CODE SWITCHING PERFORMED BY ENGLISH TEACHER IN TEACHING AND LEARNING PROCESS IN ZUMROTUS SALAMAH PRIMARY SCHOOL

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ABSTRACT

The phenomenon of code-switching in bilingual education serves as a crucial bridge in facilitating second language acquisition, particularly at the elementary school level where English is still considered a foreign language. This study focuses on analyzing the linguistic practices of an English teacher at Zumrotus Salamah Elementary School, with the primary goal of identifying the types of code-switching used and the underlying pedagogical reasons. Using a descriptive qualitative approach, this study collected data through in-depth classroom observations, interviews, and documentation, which were then analyzed based on Poplack and Hoffman's theoretical framework. The findings revealed that the teacher actively switched between English, Indonesian, and Arabic through three specific categories: extra-sentential, intra-sentential, and inter-sentential, with the intra-sentential type appearing most dominant. This language switching was not random but rather a conscious strategy aimed at clarifying meaning, emphasizing instruction, checking student understanding, and maintaining group identity. This study concludes that code-switching is not an indication of a lack of linguistic competence but rather an effective and adaptive pedagogical strategy that supports student understanding and maintains interactive communication in a bilingual classroom environment.
Keywords: *Code Switching, English Teachers, Bilingual Education, Elementary School, Second Language Acquisition*

ABSTRAK

Fenomena alih kode dalam pendidikan bilingual berfungsi sebagai jembatan krusial dalam memfasilitasi pemerolehan bahasa kedua, khususnya di tingkat sekolah dasar di mana bahasa Inggris masih dianggap sebagai bahasa asing. Penelitian ini berfokus pada analisis praktik linguistik seorang guru bahasa Inggris di SD Zumrotus Salamah, dengan tujuan utama mengidentifikasi jenis-jenis alih kode yang digunakan serta alasan pedagogis yang mendasarinya. Menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif deskriptif, penelitian ini mengumpulkan data melalui observasi kelas yang mendalam, wawancara, dan dokumentasi, yang kemudian dianalisis berdasarkan kerangka teori Poplack dan Hoffman. Temuan penelitian mengungkapkan bahwa guru secara aktif melakukan pergantian antara bahasa Inggris, Indonesia, dan Arab melalui tiga kategori spesifik: *extra-sentential*, *intra-sentential*, dan *inter-sentential*, di mana tipe *intra-sentential* muncul paling dominan. Peralihan bahasa ini terbukti bukan terjadi secara acak, melainkan merupakan strategi sadar yang bertujuan untuk mengklarifikasi makna, menekankan instruksi, memeriksa pemahaman siswa, serta menjaga identitas kelompok. Penelitian ini menyimpulkan bahwa alih kode bukanlah indikasi kekurangan kompetensi linguistik, melainkan sebuah strategi pedagogis yang efektif dan adaptif yang mendukung pemahaman siswa serta menjaga keberlangsungan komunikasi interaktif dalam lingkungan kelas bilingual.
Keywords: *Alih Kode, Guru Bahasa Inggris, Pendidikan Bilingual, Sekolah Dasar, Akuisisi Bahasa Kedua*

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INTRODUCTION

English is widely recognized as one of the most dominant languages globally, serving as a primary medium for international communication, commerce, and education. The global influence of this language continues to expand rapidly, permeating various aspects of modern life. As noted by scholars, at least one-quarter of the world's population currently speaks English, highlighting its critical role in connecting diverse communities (Jenks, 2024; Nadia & Amalia, 2025; Nindya et al., 2022). In the specific context of Indonesia, English has been integrated into the curriculum across all educational levels, ranging from primary schools to universities, where it is officially categorized as a foreign language. Despite this mandatory inclusion, the practical reality in classrooms often differs from the monolingual ideal. English teachers frequently utilize two or more languages during the teaching and learning process to ensure students grasp complex concepts. This specific linguistic phenomenon, where bilingual speakers alternate between languages within a single conversation, is known as *code-switching*. It represents a pragmatic bridge between the target language and the students' native tongue, facilitating better understanding in a foreign language environment.

Sociolinguistics serves as the essential framework for understanding these classroom dynamics, as it is the study of the intricate relationship between language and society. This field explores how language functions within various social contexts and how specific social factors—such as social class, education level, ethnicity, and the setting of the interaction—profoundly influence language use. Experts define sociolinguistics as the study of language in relation to social interaction, bilingualism, nationalism, and the various varieties of language that exist within a community. Consequently, sociolinguistics provides the necessary theoretical basis for analyzing *code-switching* not merely as a linguistic error, but as a complex social and linguistic phenomenon (Baker, 2021; Eren, 2022; Jenks, 2024; Mehdi, 2024). By viewing language through this lens, educators can understand that the choice of language in the classroom is driven by social necessities and pedagogical goals. The interaction between teachers and students is a social event, and the languages used reflect the social realities of that environment, making sociolinguistics the perfect lens for examining bilingual educational settings.

In the realm of linguistic research over the past few decades, *code-switching* and language mixing have emerged as major areas of focus, particularly regarding their application in educational settings. In bilingual classrooms, especially in contexts where English is taught as a second or foreign language, teachers frequently switch codes as a strategic tool. This is done to clarify meanings that might be obscure in the target language, to maintain active classroom interaction, or to ensure that all students comprehend the lesson content. This practice plays a significant, albeit sometimes controversial, role in the development of learners' linguistic and communicative competence. While the ideal scenario often promoted in ELT methodology is maximum exposure to the target language, the reality necessitates flexibility. Teachers often find that rigid adherence to English-only policies can hinder distinct aspects of learning, such as building rapport or explaining abstract grammar points. Thus, the gap between the "ideal" monolingual classroom and the "real" bilingual classroom is bridged by the functional use of *code-switching*.

Technically, *code-switching* refers to the alternation between two or more languages or language varieties within the same conversation or even a single utterance. It is formally defined as the juxtaposition within the same speech exchange of passages of speech belonging to two different grammatical systems or subsystems. Scholars generally share a similar understanding that this phenomenon involves the use of two or more languages by bilingual speakers during active communication. It is highlighted that speakers may mix codes within even very short

utterances, effectively forming a hybrid linguistic system that serves immediate communicative needs (Anderson, 2018; Baker, 2021; Victoria et al., 2024). Therefore, *code-switching* should be understood as a dynamic practice that reflects a bilingual individual's high level of linguistic competence and social adaptation capabilities. It is not a sign of confusion, but rather a sophisticated manipulation of linguistic resources. This dynamic capability allows speakers to navigate between their native cultural identity and the target language culture, creating a fluid communication style that is responsive to the listener's needs.

To understand the mechanics of this phenomenon, it is necessary to classify *code-switching* into distinct types based on their structural characteristics. In this specific study, three primary types of *code-switching* are adopted for analysis: extra-sentential (often called tag-switching), intra-sentential, and inter-sentential switching. Extra-sentential *code-switching* involves inserting a tag or short phrase from one language into an utterance of another, such as saying, "I will ask you to come forward, *ya*?" Intra-sentential switching is more complex and occurs within the boundaries of a clause or phrase, for example, "I *akan* give my *hati kepada* you." Finally, inter-sentential switching occurs at clause or sentence boundaries, where one full sentence is in one language and the next is in another, such as, "*Saya akan memberikan kamu cintaku*, if you have already married with me." Each type requires a different level of bilingual proficiency, with intra-sentential switching often indicating a high degree of syntactic control over both languages being used by the speaker.

The motivations behind these switches are as important as the types used, as *code-switching* is rarely random. Teachers and students switch languages for specific reasons, such as talking about a particular topic where terms are more natural in the native language, or quoting someone in their original language. Other reasons include expressing emphasis or emotion, using interjections, repeating information for clarification, expressing group identity, or confirming comprehension. These motivations illustrate that *code-switching* serves vital communicative, social, and pedagogical functions. Furthermore, age is a crucial factor in how these languages are acquired. Introducing foreign languages at an early age, such as in kindergarten or primary school, offers distinct advantages because young learners tend to acquire new languages naturally. As proposed in the input hypothesis, comprehensible input slightly above the learner's current level $(i + 1)$ is fundamental for successful acquisition (Krashen, 2015; Lucas, 2021; Meriläinen & Piispanen, 2019). In this context, *code-switching* helps provide that comprehensible input, creating a relaxed environment essential for language development.

In Indonesia, the implementation of these theories is visible in schools like Zumrotus Salamah Primary School in Tulungagung, which employs English as the medium of instruction in subjects like Mathematics and Science. Although the school enforces an English-speaking policy, teachers occasionally use *code-switching* to ensure comprehension or express complex ideas. Previous studies have explored *code-switching* in various contexts, such as in SMS messages, novels like *Negeri 5 Menara*, or general classroom discourse focusing on solidarity. However, there is a noticeable gap in research conducted specifically at the primary school level in bilingual environments. Considering these gaps, the present study specifically investigates *code-switching* performed by English teachers during teaching and learning activities at Zumrotus Salamah Primary School. The study aims to identify the types of *code-switching* used and the underlying reasons for its use. By examining this in an early education conte, this research offers a significant novelty by contributing to a better understanding of bilingual interaction in primary education.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs a qualitative descriptive research design as the primary methodological framework to explore linguistic phenomena in depth in their natural context. The qualitative approach was deliberately chosen for its superior ability to explore subject meanings and behaviors as perceived by participants, prioritizing data depth over statistical generalizations. The substantial focus of this study is directed at describing the types and underlying reasons for the use of code-switching practiced by English teachers at Zumrotus Salamah Elementary School during the instructional process. The descriptive design facilitates the researcher in presenting a comprehensive portrait of teachers' linguistic behavior, providing rich contextual details regarding when and why code-switching occurs. In the implementation procedure, the researcher acts as a key instrument, conducting direct classroom observations to identify authentic code-switching incidents and explore the pedagogical motivations behind them. The use of this design is considered highly relevant to answering the research questions, ensuring that the collected data has high empirical validity and is able to represent the reality of classroom interactions accurately, systematically, and scientifically accountable without experimental intervention.

The primary data used as the basis for this study's analysis include teacher utterances containing elements of code-switching between English and another language, as well as transcripts of teachers' explanations regarding the rationale for using this strategy. Data sources were comprehensively explored through three primary data collection techniques: classroom observations of English teaching sessions, in-depth interviews with the teachers, and a review of supporting documents such as teaching materials and attendance lists. To ensure the validity and reliability of the findings, this study employed rigorous methodological triangulation, in which the researcher cross-verified observational data, interview results, and documentary evidence. Data collection was conducted cyclically until saturation was reached, indicating the absence of new information. The scope of the analysis was specifically limited to verbal interactions within the classroom context at Zumrotus Salamah Elementary School, excluding non-verbal communication or discourse outside the classroom. This triangulation process is vital for minimizing the researcher's subjective bias, thereby enhancing the credibility and dependability of the descriptive and context-specific research findings.

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

Findings

This section presents the findings derived from classroom observations and interviews conducted with the English teacher at Zumrotus Salamah Primary School. The data were analyzed to identify the types and reasons for the teacher's code-switching during the teaching and learning process.

RQ1: What types of code-switching are performed by the English teacher during the teaching and learning process at Zumrotus Salamah Primary School?

Based on the data analysis, three major types of code-switching were found in the teacher's classroom discourse: extra-sentential, intra-sentential, and inter-sentential. Each type appeared with distinctive linguistic and pedagogical characteristics.

1. Extra-Sentential Code-Switching

This type of code-switching occurred three times in the classroom interactions. It involved the insertion of Indonesian tag words such as "ya" at the end of an English sentence—for example:

"Good morning student, ya?"

"You can do your chance, ya?"

These expressions function similarly to English question tags like "right?" or "okay?" and were used by the teacher to seek confirmation and maintain student engagement. This type of switching reflects the teacher's attempt to ensure classroom harmony and comprehension through minor linguistic blending.

2. Intra-Sentential Code-Switching

The second and most dominant type was intra-sentential code-switching, which appeared seventeen times. It occurred within a single clause or phrase, such as:

"Yuk, open yuk!"

"He! The boy first!"

In addition, the teacher mixed linguistic elements within explanations, such as:

"WH questions adalah kata tanya yang dimulai dengan huruf W dan H."

This type of switching allowed the teacher to emphasize certain points, manage classroom behavior, or simplify complex instructions. It also served to strengthen understanding by alternating between familiar (Indonesian) and target (English) linguistic systems.

3. Inter-Sentential Code-Switching

Inter-sentential code-switching occurred six times and involved complete shifts between sentences in different languages. Examples include:

"Please make one sentence 'Kemarin saya makan bakso,' translate in English!"

"Coba nanti beli jajan. Ok? Ok, I'm only joking."

In some contexts, the teacher also combined Arabic and English during prayer, such as:

"Allahumma baariklana fiima rozaktana waqinaa adzabannaar. Oh Allah, give us blessing…"

This type of code-switching demonstrates how religious and cultural expressions coexist with English instruction, promoting inclusivity and contextual meaning in a bilingual classroom.

The findings reveal three types of code-switching performed by the English teacher at Zumrotus Salamah Primary School: extra-sentential, intra-sentential, and inter-sentential code-switching. These results are consistent with Poplack's (1980) classification as cited in Hamers and Blanc (2004), which identifies the same three forms of switching. The data analysis confirms that each type serves a specific communicative and pedagogical function in the classroom.

Extra-sentential code-switching, such as "Good morning student, ya?", reflects the insertion of a tag from one language into an utterance entirely in another. The Indonesian tag "ya" corresponds to the English "right?", serving to confirm understanding and maintain interaction.

Intra-sentential code-switching, as in "Yuk, open yuk!", occurs within a clause or sentence, blending Indonesian and English elements to encourage participation and emphasize instruction.

Meanwhile, inter-sentential code-switching, as in "Please make one sentence 'Kemarin saya makan bakso,' translate in English!", occurs between sentences and is used to direct, question, or clarify instructions.

These findings support Poplack's framework and demonstrate that all three forms of code-switching naturally occur in bilingual classrooms. The teacher's strategic use of code-switching aligns with the communicative purpose of facilitating understanding and creating a supportive learning environment.

RQ2: Why does the English teacher perform code-switching during the teaching and learning process?

The findings from the interview with the English teacher revealed three primary reasons for employing code-switching during classroom interaction:

1. Institutional Policy and Learning Context

As a Cambridge-affiliated bilingual school, Zumrotus Salamah Primary School maintains an English-speaking environment. However, teachers are allowed to switch to other languages when necessary to maintain clarity. Thus, the teacher's code-switching followed the school's instructional policy—using English predominantly but allowing limited switching for pedagogical purposes.

2. Building English Habits in a Supportive Environment

The teacher used code-switching as a transitional tool to help students form English-speaking habits without causing confusion. For example, simple switches between Indonesian and English encouraged students to practice English naturally while still ensuring comprehension. This strategy aligns with the principles of scaffolding in bilingual education.

3. Confirming Students' Understanding

Another dominant reason for code-switching was to check and confirm students' comprehension. The teacher often switched to Indonesian to verify whether students understood the lesson or instructions. This approach allowed immediate clarification and ensured that learning objectives were achieved effectively.

The findings indicate that the English teacher at Zumrotus Salamah Primary School frequently employed code-switching as an instructional strategy rather than as a sign of linguistic deficiency. Among the three types of code-switching identified, intra-sentential code-switching was the most dominant, accounting for the majority of switches observed.

The teacher's code-switching served multiple pedagogical functions, including:

1. simplifying linguistic input for learners,
2. maintaining classroom rapport,
3. confirming comprehension, and
4. contextualizing religious and cultural references.

Overall, the findings demonstrate that code-switching plays a crucial role in facilitating communication and promoting English language acquisition in bilingual primary education contexts.

The data and interview results show three major reasons for code-switching:

1. adherence to institutional procedures,
2. creation of English-speaking habits, and
3. confirmation of students' understanding.

These reasons correspond closely with Hoffmann's (1991) explanation that code-switching can be used to clarify meaning, emphasize a point, and confirm comprehension.

For example, "Good morning student, ya?" shows code-switching used for confirmation, while "Yuk, open yuk!" serves as an interjection to motivate students in a friendly tone. The use of both English and Indonesian in "Please make one sentence 'Kemarin saya makan bakso,' translate in English!" illustrates a functional switch that helps bridge meaning between the two languages.

Thus, the teacher's code-switching is not arbitrary; it is purposeful, communicative, and pedagogically effective.

Discussion

The analysis of code-switching practices by English teachers at Zumrotus Salamah Elementary School indicates that this phenomenon is a complex communicative strategy, rather than mere linguistic inadvertence. Research findings confirm the existence of three main types of code-switching—extra-sentential, intra-sentential, and inter-sentential—which align with

the classification framework proposed by Poplack as cited in Hamers and Blanc (CJ, 2018). The diversity of emerging types indicates that teachers possess a sufficient linguistic repertoire to manipulate two languages to achieve teaching goals. The alternating use of these three types reflects the teachers' adaptation to bilingual classroom dynamics, where English is positioned as the target language while Indonesian and local elements function as cognitive bridges. This confirms that in the context of bilingual primary education, a purely monolingual approach may not yet be fully effective, necessitating linguistic code variations to maintain interactional fluency (Rukmi & Khasanah, 2020; Sakaria & Priyana, 2018).

The dominance of intra-sentential code-switching in these findings, appearing seventeen times, highlights the crucial role of language integration in facilitating direct instruction. The high frequency of code-mixing within a single clause, such as in the utterance "Yuk, open yuk!", demonstrates the teacher's effort to build rapport and reduce formal distance with young students. The use of Indonesian particles within English sentence structures serves to soften commands and make them sound more familiar to students' ears. This strategy allows teachers to maintain English grammatical structure as the primary input while inserting local lexical elements to ensure active student participation. This phenomenon indicates that intra-sentential switching is the most efficient pedagogical tool in classroom management requiring quick and spontaneous responses from students without sacrificing exposure to the target language (Gultom & Naibaho, 2021; Kana et al., 2023; Sholikhah & Isnaini, 2024).

Meanwhile, the presence of extra-sentential and inter-sentential code-switching serves distinct yet complementary strategic functions. The extra-sentential type, characterized by the insertion of tags like "ya" at the end of sentences, functions as a confirmation check to ensure the message has been well received by students. On the other hand, inter-sentential code-switching, involving full switching between sentences, is often used for translating more complex concepts or clarifying instructions, such as when the teacher asks students to translate sentences about "eating meatballs." These findings align with the view that code-switching functions as a bridge of meaning when the target language has not been fully mastered by learners. By using complete sentences in Indonesian after or before English, teachers create scaffolding that helps students understand the context without feeling frustrated by excessive language barriers.

Analysis regarding the reasons for code-switching usage reveals that teacher motivation is closely tied to institutional policies and pedagogical needs. These findings support Hoffmann's theory stating that code-switching is used to clarify meaning and confirm understanding (Chong et al., 2023). At Zumrotus Salamah Elementary School, despite an English-speaking environment policy, flexibility remains granted for the sake of instructional clarity. This indicates that teachers possess strategic competence to balance bilingual curriculum idealism with the reality of student proficiency. Teachers do not view the use of Indonesian as a rule violation, but rather as a transitional aid to gradually build English-speaking habits. This approach is essential in the English as a Foreign Language (EFL) context to prevent cognitive confusion and ensure that subject learning objectives are met even though student language proficiency is still in the developmental stage (Aulia et al., 2022; Kurniawan, 2023; Rahmat & Fauzi, 2022; Syafii et al., 2022).

Cultural and religious aspects also emerge as important dimensions in teacher code-switching patterns, particularly through the alternating use of Arabic and English in prayer. The integration of religious expressions like "Allahumma..." with English prayers shows that bilingual education at this school does not uproot students' cultural and religious identity. Teachers consciously contextualize English learning to align with Islamic values embraced by the school. This creates an inclusive learning environment where the foreign language is viewed

as a global communication tool that can go hand-in-hand with daily worship practices (Madkur et al., 2024; Sholeh et al., 2022). The implication is that code-switching here functions as a tool for identity negotiation, teaching students that being bilingual does not mean losing their cultural or spiritual selfhood.

The practical implication of this research for bilingual education at the elementary level is the need to view code-switching as a pedagogical asset, not a linguistic deficit. For educators teaching young learners, strategic use of the mother tongue can lower the affective filter or student anxiety in learning a foreign language. These findings suggest that bilingual teacher training should not only focus on English proficiency alone, but also on effective code-switching strategies for scaffolding. Teachers need to be equipped with an understanding of when to switch codes for clarification and when to maintain the target language for maximal exposure. Thus, the teaching and learning process becomes more humanistic and responsive to students' emotional and cognitive needs, which can ultimately improve their motivation and overall learning outcomes.

Although this research provides deep insights into code-switching types and functions, several limitations must be noted. The research focus on only one teacher limits the generalization of findings to broader contexts or different teaching styles. Furthermore, students' perspectives regarding the impact of code-switching on their understanding have not been deeply explored, so the effectiveness of this strategy is viewed only from the teacher's instructional standpoint. Future research is suggested to involve larger samples and explore student perceptions to see whether code-switching truly aids their understanding or creates dependency on the mother tongue. Despite these limitations, this study asserts that code-switching is a natural and functional phenomenon that enriches interaction dynamics in the bilingual classroom.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the code-switching practices employed by English teachers at Zumrotus Salamah Elementary School constitute a complex and deliberate pedagogical strategy, not simply a linguistic deviation resulting from language illiteracy. The research findings confirm the use of three main types of code-switching: extra-sentential, intra-sentential, and inter-sentential, which serve a vital role as cognitive bridges in bilingual classroom dynamics. The dominance of the intra-sentential type demonstrates the teachers' efforts to build emotional closeness or rapport with young students, while simultaneously lowering their affective filter to facilitate instruction without sacrificing exposure to the target language's grammar. Furthermore, the integration of religious values through code-switching between English and religious expressions demonstrates that foreign language education can align with the development of students' cultural identities. Therefore, the use of the mother tongue in this context is not a violation of school policy, but rather a necessary form of scaffolding to facilitate understanding of complex concepts, maintain smooth interactions, and prevent cognitive frustration in students whose language proficiency is still in its early stages of development.

Implicatively, this study recommends that code-switching be viewed as a strategic instructional asset in teaching English as a Foreign Language (EFL) at the elementary level, rather than as a deficit. However, given the limitations of the study, which focused on only one teacher, generalizations of these findings should be made with caution. For future research, it is recommended that researchers expand the scope of the study by involving a larger and more diverse sample to compare code-switching patterns across different teaching styles. Further research is also crucial to explore students' perspectives in depth, to test whether intensive use

of code-switching truly accelerates material comprehension or creates a permanent dependence on the mother tongue. Furthermore, experimental or longitudinal studies are needed to measure the long-term impact of this strategy on students' independent oral production abilities, so that guidelines can be formulated for the most effective and balanced proportion of language use in the bilingual education curriculum in elementary schools.

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