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### The Use of Code-Switching in English as a Foreign Language Classrooms in Teachers' Perspective

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#### Abstrak

Praktik alih kode masih menjadi perdebatan di kalangan peneliti, apakah alih kode merugikan sebagai pertanda kurangnya kompetensi guru ataukah bermanfaat sebagai strategi komunikasi dalam proses pembelajaran Bahasa Inggris. Terlepas dari kontroversi mengenai alih kode diantara para peneliti, guru masih mempraktekannya di kelas EFL mereka. Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk menyelidiki persepektif guru dalam mempertahankan penggunaan alih kode di kelas EFL mereka sebagai strategi pembelajarn. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode deskriptif kualitatif. Data dikumpulkan terutama dari hasil wawancara dari lima orang guru Bahasa Inggris. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa guru mempraktekan alih kode karena institusi mereka masih mengizinkan praktek alih kode di dalam kelas. Namun, guru membatasi penggunaan alih kode hanya ketika mereka harus menjelaskan aturan Bahasa, dan ketika guru memberikan instruksi tugas sehingga siswa tidak salah memahami instruksi. Guru percaya bahwa alih kode mendukung mereka dalam masalah instruksional dan manajerial kelas dan menggunakan alih kode sesedikit mungkin dan biasanya dilakukan di kelas pemula. Guru percaya bahwa menggunakan alih kode dapat melayani tujuan pedagogis dan strategi komunikasi di kelas EFL mereka.

**Kata Kunci:** TEFL, Alih kode, Kelas EFL, Perspektif

#### Abstract

*The practice of code-switching still become a debatable notion among researchers, is it detrimental as a sign of a teacher's lack of competence or beneficial as a communication strategy in the English teaching-learning process, Despite the controversy on code-switching among researchers, teachers still practice it in their EFL classroom. The purpose of this study was to investigate teachers' perspectives on maintaining the use of code-switching in their EFL classroom as an instructional strategy. This study uses the qualitative descriptive method. The data was collected primarily from interviews with five English teachers. The result showed that the teacher practiced the code-switching because the institution allowed the code-switching practice in the classroom However, teachers limited the use of code-switching only when they should explain the language rules, and when the teachers gave task instruction so that the student did not misunderstand the instruction. Teachers believe that code-switching supports them in the instructional and managerial matter in EFL class and they used code-switching as little as possible and usually in their beginner class. The teachers believed that using code-switching can serve pedagogical purposes and communication strategies in their EFL classroom.*

**Keywords:** TEFL, Code-switching, EFL Classroom, Teacher's Perspective

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## INTRODUCTION

In EFL classroom, English is essentially used as a medium for lesson instruction. Nevertheless, as a foreign language classes, EFL classroom in Indonesia that usually consist of bilingual or multilingual speakers where people speak more than one language and dialects makes the use of code-switching in the class is inevitable (Puspawati, 2018). Furthermore, in EFL classroom context in Indonesia, in which the member of the class shares the same first language, the practice of code-switch occurs. Code-switch refers to the alternating use of more than one linguistics code in classroom by any of the classroom participants such as teachers and students. (Lin, 2017). While according to (Olson, 2015), code-switching also can be broadly defined on the use of at least two languages during the same interaction. Accordingly, in EFL classroom in Indonesia it can be said that code-switching is the ability of class participants to switch from Bahasa (L1) and English (L2) and vice versa. In EFL classroom, teacher usually switch from English to Bahasa. Code-switching is still popular as one of the strategies in English teaching and learning process in the EFL classroom. Some researchers believe that code-switching in the EFL classroom serves as more managerial in which the use of code-switching in learning process intend to act more in managing and facilitating interaction in learning. Managing and facilitating the interactions is a way to support English communication in the classroom, since code-switching may help the senders transfer the information to the receivers effectively (Weng, 2012). Code-switching should have intention of providing essential meaning to create lessons across the curriculum and work with text that are mostly written in English, learning new vocabulary in the classroom, establishing relationship with students or asserting authority of the teacher, increasing the inclusion, increasing participation, understanding of students in the learning process, developing less formal relationship between participants, conveying ideas more easily, accomplishing lesson, and contributing to a “teachable” pedagogic resource (Zulfa, 2016). In addition, in EFL classroom, teacher tend to practice code-switching to achieve the main goal of language learning. In this way, teacher or lecturer may have to organized and create condition for the students to speak and it will be useful to code-switching to L1. Create a foreign language learning environment that is suitable for students (Rahayu, 2019)

However, the use of code-switching in the classroom is still part of the controversy in English teaching and learning practice, whether it is beneficial for students or it will hinder students to immerse in the target language. Even though many English language classrooms put forward the importance of target language immersion for language learner -so that teachers of EFL Classroom consider to use English language primarily as target language to ensure the success of English language immersion- however, many English language teachers still conduct the code-switching in the EFL classroom. Basically, one of the goals for many teachers of English as a foreign language classroom is to have the students to communicate in English as much as possible, especially when they are in the classroom (Zulfa, 2016). Accordingly, learners should practice to communicate with other members of the class using the English language, so that it promotes the communicative exchange in the classroom and in the end will promote the students' English communicative competence. Furthermore, not only the students who should active in developing their English communicative competence but also the teachers should also have ability to speak English fluently when doing the teaching-learning process for the learning can be more effective and also to be able to give more English exercise more often and more comprehensive for the students. Accordingly, teachers of EFL classroom should consider to speak in full English in the classroom. However, in reality both teachers and students still perform code-switching in the classroom for various reason. Nevertheless, it cannot be denied that the use of code-switching seems can be beneficial for students.

Numerous studies have been conducted regarding the use of code-switch in language classroom. The use of code-switching in the EFL classroom as strategy has interested researchers to analyzed it in sociolinguistics field (Malik, 2014; Modupeola, 2013; Wang, 2017; Weng, 2012), while other researches has focus more on its

function that was used by teachers when they practice code-switching (Azlan & Narasuman, 2013; Johansson, 2013; Ramasari & Kumalasari, 2018; Tajudin, 2013; Zulfa, 2016). Besides the function of code-switching, researchers also want to find out the types of code-switch that was used in the class (Hutahuruk, 2016; Mukti & Muljani, 2016). The use of code-switching in the EFL classroom is inseparable from the teacher as classroom facilitator in EFL class. The teacher believes in conducting the code-switch also interest researcher (Bensen & Çavuşoğlu, 2013; Engku Ibrahim et al., 2013) and also students perception of the use in EFL Classroom (Fuente, 2021) Nevertheless, there are still many issues to investigate when the code-switching is conducted in EFL classroom. There are still many unexplored questions about the code-switching in the classroom such as what is teacher's perspective that lead to their action in maintaining to practice code-switch in the EFL classroom despite the controversy of the use of code-switching. Accordingly, this current study has objective to investigate teacher's perspective in conducting code-switching in the EFL classroom classroom

## RESEARCH METHOD

This study was guided by qualitative research, (Creswell, 2014) states that qualitative research is an inquiry process of understanding based on distinct methodological traditions of inquiry that explore social or human problem. The researcher built a complex, holistic picture, analyzes words, report detailed views of informants and conducted the study in natural setting since this study tries to understand the phenomenon in natural setting. Furthermore, the qualitative research also promotes more diverse reaction from those who have been asked or surveyed, accordingly the human behavior is taken more into consideration than numbers. This study is also guided by case study method since this study wanted to analyse and describes life situation of a group of people in detail. This study aimed to find out the teacher's perspective in doing code-switching in EFL Classroom.

For the purpose of this study the researcher used written interview to find out the teacher's perspective in the use of code-switching as main instrument. The participants of this study were five English teachers who were teaching English at different institutions in Surabaya. The highest educational background of the teachers was a Master Degree. Data was collected through written interview in which the respondent should write their response in paper. First the interview questions were given to the respondent, they were asked to write down the answer of the interview. After they finished answering the interview questions, the respondents gave the interview and their answer to the researchers. Furthermore, for data analyzing; there were three techniques for analyzing the data, they are data reduction, presenting the data (data display), and draw the conclusion. After the data was collected, then the data was presented or displayed. Furthermore, the data showed the teacher perspective in code-switching and gives possibility to draw conclusion.

## RESEARCH RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study aimed to find out the teachers' perspective in doing the code-switching in the EFL Classroom. The data collected from the written interview that was given to five EFL teachers. There are seven items in the interview questions and the result presented as below:

**Table 1**  
**Result of Written Interview**

Question 1a. Based on your institution curriculum for English, can you do code-switch from English to Bahasa or vice versa in EFL Classroom?	
Teacher A	Yes, we can. The manager and director in the institution I work once gave me an instruction to code-switch to Bahasa in class
Teacher B	Yes, I can.
Teacher C	Yes, I can.
Teacher D	Yes, we can.
Teacher E	Yes

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<b>Question 1b. In what level or class usually, you allow to use Bahasa in EFL Classroom.</b>	
Teacher A	In the beginner class
Teacher B	In Beginner Level
Teacher C	In Basic English
Teacher D	In Beginner Level
Teacher E	In Basic class or Primary level class or for specific subjects like mathematics, chemistry, etc
<b>Question 2 What do you think about the use of Bahasa in the English classroom, in general?</b>	
Teacher A	In my opinion, it is necessary and helpful to do code-switching in English classroom. Of course, the lecturer should be aware that implementing a larger portion of native language is not recommended
Teacher B	Bahasa helps students to understand English text quickly
Teacher C	I think code-switching can help students to understand better when it is related to the Language rules
Teacher D	It's okay to use code-switch in the EFL classroom in order to make the students understand the difficult material or essential rules of the language
Teacher E	It's OK. It helps students who are weak
<b>Question 3. In what situation do you tend to choose to speak Bahasa?</b>	
Teacher A	Usually there are two situations when I frequently do code-switching: first, when I have to explain complex grammar rules. Second, when I have to trigger the students to share their thoughts or opinion about a certain topic.
Teacher B	When the students do not understand what I am speaking
Teacher C	When I explain grammar rules or give the instruction to avoid misunderstanding about the instruction
Teacher D	When I give the task instruction or explain the difficult part of English materials
Teacher E	When the students seem to have difficulty in understanding the material.
<b>Question 4 What is the purpose when you code-switch to Bahasa in the English classroom?</b>	
Teacher A	To help the students understand the material better and to smoothen the communication in class.
Teacher B	In order the students can comprehend quickly.
Teacher C	In order the students can understand the complex material
Teacher D	To save time to explain the difficult material and make the students understand better about the material
Teacher E	To make sure that the students get the points of the explanation
<b>Question 5. What do the students react, in general, when you code-switch to Bahasa in English Classroom? (e.g.: arouse their interest, make them confident in getting ahead, or dislike the use of Bahasa in English Classroom);</b>	
Teacher A	The students usually respond or understand better after I explain in Bahasa.
Teacher B	The students can more understand
Teacher C	Make them understand and confident in getting ahead with the material
Teacher D	They still enjoy the lesson, because using code-switch make them feeling less stressful in learning English
Teacher E	They understand better
<b>Questions 6. Are there advantages in changes the language to Bahasa when you teach?</b>	
Teacher A	The students can understand the material and teacher's talk better. Of course, it is expected that the students gain more confident in class.
Teacher B	It saves time in explaining English text.
Teacher C	It saves time explaining the difficult or complex rules
Teacher D	Saves time and make students feeling less stressful in the classroom
Teacher E	Yes. The students have clearer understanding
<b>Question 7. Are there disadvantages in changes the language to Bahasa when you teach?</b>	
Teacher A	I guess there is not.
Teacher B	The students become dependent on Bahasa

- Teacher C So far, the students get the benefit when I code-switch in the classroom. They get the lesson more clearly
- Teacher D I don't think it won't be any problem if we as the teacher can use code-switch proportionally
- Teacher E Yes. The students may not get used to think in English.
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Based on the interview on the lecturer of EFL class, it revealed that, teachers practice the code-switch in their EFL classroom because the institutions allow them to do code-switching, of course in appropriate amount, because teachers aware of that English is taught as a Foreign language and also because of the diversity of students' skills and goals in learning English. They are also aware that teaching fully in English may stimulate students anxious in communicating in English. The common perception between educational institutions that provide English classes and English teachers is needed for teachers to be able to provide learning that is in accordance with the learning objectives established together with the school. (Trinaldi et al., 2022). However, based on the written interview, the teachers practice code-switching when they teach in the beginner level. It seems that the teachers are aware of the students' language skills for beginner or basic level that in average is in low level of proficiency. Furthermore, based on the third written interview questions, about their opinion about using code-switching. Essentially, the teachers find that it is okay to do code-switching in the sense that it will help students to understand English mainly the rules of English language, difficult material and as long as it is done in minimum portion just to make the learning more efficient and the students would be able to grasp the essential instruction especially for students who are still weak in English. This result is in line with the notion that is mentioned (Bensen & Çavuşoğlu, 2013) on their research that mention the notion that the code-switch practice can be an important element for teaching and learning English. It can be an effective tool to transfer the information from the sender to receivers. Furthermore, for the low proficiency students, the use of code-switching is very helpful for them in terms of gaining better comprehension of the materials, especially when giving classroom instruction and procedures.

Accordingly, teachers usually practice code-switching mostly when explain complex grammar rules to avoid misunderstanding, secondly, teachers used code-switching to clarify difficult concept or instruction and lastly usually to break the tense atmosphere for the English language learner would be able to share their thought or opinion about some topics and may create less anxiety environment for the English language learner. Therefore, the teachers' purpose when doing code-switching is mainly for the students to understand English material especially the complex one, and create less anxiety classroom so that the English language learners may become active in the classroom using English. Besides that, the use of code-switching is seen to be able to avoid the students from dropping out their interest in learning English since it can build the comfortable environment for acquiring a foreign language (Malik, 2014). Even more they will be able to understand the materials and teacher's talk better while they also may gain confident and feel less stressful in participating in the English class. Accordingly, based on that argument, the use of code-switching should not be considered as a drawback when it is used by the teachers in the classroom.

The response of the teachers in this study also indicate the their perception of the use of code-switch to class management purpose and it is in accordance to the result of (Puspawati, 2018) who states that the functions of teachers' code-switching were to construct and transmit knowledge, to manage the class, and to build interpersonal relation with the students. In terms of managing the class, the response of the teacher indicate that teacher would carry out action in order to be able to create and maintain optimal conditions, creating atmosphere of good interpersonal relations so that teaching and learning process can run effectively and learning objectives would be achieved (Wiguna & Muhroji, 2022). Furthermore, for classroom management purpose, the most frequent that the teachers were using code-switch are for giving instruction, introducing lesson objectives and repeating questions (Puspawati, 2018). However, the use of code-switching still left some concerns. One of the concerns is that even though the students may get benefit from code-switching but they may become dependent on the use of L1 which is Bahasa, and secondly, they may not get used to think in a way English language

works. Therefore, to anticipate that matter, teachers should do code-switching in a minimum portion. This concerns also concurrence with the implication of (Yatağanbaba & Yıldırım, 2015) research in which it is mentioned that despite the linguistics potential and value of classroom code-switching, L2 learners require a requisite amount of input and practice in the target language if they are to develop their fluency and competency in the language to the level acceptable for an English language instructor. Practicing code-switching is effective for student learning and it is encouraged to be used when teaching students of low proficiency.

So that in summary, all the teachers as subjects of this research tend to think that using code-switching, essentially, will help students to understand basic rule of English language therefore they will also use it in a small portion so that just for the student understand the concept. Furthermore, the use of code-switching enables the teacher to convey precise meaning which helps enhance learning. This result is in accordance to the research (Bensen & Çavuşoğlu, 2013) that asserted that the possibilities of misunderstanding are minimized as their native language is also used while teaching the grammar points---. Most of the teachers that were given the written interview believe that use code-switch in the classroom benefited the students in learning English. This result showed that the teachers in EFL class still believe that using code-switch in EFL classroom is understandable as long as it is used for the low proficiency students so that they can easily understand the material and make the classroom more comfortable for them to learn English since they can use their native language to clarify the material that they do not understand.

The result of this study is in line with the previous researches that mention about the code-switch is the important element in teaching and learning English, moreover it can make the classroom more comfortable for learning the materials, so that it avoids the students in dropping out their interest in learning English. (Malik, 2014; Puspawati, 2018) This result also in line with (Engku Ibrahim et al., 2013) that resulted that both of the subjects observed in the study displayed positive attitudes towards code-switching. They believed that moderate code-switching is tolerable as long as the switches do not interfere with the essential processes of the learning itself. The use of English-only in class was highly encouraged. One of the teachers considered code-switching as an alternative way of teaching low proficiency students. Both of the subjects stated that there were many reasons for ESL teachers to code-switch, namely, lack of proficiency, inability to find the exact words in English, promoting students' understanding particularly in explaining difficult terms, for friendliness, and to follow the usage that is found one's culture However, this result is on the contrary of Krashen (Malik, 2014) statement that the code-switch will hinder the immersion of English as the target language.

This study has some limitations in terms of generalizability the subject of the study is still limited to small number of teachers, accordingly the teachers' perspective still not compensable enough even though this study is not intended to generalize the teacher's perspective towards the use of code-switching in the EFL Classroom. Besides that, the interview questions should be more depth in digging the teacher's perspective. Therefore, future research should consider those point Furthermore, considering the finding, it is also necessary to conduct the further research in the EFL classroom to be able to know how teacher code-switch in the class and also the students' reaction when the teacher code-switch in the class

## CONCLUSIONS

The result showed that the teachers had positive perspective on the use of code-switching in EFL classroom, even more, the educational institution also allows teachers to do code-switch in the classroom. Teachers still believe that the use of code-switch in EFL Classroom still necessary for the beginner level or low proficiency students. Teachers of EFL Classroom tend to use code-switching in the classroom when it is dealing with the low proficiency students. Teachers use code-switch in order to help the students to get better understanding in lesson material and also help the students to reduce their anxiety in learning English in the class since using code-switch make the students less stressful in the classroom. Teachers also tended to use code-switching when explained the difficult materials so that the students can understand better and make the

classroom more comfortable for the students to learn English. Accordingly, teachers in EFL class still believe that using code-switch in EFL classroom is understandable as long as it is used for the low proficiency students so that they can easily understand the material and make the classroom more comfortable for them to learn English since they can use their native language to clarify the material that they do not understand.

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