describing how the participants perceive the frequency and timing of lecturers' code-switching, and three major themes related to the factors that support or hinder the effectiveness of code-switching in enhancing students' emotional engagement.

How do EFL Students Perceive The Frequency and Timing of Lecturers' Code-Switching in Speaking Classes?

The findings from the interview, supported by classroom observation, revealed three main themes concerning students' perceptions of the frequency and timing of lecturers' code-switching in EFL speaking classes: (1) students preferred code-switching when they experienced difficulties in understanding English, (2) the effectiveness of code-switching depended on a balance between English and Indonesian, and (3) appropriate timing of code-switching was associated with more positive emotional responses. These themes illustrate that

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students did not perceive code-switching simply in terms of whether it was used, but also considered when it was needed and how frequently it occurred.

Superordinate Theme 1: Students Prefer Code-Switching at Moments of Comprehension Difficulty

The first theme indicates that participants generally perceived code-switching as useful when they experienced difficulties in understanding English explanations, vocabulary, or instructions. Rather than expecting Indonesian to be used throughout the lesson, participants described code-switching as particularly helpful when English alone was insufficient for understanding the lecturer's message.

Subordinate Theme 1.1: Difficulty Understanding English

Several participants explained that lecturers commonly began explanations or instructions in English and switched to Indonesian when students needed further clarification:
"Usually, the lecturer explains the material first or gives instructions in English. Then, the lecturer explains it again in Indonesian so that we can better understand what the lecturer wants us to do." (P2)
"Based on my experience in class, the lecturer switches from English to Indonesian when there are sentences that are difficult for the students to understand. So, the lecturer does this to deliver the material more flexibly and effectively, so that what is being explained is not only understood by the lecturer but also by the students being taught." (P4)

These responses suggest that students viewed English as the initial language of instruction, while Indonesian was used when additional explanation was necessary. The switch therefore functioned as a form of clarification rather than as a replacement for English.

Subordinate Theme 1.2: Unfamiliar Vocabulary and Unclear Instructions

Participants also associated code-switching with unfamiliar vocabulary and unclear instructions:
"For example, in my previous experience, there was a motion, I forgot the exact title, but it was 'The House believes teenagers under 17 years old should be restricted.' I did not know what 'restricted' meant when I first heard it. Then, the lecturer explained it in Indonesian, so I understood, 'Oh, restricted means dibatasi.'" (P2)
"Yes. Usually, when the material is new, the lecturer also explains it using code-switching so that we can understand the new words that we have just heard." (P1)

These responses indicate that students particularly valued code-switching when they encountered new vocabulary or material for the first time.

Subordinate Theme 1.3: Need for Further Clarification

Code-switching was also perceived as useful when students understood individual English words but were still uncertain about the intended meaning of an instruction:
"Yes, instructions. The most important thing is instructions. Sometimes we understand, but when it is in English, we are like, 'Oh my God, what does this mean?' Even though we know the meaning, we do not understand the deeper meaning. So, sometimes we ask, 'Sir, what exactly do you mean by this?'" (P5)

This statement shows that students' difficulties were not always caused by unfamiliar vocabulary. In some cases, students could recognize the words but still had difficulty interpreting the intended message. The interview findings were also supported by the classroom observations. During the observations, P4 appeared to understand the lecturer's explanation quickly, while P3 appeared to require more support or clarification. The lecturers were also observed switching between English and Bahasa Indonesia when giving instructions and explaining difficult material. These observations provide contextual support for the participants' accounts that code-switching was particularly useful when students experienced difficulties understanding English explanations or instructions. Overall, Theme 1 indicates that students perceived code-switching as most useful when it responded directly to comprehension difficulties.

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Superordinate Theme 2: The Effectiveness of Code-Switching Depends on an Appropriate Balance Between English and Indonesian

The second theme concerns students' perceptions of language frequency. The findings show that participants did not consider either English or Indonesian alone to be consistently appropriate. Instead, they emphasized the importance of balancing the two languages according to students' understanding and learning needs.

Subordinate Theme 2.1: Excessive Use of English

Some participants described excessive English use as difficult, particularly when their English proficiency was not sufficient to follow the lecturer's explanation:

"Overall, it is what I mentioned earlier: when the frequency of English is too high and when words or sentences are repeated too much." (P1)

"When I was in the first semester, there was a lecturer who explained everything fully in English, while our English level was still basic or below basic. So, I immediately lost my motivation, and every time I was about to enter the class, I felt nervous." (P2)

This response indicates that frequent English use could become problematic when students were unable to follow the explanation. In this situation, the language frequency was perceived not only as a comprehension issue but also as something associated with reduced motivation and increased nervousness.

Subordinate Theme 2.2: Excessive Use of Indonesian

At the same time, participants did not perceive frequent Indonesian use as an ideal solution:

"Since most of the lecturers who teach us use more English, I think the frequency is the issue. For us to master English, there should not be too much Indonesian." (P1)

"When too much Indonesian is used to explain basic things that we can already understand if they are explained in English." (P2)

These statements demonstrate that students recognized the importance of maintaining exposure to English. Indonesian was considered useful when clarification was necessary, but its use was perceived as less appropriate when students could already understand the material in English.

Subordinate Theme 2.3: Preference for Balanced Language Use

Several participants explicitly expressed a preference for balanced language use:

"It is balanced." (P3)

"For me, both. Because, for example, when the lecturer switches to Indonesian, it makes me more motivated to learn because there are still many sentences that the lecturer says that I do not understand. So, when the two languages are mixed, my understanding of the material improves." (P4)

"We should not use too much English, and we should not use too much Indonesian either. It should be balanced. That's what I think makes the class enjoyable, and I do not get bored." (P5)

The responses indicate that participants did not define an effective frequency through a fixed amount of English or Indonesian. Instead, they preferred flexible language use that responded to their level of understanding. The classroom observations similarly showed lecturers alternating between English and Bahasa Indonesia according to the classroom situation and instructional needs. Overall, the findings suggest that students perceived frequency as effective when English remained the main language of learning while Indonesian was used strategically for clarification.

Superordinate Theme 3: Appropriate Timing of Code-Switching Supports Positive Emotional Responses

The third theme demonstrates that the timing of code-switching was closely connected to students' emotional experiences. Participants described situations in which confusion or uncertainty occurred before the switch, followed by increased understanding, confidence, comfort, or motivation after the lecturer used Indonesian.

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Subordinate Theme 3.1: Initial Uncertainty Before Switching

P2 described how an English explanation could initially leave students uncertain:

"Sometimes, as I mentioned earlier, the lecturer starts the class by using English. Then, when the lecturer switches to Indonesian, at first, we may only be guessing what the lecturer means when speaking English. After it is explained in Indonesian, we realize, 'Oh, so this is the complete meaning.'" (P2)

"My understanding? I think I can understand things more quickly as well. Because sometimes, if everything is in English, we start thinking, 'What did they just say?' Before we have time to think about one thing, the lecturer has already moved on to another word." (P3)

These responses indicate that the timing of the switch was important because students could experience confusion when clarification came too late. A switch at the appropriate moment helped them reconnect with the lecturer's explanation.

Subordinate Theme 3.2: Regained Confidence After Switching

Participants also described emotional changes following a timely switch:

"Then, the lecturer switches to Indonesian. So, I regain my confidence because I realize, 'Oh, so this is what it means.' Then I understand the material." (P2)

"But the lecturer immediately notices and understands. Then they immediately mix English and Indonesian. So, I immediately feel like, 'Oh, okay,' and I become motivated to answer." (P5)

These statements suggest that timely code-switching could help students move from uncertainty to confidence. The switch was perceived as particularly useful when students were expected to respond but were hesitant because they did not fully understand the question or discussion.

Subordinate Theme 3.3: Increased Comfort and Reduced Nervousness

The participants also described positive emotional responses after understanding the lecturer's explanation:

"Yes. Because when we understand something, we become more enthusiastic about learning. So, when the lecturer uses code-switching, we understand the material better, and our attention becomes more focused on the lesson." (P3)

"I feel relieved. I feel happy because when I am asked a question, I can understand better what is being asked." (P4)

These responses indicate that understanding was closely associated with positive emotional experiences. When code-switching occurred at an appropriate moment, participants reported feeling more relieved, enthusiastic, focused, and prepared to respond. The classroom observations provided additional contextual support for the importance of timing. During the observations, lecturers used code-switching when giving instructions, explaining difficult material, and making jokes during classroom interaction. Students generally appeared to pay attention and continued to follow classroom activities after the lecturers switched to Bahasa Indonesia. The observations also showed differences in participation: P5 participated occasionally, while P2 rarely participated or appeared hesitant to speak. These observations indicate that students displayed different levels of participation during classroom interaction, while code-switching was observed at moments when lecturers were providing clarification or maintaining interaction. Overall, Theme 3 demonstrates that the timing of code-switching mattered because a timely switch could reduce uncertainty and support confidence and comfort.

These findings regarding the frequency and timing of code-switching are consistent with previous studies. Students' preference for code-switching during moments of comprehension difficulty supports Fithriani's (2021) and Nhat et al.'s (2025) findings that learners value lecturer code-switching primarily as a clarification strategy rather than as a constant language choice. The emphasis on balanced language use also aligns with concerns raised by Lee et al. (2024) and Hekmat et al. (2025) that excessive reliance on either the first language or the target language can hinder learning. Furthermore, the positive emotional

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responses associated with timely switching reinforce Auer's (1998) view of code-switching as a purposeful communicative practice and support Fredricks et al.'s (2004) conceptualization of emotional engagement, in which reduced uncertainty contributes to greater comfort, confidence, and willingness to participate.

What Factors Support or Hinder the Effectiveness of Lecturers' Code-Switching in Enhancing Students' Emotional Engagement?

The findings from the interviews, supported by classroom observations, generated three themes: (1) improved understanding supports positive emotional engagement, (2) code-switching helps reduce language-related anxiety, and (3) excessive or inappropriate language use may hinder emotional engagement. These themes demonstrate that the emotional value of code-switching was closely related to students' understanding and to the appropriateness of its use.

Superordinate Theme 4: Improved Understanding Supports Positive Emotional Engagement

The fourth theme indicates that improved understanding was one of the main factors supporting students' emotional engagement. Participants described clearer understanding as being associated with comfort, enjoyment, attention, confidence, and motivation during speaking activities.

Subordinate Theme 4.1: Difficulty Understanding English

Code-switching allowed students to receive English input while still obtaining clarification in Indonesian:

"What makes me feel most comfortable is when explaining the material. Besides learning the material, we also get to practice listening to English. So, I enjoy it more. And Indonesian helps us understand the material better." (P3)

"Sometimes when the lecturer speaks in English, I understand it, but it feels just normal. But when they switch to Indonesian, I think, 'Oh, so this is what they mean.' Sometimes I know the meaning, but I do not really understand the actual meaning or implication of what they are saying. But when they use Indonesian, I think, 'Oh, I got it.'" (P5)

These accounts show that code-switching supported emotional engagement by making the meaning of classroom interaction clearer. Students were able to continue receiving English input while using Indonesian as additional support for understanding.

Subordinate Theme 4.2: Feeling Comfortable and Enjoying the Lesson

The improved understanding was also reflected in participants' positive feelings:

"Yes, I feel more comfortable and enjoy the class more." (P3)

"I feel relieved. I feel happy because when I am asked a question, I can understand better what is being asked." (P4)

The statements suggest that comfort and enjoyment emerged when students no longer felt uncertain about the material or questions being presented. Thus, comprehension functioned as an important condition supporting positive emotional engagement.

Subordinate Theme 4.3: Increased Confidence

Participants also described a direct connection between clarification and confidence:

"Then, the lecturer switches to Indonesian. So, I regain my confidence because I realize, 'Oh, so this is what it means.' Then I understand the material." (P2)

"But the lecturer immediately notices and understands. Then they immediately mix English and Indonesian. So, I immediately feel like, 'Oh, okay,' and I become motivated to answer." (P5)

These responses indicate that confidence and willingness to respond were supported when students understood what was being discussed or what they were expected to answer. The classroom observations also provided contextual support for these interview accounts. During the observation, P1 was identified as actively participating in the speaking activities, while P4 appeared to understand the lecturer's explanation quickly. Students generally paid

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attention and continued to follow classroom activities after the lecturer used Bahasa Indonesia. These observations provide additional contextual support for the interview findings concerning understanding, participation, and continued engagement during classroom interaction. Overall, the findings indicate that improved understanding was an important factor supporting emotional engagement.

Superordinate Theme 5: Code-Switching Helps Reduce Language-Related Anxiety

The fifth theme concerns the relationship between code-switching and students' anxiety during speaking activities. Participants described anxiety particularly when English was used continuously and they felt unable to understand or respond. In such situations, code-switching was perceived as a means of reducing language-related nervousness.

Subordinate Theme 5.1: Panic When English Is Fully Used

P3 explicitly described feeling anxious when the lecturer used English continuously:
"I am a panicky person, and I always feel that my English ability is still lacking. When the lecturer uses full English, that is when I start to panic. But when the lecturer starts using code-switching, my panic begins to decrease." (P3)
"When I was in the first semester, there was a lecturer who explained everything fully in English, while our English level was still basic or below basic. So, I immediately lost my motivation, and every time I was about to enter the class, I felt nervous." (P2)

These responses indicate that continuous English use could become emotionally demanding when students perceived a gap between the lecturer's language use and their own level of understanding.

Subordinate Theme 5.2: Reduced Anxiety After Code-Switching

P3 further explained that the reduction in anxiety occurred when code-switching enabled better understanding:
"I don't think there is any particular reason, because once the lecturer starts using code-switching, I begin to understand the material. Automatically, my nervousness or panic decreases." (P3)
"I feel relieved. I feel happy because when I am asked a question, I can understand better what is being asked." (P4)

These statements suggest that code-switching was perceived as reducing anxiety not simply because Indonesian was used, but because the switch addressed the comprehension difficulty underlying the participants' nervousness. Overall, Theme 5 indicates that language-related anxiety was reduced when code-switching helped students understand the lecturer's message.

Superordinate Theme 6: *Excessive or Inappropriate Code-Switching May Hinder Emotional Engagement*

The final theme demonstrates that code-switching was not perceived as beneficial in every situation. Participants identified excessive Indonesian, excessive English, and repetitive explanations as conditions that could reduce their interest, focus, motivation, or enjoyment. This finding shows that the effectiveness of code-switching depended on its appropriateness rather than its mere presence.

Subordinate Theme 6.1: Excessive Use of Indonesian

P2 explained that Indonesian was unnecessary when students were already able to understand the material in English:
"When too much Indonesian is used to explain basic things that we can already understand if they are explained in English." (P2)
"Since most of the lecturers who teach us use more English, I think the frequency is the issue. For us to master English, there should not be too much Indonesian." (P1)

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These responses indicate that Indonesian could become less effective when it was used beyond the students' actual needs. Participants still expected English to remain an important part of speaking instruction.

Subordinate Theme 6.2: Excessive Use of English

Conversely, participants also described excessive English as potentially problematic:
"Overall, it is what I mentioned earlier: when the frequency of English is too high and when words or sentences are repeated too much." (P1)
"So, I immediately lost my motivation, and every time I was about to enter the class, I felt nervous." (P2)

The responses suggest that excessive English could hinder emotional engagement when students were unable to follow the lesson. In this situation, the lack of timely clarification was associated with reduced motivation and increased nervousness.

Subordinate Theme 6.3: Repetitive Explanations

Participants also identified unnecessary repetition as a factor that could reduce engagement:
"Usually, it is because of repeated words or sentences. For example, if a sentence has already been said and then translated, and later the same sentence is said and translated again." (P1)
"Yes, or when we keep discussing the same topic over and over. That can sometimes make me bored." (P3)

These statements show that repetition was not automatically perceived as helpful. Although repetition may support understanding in some situations, excessive repetition could reduce students' interest and contribute to boredom. Overall, the findings show that students perceived code-switching as most useful when it was used purposefully and at moments when clarification was needed. The classroom observations complement the interview findings by showing how lecturers used code-switching during actual classroom interaction and how students responded visibly through attention and participation. However, the observations were used as contextual support rather than as evidence of students' internal emotional experiences. Overall, Theme 6 indicates that the effectiveness of code-switching depended on its appropriate use. Both excessive English and excessive Indonesian could create difficulties for students, while unnecessary repetition could reduce their interest and enjoyment.

The factors identified in this study further illustrate the dual role of code-switching in EFL speaking classes. The link between improved understanding and positive emotional engagement echoes Munawaroh et al. (2022) and Suganda et al. (2021), who reported that strategic code-switching can reduce anxiety and enhance motivation. At the same time, the finding that excessive or inappropriate switching may hinder engagement is in line with Rengur et al. (2025) and Lee et al. (2024), who cautioned that overuse of the first language can limit target language exposure and reduce students' interest. Taken together, these results suggest that the effectiveness of code-switching in supporting emotional engagement depends less on its frequency alone and more on its responsiveness to students' immediate comprehension and affective needs, a point that has received relatively limited attention in previous research on Indonesian university speaking classrooms.

CONCLUSIONS

This study concludes that EFL students perceived lecturers' code-switching as beneficial when used selectively and at appropriate moments during speaking classes. Participants valued the use of Indonesian to clarify unfamiliar vocabulary, explain difficult concepts, and resolve misunderstandings, particularly when these difficulties affected their confidence and willingness to participate. The findings also suggest that purposeful code-switching was associated with positive emotional experiences, including greater comfort, confidence, and reduced language anxiety. However, excessive use of either English or Indonesian could undermine engagement by increasing confusion or limiting opportunities for English practice. These findings highlight the importance of balancing comprehension support with

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meaningful English-speaking opportunities. In practice, lecturers should use Indonesian selectively when students encounter comprehension difficulties, then return to English to encourage continued interaction and independent language use. Nevertheless, the findings should be interpreted within the study's scope because the research involved only five students at one private university in Southeast Sulawesi. Future research could include students with different English proficiency levels, compare multiple educational settings, and examine classroom interactions across repeated speaking sessions to develop a broader understanding of how specific code-switching practices relate to students' emotional experiences.

DECLARATIONS

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Ethical Approval and Consent: This study was conducted in accordance with the research ethics guidelines and procedures established by the Institute for Research and Community Service (LPPM) of the university. The researchers also respected participants' rights, ensured voluntary participation, and obtained their consent before conducting observations and interviews.
Use of Generative AI: Generative AI tools were used solely to assist with English language proofreading and grammatical refinement. All research activities, data interpretation, findings, and academic arguments were conducted and verified by the authors, who take full responsibility for the content of this manuscript.

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