

Attitudes Toward Code-Switching Among Indonesian Junior High School EFL Teachers

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Abstract—Although English language teachers in Indonesia frequently employ code-switching (CS) in the classroom, its use is often sporadic and intuitive rather than guided by research-based strategic functions. In the Indonesian context, only a limited number of studies have examined how two local languages—the mother tongue and the Indonesian language—function differently in code-switching practices in EFL classrooms. This study investigates why and when Indonesian English teachers switch to Indonesian and Malay dialects while teaching English. In the quantitative phase, 83 teachers participated in the survey, whereas in the qualitative phase (interviews and classroom observations), 6 teachers were involved. The findings reveal that Indonesian and Malay dialects serve distinct functions in the English classroom, including knowledge construction, classroom management, relationship building, and contextual constraint accommodation. Furthermore, the study shows that teachers' code-switching occurs in various situations, such as providing detailed explanations, clarifying complex concepts, giving advice, offering instructions and feedback, addressing student misconduct, making jokes, expressing anger, and motivating students.

Index Terms—code-switching functions, EFL, English teachers, Indonesia, Malay dialect

I. INTRODUCTION

Research shows that the use of *code-switching* in English learning can be beneficial in certain situations, such as when students struggle to comprehend a topic due to limited vocabulary or grammatical knowledge in the target language. The use of the first language (L1) can help students better understand the material and accelerate their learning process. However, the use of code-switching has often been controversial among experts. Some argue that code-switching in the foreign language classroom is effective, while others contend that it can be detrimental to foreign language learning (Littlewood & Yu, 2011).

Macaro's (2005) study showed that the use of L1 in the classroom creates greater opportunities for learning, as it benefits both teachers and students. Teachers can decide when, where, and how they should switch codes, which can also enhance their linguistic abilities. For students, the use of code-switching can support the development of their language-learning competence and help them become more adaptable in acquiring new languages.

Code-switching is also believed to enhance students' understanding of how their first language contributes to learning and communication. According to Liu (2008), in learning English vocabulary, for instance, L1 is an effective means of semantization for checking and validating L2 learners' understanding of word meanings. In addition, code-switching can assist students who are unable to articulate their ideas in other languages (Van der Meij & Zhao, 2010). Despite these benefits and potential, teachers still often feel uncomfortable and even guilty when using code-switching in their classes (Littlewood & Yu, 2011; Setyowati, 2023). Due to students' limited exposure to English in the classroom, Krashen (1985) claimed that code-switching can negatively affect students' verbal skills. Similarly, Turnbull and Arnett (2002) argued that the use of code-switching results in a decline in the quality of the target language. Likewise, Moore (2002) asserted that code-switching in the classroom could decrease both students' and teachers' proficiency in the target language. Thus, the application of code-switching must be reliable, reasonable, and practical (Macaro, 2009).

Nurhamidah et al.'s (2018) study, conducted in the Indonesian EFL classroom context, found that code-switching was beneficial for both teachers and students in conveying and receiving information. Similarly, Khaerunnisa (2016)

observed that code-switching provided clear material explanations, explicit task instructions, encouragement, and discipline. Although many studies have investigated the use of code-switching in Indonesia, most have focused only on its functions as well as teachers' and students' perceptions of it in the classroom (e.g., Khaerunnisa, 2016; Nurhamidah et al., 2018; Syafrizal et al., 2019; Patmasari et al., 2022). However, only a few studies in Indonesia have specifically examined how two languages (the mother tongue and Indonesian) function differently in code-switching practices in the EFL classroom. Therefore, this study aims to fill this research gap by addressing the following research questions:

RQ1. Why do teachers switch to Indonesian and Malay dialects in the English classroom?

RQ2. When do teachers switch to Indonesian and Malay dialects in the English classroom?

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Problematizing Code-Switching

The term *code-switching* refers to the mixing of two or more languages by bilinguals or multilinguals, often without a change in topic or interlocutor (Poplack, 2001). According to Yim and Clement (2021), bilinguals use code-switching, either intentionally or unconsciously, as a social and communicative tool to signal social categories and group identity. Code-switching is defined as the alternating use of two or more languages within a single utterance or conversation (Gardner-Chloros, 2009; Shartiely, 2016). This multilingual practice typically involves the use of both the native language and a second language (Cook, 2001). In bilingual classrooms, García (2011) outlines several rules for responsible code-switching. First, there should be as little code-switching to the dominant language as possible when the instructional language is endangered. Second, switching to the mother tongue should be intentional rather than random. García (2011) suggests that code-switching is particularly useful when providing word definitions, giving linguistic summaries, or offering lesson recaps. This type of code-switching not only aids in clarifying meaning but also provides a clear language contrast.

In multilingual contexts, *code-switching* and *translanguaging* are often used interchangeably (Park, 2013; MacSwan, 2022). More recently, scholarly discussions have focused on how these two concepts overlap (Balam, 2021). According to MacSwan (2022), *translanguaging*—a term with a similar meaning frequently used in bilingual education—has increasingly been linked to code-switching. It is both a theoretical and pedagogical approach that draws on learners' entire linguistic repertoires to enhance their language and content knowledge in educational settings (Cenoz & Gorter, 2022). Furthermore, these scholars argue that pedagogical *translanguaging* prioritizes the learner, supports the development of each language they use, softens the boundaries between languages, and promotes metalinguistic awareness. *Translanguaging* is thus a teaching approach that values and draws upon students' varied and dynamic language practices in both instruction and learning (Vogel & García, 2017).

Milroy and Muysken (1995), on the other hand, argued that code-switching is a form of *translanguaging*, referring to bilinguals' alternating use of two or more languages in the same speech interaction. In this sense, *translanguaging* and code-switching are comparable in that both describe the natural switching of languages among multilingual speakers (Park, 2013). However, Otheguy et al. (2019) maintained that *translanguaging* and code-switching are not synonymous, since *translanguaging* is based on a distinct theory of the bilingual mind. Przymus (2024) further explained that code-switching and *translanguaging* can be distinguished depending on who is speaking, the topic of discussion, and the setting. According to them, *translanguaging* is more concerned with the context of interaction, whereas code-switching focuses on the actual language codes and word/concept formation. Thus, the definitions and uses of code-switching and *translanguaging* in the EFL classroom remain contested among scholars, and the debate continues. Nevertheless, as discussed below, several recent studies demonstrate that code-switching in the classroom positively influences both teachers and students.

In the context of English as a foreign language (EFL), such as in Indonesia, Simatupang et al. (2024) suggested that code-switching occurs when multiple languages are used in the learning process to achieve linguistic purposes and enhance students' understanding of learning concepts. Similarly, the ability to enrich the target language, maintain students' attention, clarify concepts, make the target language more accessible, and reinforce instructional content are among the benefits of code-switching (Shafi et al., 2020). Previous studies have also shown that switching between different languages is a common linguistic practice in everyday interactions among speakers who share the same languages (Ghaderi et al., 2024).

Many researchers have shown that code-switching in the EFL classroom benefits both teachers and students (Nurhamidah et al., 2018; Hazaymeh, 2022). The use of code-switching in English learning can be particularly helpful in situations such as supporting different aspects of the learning process and fostering a positive social atmosphere for instruction and language development (Hazaymeh, 2022). Furthermore, Kumar et al. (2021), in their exploration of the effectiveness of code-switching in language classrooms, explained that it is most commonly used in primary schools to clarify complex ideas, translate questions, seek confirmation, assess students' understanding, and promote solidarity. Code-switching also creates greater opportunities for learning, as it benefits both teachers and students (Macaro, 2005).

For teachers, the use of students' mother tongue in the classroom can assist in clarifying unfamiliar vocabulary, explaining grammatical rules, organizing classes, and improving both cooperative and individual learning (Cook, 2001). For students, code-switching helps them articulate their ideas in other languages and enhances their understanding of

how their first language contributes to learning and communication (Van der Meij & Zhao, 2010).

Studies have shown that code-switching serves multiple purposes in the classroom, including content delivery, classroom management, humor, and mood regulation (Puspawati, 2018; Temesgen & Hailu, 2022; Mulyani et al., 2024). Similarly, Ye (2021) pointed out that code-switching primarily fulfills four major functions: knowledge construction, classroom administration, relationship building, and accommodation of contextual constraints. Ataş and Şimşek (2021) noted that both teachers and students code-switched in class for educational and communicative purposes—such as facilitating communication, delivering subject content, and managing classroom issues. According to Temesgen and Hailu (2022), students' limited English proficiency, teachers' perceptions, and the types and nature of language skills were the key factors influencing their code-switching practices. Although code-switching can help students better understand content and accelerate their learning process—particularly when they struggle with vocabulary or grammar—it has also generated considerable debate among experts. Some argue that code-switching in the language classroom can hinder foreign language learning (Littlewood & Yu, 2011), while Palmer (2009) observed that many multilingual speakers regard code-switching as a sign of linguistic weakness or inadequacy. Palmer further argued that code-switching may cause problems when speakers are unfamiliar with the semantics of words or phrases across languages. Moreover, excessive reliance on code-switching may negatively affect students' English proficiency compared to classes conducted exclusively in English, potentially leading to disadvantages in communication later on (Zhu, 2008).

B. Code-Switching in the Indonesian Context

With more than 726 languages spoken, Indonesia has the second-highest number of languages in the world (Budiono & Harimansyah, 2023). Among these, Malay is one of the languages widely spoken and has long served as a lingua franca, although it has not been the majority regional or culturally dominant language in the country (Cohn & Ravindranath, 2014). In the EFL context, English is a compulsory subject taught from elementary to tertiary levels. Indonesian, the national language, is mostly used in official settings and educational contexts by the majority of the population, while vernacular languages (such as Malay) serve as mother tongues in daily communication. In Pekanbaru, a city in Riau Province, Malay is predominantly spoken in everyday conversation, while Indonesian is used in formal situations, including schools. In practice, most EFL teachers in Pekanbaru employ code-switching during teaching and learning activities, often alternating between Malay and Indonesian when teaching English.

III. METHOD

This study employed a mixed-methods approach, utilizing both qualitative and quantitative data collection techniques. The first research question was addressed using survey data adapted from Lee (2016), who investigated the functions of code-switching in EFL classrooms for language instruction. Additionally, the first research question was further explored through semi-structured interviews and classroom observations. The second research question was examined using survey data, in which teachers were asked to provide written notes describing the situations in which they employed code-switching in their EFL classrooms.

Sample and Data Collection

The survey participants consisted of 83 teachers enrolled in the professional teacher education program at Riau University. In the interview and classroom observation phases, six selected teachers participated in the study. All participants spoke Malay and Indonesian as their first and second languages, respectively, while English functioned as a foreign language for them.

IV. RESULT

Although the research questions are elaborated in the discussion section, the findings are aligned with these questions in the manner of evaluative research (Bryman, 2016) and are therefore presented accordingly:

RQ1: Why do teachers switch to Indonesian and Malay dialects in the English classroom?

The survey data regarding teachers' reasons for using code-switching in the English classroom are presented in the following table:

TABLE 1
TEACHERS' REASON FOR USING CODE-SWITCHING IN THE ENGLISH CLASSROOM

Code-Switching is for	1	2	3	4	5
Clarification	1.2%	3.6%	19.3%	33.7%	42.2%
Checking students' understanding	3.6%	2.4%	10.8%	42.2%	41%
Giving instruction	0	7.2%	18.1%	44.6%	30.1%
Giving feedback	0	6%	24.1%	45.8%	24.1%
Increasing students' Interaction	2.4%	4.8%	10.8%	54.2%	27.7%
Helping students feel more confident and comfortable	4.8%	1.2%	13.3%	39.8%	41%
Developing vocabulary and grammar	2.4%	4.8%	16.9%	48.2%	27.7%
Class discussion	1.2%	3.6%	19.3%	49.4%	26.5%

The results indicate that the majority of participants (75%) believed they employed code-switching in the EFL classroom for clarification purposes. Conversely, only a small proportion of participants (4.8%) did not consider code-switching useful for clarification. The findings also suggest that most teachers used code-switching to check students' understanding, with 42% selecting *agree* and 41% selecting *strongly agree*.

In addition, a large proportion of participants reported using code-switching to give instructions (74%) and provide feedback (70%) to their students. Interestingly, many teachers also acknowledged that code-switching was used to increase students' participation and to help them feel more confident and comfortable in the EFL classroom. Furthermore, more than 75% of respondents believed that code-switching supported the development of students' vocabulary and grammar. Finally, the majority of respondents admitted that code-switching could also be used to facilitate classroom discussions, with more than 75% agreement. These findings suggest that most participating teachers used code-switching in the EFL classroom, albeit for different purposes.

The qualitative analyses revealed four themes that emerged in relation to why teachers switch to Indonesian and Malay dialects in the English classroom: knowledge construction, classroom management, interpersonal relations, and accommodation of contextual factors. These findings are consistent with the results of previous studies (Ataş & Şimşek, 2021; Ye, 2021), which also identified four major functions of code-switching: knowledge construction, classroom administration, relationship building, and contextual constraint accommodation.

A. Code-Switching for Knowledge Construction

All respondents reported that they employed code-switching in the EFL classroom to ensure students' comprehension of subject content. According to their responses, students often struggled to understand the lesson when instruction was delivered exclusively in English. In such cases, teachers felt the need to switch from English to Indonesian.

For instance, Budi explained that he used Indonesian when teaching writing skills to help students grasp the concepts more effectively. Similarly, Iwan described that, while teaching English grammar, he frequently switched to Indonesian to ensure that students could better comprehend complex structures:

"I always use Indonesian in teaching new grammatical concepts in English. It makes it easier for me to explain the concepts and helps students understand them well." (Iwan, interview)

Classroom observations further confirmed that teachers predominantly used Indonesian when introducing new ideas. During one observation, Iwan clarified the grammar rules that needed to be applied in writing a descriptive text. This finding aligns with previous studies, which showed that code-switching in the English classroom functions as a tool for developing new knowledge (Khaerunnisa, 2016; Puspawati, 2018; Temesgen & Hailu, 2022), rather than merely reinforcing prior knowledge.

According to Cook (2001), code-switching enables teachers to clarify complex concepts such as difficult terminology and grammatical rules. In this study, teachers primarily used Indonesian rather than Malay because Indonesian provides a richer vocabulary base and serves as the lingua franca in Indonesia. As Tuti explained, she rarely used Malay to introduce new concepts, as its limited vocabulary restricted her explanations. Thus, she preferred to employ Indonesian to facilitate clearer and more precise instruction.

B. Code-Switching for Classroom Management

All respondents emphasized that code-switching is essential for organizing and managing the classroom. Teachers reported using both Indonesian and Malay to maintain order and regulate classroom activities. Interestingly, the findings indicated that Malay was perceived to be more effective than Indonesian in managing teaching and learning activities.

For example, Budi explained that he often used Malay to manage the classroom, particularly when instructing students to concentrate on their studies and refrain from disruptive behavior. He further stated that employing Malay helped him control his patience in a way that students could better understand. Similarly, Tuti noted that she used Malay to counsel students who misbehaved in class, as some students tended not to listen attentively. In such cases, she employed Malay expressions to indirectly highlight their behavior so that they would realize their mistakes:

“Asal bunyi saje, pikir dulu sebelum bercakap! Jangan macam tong kosong nyaring bunyinye.”
(Don't just speak carelessly, think before you talk! Don't be like an empty barrel making a loud noise.)

Classroom observations also confirmed that Malay was frequently used to control students' misconduct. For instance, during a Grade 9 class, Lina banged the whiteboard and exclaimed:

“Hei, hei budak-budak, apa awak tak dongar perintah aku, apa kalin semua berkepala batu?”
(Hey, hey kids, can't you hear my orders? Are you all stone-headed?)

This finding is consistent with Yiltanlilar and Çağanağa (2015), who reported that code-switching was employed to minimize students' disruptive behaviors. In the present study, Malay rather than Indonesian was the primary language used by teachers to manage the classroom and reduce misbehavior. Malay enabled teachers to build rapport with students and foster a positive classroom environment, while Indonesian was mainly used as the language of instruction in the EFL classroom. Previous studies (Khaerunnisa, 2016; Puspawati, 2018; Ye, 2021; Temesgen & Hailu, 2022) have similarly shown that one of the key functions of code-switching is to facilitate classroom organization and management.

C. Code-Switching to Foster Interpersonal Relations

According to Lee (2016), one of the key objectives of code-switching is to help students feel more confident and comfortable in the classroom. Building strong teacher–student relationships requires careful rapport management, and code-switching can serve as an effective tool in this process.

Budi reported that he often used Indonesian or Malay to motivate students to study diligently and behave appropriately. He explained that when he advised his students in an emotive tone using Indonesian or Malay, they were more receptive to his guidance and felt that he was paying closer attention to them. Similarly, Lina stated that she switched into Indonesian or Malay when advising her students, as she believed this practice increased students' awareness and engagement in learning.

Classroom observations further supported these claims. When teachers posed questions in English, student responses were typically limited, likely due to their restricted English proficiency. However, when the teachers switched into Indonesian or Malay, students responded more spontaneously and actively. This pattern suggests that code-switching is crucial in fostering positive teacher–student relationships.

This finding is consistent with Ye (2021) who found that code-switching plays a significant role in building constructive relationships between teachers and students. Furthermore, Simatupang et al. (2024) emphasized that code-switching enhances communication and student engagement, particularly when limited English proficiency hinders interpersonal and affective interaction in the classroom.

D. Code-Switching to Accommodate to Contextual Factors

Most respondents indicated that code-switching was important for accommodating the contextual factors of the lesson or other relevant considerations. Teachers reported that certain topics were better taught in English, while others were more effectively delivered in Indonesian or Malay.

For instance, Iwan explained that the learning topic often determined the nature of code-switching. He stated that when teaching grammar or writing skills, he preferred to employ Indonesian. By contrast, when teaching reading and listening skills, he relied more heavily on English than on Indonesian or Malay. Similarly, Rita emphasized that code-switching was crucial in addressing students' varying proficiency levels, noting that she used English more frequently with students who demonstrated higher levels of competence.

This finding aligns with the study of Tabassum et al. (2020), which revealed that teachers used code-switching to repeat basic topics, manage classroom activities, facilitate expression, bridge gaps in students' language competence, and compensate for their own limited English proficiency. Likewise, Bensen and Cavusoglu (2013) observed that teachers employed code-switching for a range of purposes and considered it a valuable tool for enhancing learning when used strategically.

RQ2: When do teachers switch to Indonesian and Malay dialects in the English classroom?

Teachers' code-switching to Indonesian and Malay dialects in the English classroom, particularly in Riau schools, occurred in several situations. Based on the analysis of teachers' written lists, their responses were grouped into nine categories. These categories are presented in the following table:

TABLE 2
THE OCCASION OF TEACHERS' SWITCHING THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE INTO INDONESIAN OR MALAY DIALECTS

When do teachers switch to Indonesian and Malay dialects in the English classroom?	N
provide more explanation	32
teachers' get stuck to speak English	7
explaining complex concepts	10
make jokes	4
get angry	9
give instructions	3
get distractions	1
students' English skills are low	14
give advice and motivation	3
TOTAL	83

The data revealed that teachers employed code-switching in various situations in the English classroom. In general, the most frequent reason for code-switching was students' confusion with the subject content ($n = 17$) and their limited English proficiency ($n = 14$), which led teachers to switch into Indonesian or Malay. In addition, teachers reported that they used code-switching when students required further explanation ($n = 10$) or when the topic involved complex concepts ($n = 10$). Interestingly, code-switching was also observed when teachers encountered difficulties in expressing themselves in English, such as being unable to recall an appropriate word, phrase, or grammatical structure ($n = 7$). Moreover, teachers reported switching into Indonesian or Malay when they were angry ($n = 9$), when making jokes ($n = 4$), and when giving advice to students ($n = 3$).

V. DISCUSSION

Regardless of contextual differences, code-switching is a common practice in EFL classrooms worldwide. The findings of this study show that code-switching plays a pivotal role in classroom interactions. Most teachers in this study believed that code-switching benefits both teachers and students, particularly in checking students' understanding, providing instructions and feedback, developing vocabulary and grammar, and facilitating classroom discussions. The survey findings align with Altalhi (2024), who found that teachers generally perceive code-switching as an effective teaching strategy, especially when working with students who have limited English proficiency. For such students, who face greater challenges in learning the language, teachers' use of code-switching can be especially beneficial.

The qualitative findings of this study indicate that teachers employed code-switching for several purposes, including knowledge construction, classroom management, interpersonal relationship building, and accommodation of contextual factors. These findings are consistent with those of Ye (2021) and Simatupang et al. (2024), who identified four distinct functions of code-switching: knowledge construction, classroom administration, relationship building, and accommodation of contextual constraints. Furthermore, this study confirms that code-switching in the EFL classroom is often used for meta-linguistic purposes, particularly when discussing grammar or other linguistic tasks (Simatupang et al., 2024).

Many researchers have found that code-switching supports the teaching and learning process in language classrooms. According to Simatupang et al. (2024), teachers' code-switching has essential pedagogical and social functions in bilingual programs, helping to achieve the dual goals of subject learning and language acquisition. Similarly, Bensen and Cavusoglu (2013) argued that code-switching can be an effective strategy for enhancing classroom learning when used opportunistically. However, some scholars remain critical of this practice. Chen and Rubinstein-Ávila (2015), for example, noted that opponents of code-switching argue that it may hinder second (or additional) language acquisition, as it could create obstacles to achieving the ultimate goal of learning the target language (Nurhamidah et al., 2018).

Despite these debates between proponents and critics, the present study found that teachers employed code-switching to deliver subject content in a learner-sensitive manner. Several teacher participants reported that they used Indonesian specifically to clarify key grammatical concepts, which supports the findings of Simatupang et al. (2024). In particular, teachers preferred to use Indonesian because it offers a richer repertoire of vocabulary and grammatical resources for explaining complex concepts. Moreover, as the national language, Indonesian is naturally the medium through which teachers can reduce linguistic barriers, making it easier for less proficient learners to comprehend the lessons.

This study also found that code-switching plays an important role in classroom management. This finding is consistent with Ye (2021) and Simatupang et al. (2024). The results showed that teachers frequently switched into Indonesian or Malay to manage the teaching and learning process. For example, when students were inattentive or disruptive, teachers used Indonesian or Malay to discipline them. Interestingly, Malay appeared to be more effective than Indonesian in regulating students' behavior, as it is the mother tongue of both teachers and students. In line with Masna (2020), code-switching facilitates the expression of thoughts and feelings so that they can be understood more clearly and meaningfully in classroom interaction.

In addition, this study found that teachers used code-switching in Indonesian and Malay to strengthen relationships with their students by fostering interpersonal communication. This finding echoes the results of Simatupang et al. (2024) who demonstrated that code-switching can support the development of interpersonal skills in the classroom. According to Ataş and Şimşek (2021), drawing on Wenger's (1998) concept of communities of practice, the language classroom can be viewed as a social community in which individuals collaborate to achieve shared educational goals using the linguistic resources available to them.

To build strong teacher-student relationships, both Indonesian and Malay were found to serve important, yet functionally distinct, roles. Findings revealed that Indonesian was generally used to give compliments, while Malay was more often used for humor and entertainment. This supports Ferguson's (2003) argument that local languages can be powerful tools for building closer relationships. Thus, teachers often switched into Malay to encourage and motivate underachieving students.

Another important finding of this study is that code-switching enables teachers to accommodate contextual factors depending on the specific classroom situation. This aligns with Ye (2021), who emphasized that the choice to switch languages often depends on the type of content being taught. In the present study, teachers' language choices were not only determined by the topic at hand, but also by situational factors such as feelings of anxiety or frustration caused by students' misconduct.

As noted above, Indonesian was typically used to ensure that students understood academic concepts, whereas Malay was more commonly employed to monitor students' off-task behaviors. This finding resonates with Al Zahra's (2024) view that code-switching can enhance students' interpersonal engagement in particular situations.

The study also found that the Malay dialect played a vital role in managing student behavior. Teachers perceived the mother tongue as an effective tool for controlling disruptive learners, as it allowed them to express feelings of anger without provoking resentment or causing students to feel guilty or embarrassed. In many cases, teachers used the Malay dialect through figurative expressions such as metaphors, hyperbole, and irony to ease classroom tension (Tien, 2009) and to increase student engagement (Zhu & Vanek, 2017), particularly when addressing students' carelessness.

With regard to the situations in which teachers employed code-switching, the findings revealed nine common contexts in which teachers switched languages. These included explaining complex concepts involving difficult vocabulary or grammar, teaching students with low English proficiency, compensating for difficulties in articulating their thoughts in English, and providing detailed explanations. This finding is consistent with the study by Makulloluwa (2013), who found that teachers often code-switch when the level of English used in textbooks or classroom instruction exceeds learners' abilities, when they have exhausted strategies to adjust their speech to learners' proficiency levels, or when they face their own linguistic limitations.

VI. CONCLUSION

The findings of this study highlight important distinctions in the use of L1 (Malay) and L2 (Indonesian) in the EFL classroom. Indonesian was primarily employed by English teachers to clarify key concepts, while Malay was more frequently used for classroom management, particularly in advising or admonishing students. Both languages were also employed to sustain interactive learning environments and foster harmonious teacher–student relationships. Moreover, code-switching contributed to students' English development by reducing linguistic barriers and facilitating comprehension. These findings provide strong evidence that the use of both L1 and L2 is valuable in the EFL classroom, as each language fulfills distinct pedagogical functions that, when combined, enrich the learning process and enhance communication.

The study also demonstrated that teaching EFL through the strategic use of L1 and L2—rather than relying solely on English—can create a more supportive learning environment and help students build confidence and understanding, particularly at the junior high school level. Given that English is rarely spoken outside the classroom in Indonesia, EFL instruction requires a nuanced understanding of learners' contexts, goals, and backgrounds. By employing code-switching strategically, teachers can design meaningful and engaging learning experiences that make complex ideas more accessible while fostering a welcoming atmosphere. Notably, code-switching can also serve as a practical resource for teachers themselves, especially when they face difficulty in finding appropriate synonyms or grammatical structures in English to explain a concept.

In Indonesian EFL classrooms, code-switching can therefore be viewed as a useful strategy for enhancing comprehension, organizing classroom activities, strengthening interpersonal relationships, and accommodating contextual factors. When used judiciously, it enables teachers to establish a more supportive and productive learning environment that assists students in navigating the challenges of acquiring a new language. Nonetheless, it is important to acknowledge that the findings of this study are context-specific and cannot be generalized beyond the sample and conditions in which the research was conducted.

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