

## **CODE SWITCHING USED IN THE ENGLISH TEACHING AND LEARNING PROCESS IN THE FACULTY OF TEACHER TRAINING AND EDUCATION AT SRIWIJAYA UNIVERSITY**

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### **Abstract**

This study investigated the act of code switching which refers to the use of two languages, English and Indonesian, as a medium of instruction used by the teachers in the context of teaching and learning English as one of the courses in the Faculty of Teacher Training and Education at Sriwijaya University. The subjects - the teachers and students who were dealing directly with the use of code switching in the process of teaching and learning – were observed, interviewed, and given a set of questionnaire. This study yields three important results. First, the teachers use code switching in order to have a better communication with their students during the teaching and learning process, especially to transfer the material or topic of discussion in class so that the students can understand the material or topic better. Second, three language aspects – pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammar – were involved in this code switching phenomenon. Finally, students had a positive perception on their teachers' use of code switching during the teaching and learning process.

**Key Words:** code switching, medium of instruction, EFL

### **1. Introduction**

Teachers and students are continually in the process of sending and receiving messages (Seevers, et al, 1997:125). Successful teachers possess effective communication skills. They express themselves verbally and nonverbally in a manner that is clear, concise, and interesting to their students. Therefore, teachers should pay more attention on the choice of languages they use in the classroom context.

Code switching has long existed as an outcome of language contact observed vastly especially in multicultural and multilingual communities (Liu, 2010). Code-

switching may be considered as a useful strategy in classroom interaction, especially if the aim is to make meanings clear and to transfer the knowledge to students in an efficient way (Gabusi, 2007).

Code switching during instruction affects the learning environment by increasing students understanding, comprehension, and application of the material. With regards to students-teacher relationship as part of a positive learning environment, it helps foster a better relationship with the students (Moghadam, Samad, & Shahraki, 2012).

In this study code switching refers to the use of two languages, namely English and Indonesian in the context of teaching and learning English as one of the compulsory subjects that students have to take during their study in The Faculty of Teacher Training and Education at Sriwijaya University (FKIP Unsri). This study only focuses on the phenomenon of code switching done by the teachers in the teaching and learning process. It focuses on finding out the reasons and the causes of code switching happened in the teaching and learning process at FKIP Unsri.

Therefore, this study proposes to identify and evaluate (1) the factors that make the English teacher use code switching during the teaching and learning process; (2) the language aspects involved in the code switching used by the teacher; and (3) the students' perception towards the code switching used by the teacher.

## **2. Theoretical Background**

Code switching is a conversational strategy. Code switching occurs when bilingual speakers switch from one language to another in the same discourse, sometimes within the same utterances (Myer-Scotton, 1997; cited in Silberstein, 2001:103). It involves the alternate use of two languages or linguistic varieties within the same utterance or during the same conversation (Hoffmann, 1991:110). Holmes (1992:51) says, "People who are rapidly code switching tend to switch completely between two linguistic systems – sound, grammar, and vocabulary".

The medium of instruction is the language used by the teacher in teaching. Bilingual education involves the use of two or more languages as media of instruction to varying degrees (Hamers and Blanc, 2000:321). In bilingual education two languages are used as [mediums] of instruction to teach subject matter content rather than just the language itself (Cummins 2003:3) cited in Tan (2005:49).

The choice of language as medium of instruction plays an important role in the teaching and learning process. Bilingual education programs and mother-tongue teaching have been shown to benefit minority children and improve their academic achievement (Hamers and Blanc, 2000:353).

Furthermore, the arguments given for mother tongue as medium of instruction in schools were more linked to the child and its needs, the individual and the local context, factors such as concept formation, cultural identity, closer relation between school and home and practical use after primary school (Cantoni, 2007:8). Therefore, the use of two languages – foreign and first languages - as a medium of instruction can be one of the useful conversational strategies in the classroom context.

Therefore, Lin (2007) in her study defines classroom code switching as the alternating use of more than two linguistic codes in the classroom by any of the classroom participants, such as teachers and students.

Several researchers have studied and investigated the functions, factors, characters and effects of code switching in wide ranges of linguistics domain. For example, Kim (2006) indicates the positive factors code switching for language education by discussing societal factors related to the reasons and motivations for these phenomena. Ahmad & Jusoff (2009) investigated the learners' perceptions of the teacher' code switching in English Language classroom and found that teachers' code switching is strongly believed as an effective teaching strategy when dealing with low English proficient students. Various positive functions of code switching, such as explaining new vocabulary, grammar, and new concepts, and relaxing learners, would improve the learners' comprehensible input during the learning process.

Usually teachers' beliefs and attitudes influence code switching. The functions of teacher code switching are recognized as topic switch, affective functions, and repetitive functions. In topic switching, the teacher alters his or her language considering the topic being taught. This usually occurs in teaching grammar, while students focus on the new knowledge. Affective functions are important in the declaration of emotions, and forming a relationship between the teacher and the student. In repetitive functions, code switching is used to clarify the meaning of a word, while stressing on the content for better comprehension (Sert, 2005).

This study focuses on the five factors of code switching which are closely related to the teachers' use of code switching in the context of teaching and learning process, proposed by Liu (2003). They are:

- (1) Owing to teacher's linguistic competence and insecurity.
- (2) For ease of expression, i.e. when an English word or expression finds its equivalent in several Indonesian terms or when its Indonesian equivalent is not easy to retrieve
- (3) For translation of new and unfamiliar words and expressions
- (4) Repetitive functions, i.e. when teachers convey the same message in both languages for clarity.
- (5) Socializing functions, i.e. when teachers turn to the students' first language to signal friendship and solidarity, including for joking. This contributes to the ability of the teacher to create a supportive language environment in language learning classrooms.

### **3. Method**

The case study was used to investigate the use of code switching by the teachers within the context of learning English as one of the compulsory subjects that the students were taking during the one semester of their study in The Faculty of Teacher Training and Education at Sriwijaya University (FKIP Unsri).

There are two kinds of participants in this study, namely the 42 students of Guidance and Counseling Study Program in Faculty of Teacher Training and education at Sriwijaya University (FKIP Unsri) and their English teacher who has 6 years of teaching experience.

The data were collected through class observation, interview, and questionnaire. The observation was carried out in that one sample class which the English teacher was teaching. The teacher who taught in the class was being observed and recorded for approximately 200 minutes within the schedule of two times 100 minutes teaching hours.

Following the transcriptions and analysis of recordings, a semi structured interview was held with the teacher. There are twelve aspects which were asked to the teacher in the interview, namely: (1) her teaching experience, (2) her relationship with the students, (3) her perception on her students' competence in English, (4) her perception of her own English competence, (5) the use of English as the medium of instruction in her class, (6) the language she uses in the class, (7) the reasons why she uses the language, (8) the switching of English and Indonesian in her class, (9) the factors of her code switching in teaching, and (10) her students' performance related to her use of code switching.

Additional data about students' perception in relation to their teacher' use of code switching during the teaching and learning process were obtained from a set of questionnaire. The questionnaire consists of 13 questions about students' motivation in English, the medium of instruction that the teacher uses in the class, and the use of code switching by teacher during the teaching and learning process.

#### 4. Result and Discussion

##### Observation

The results of the transcripts showed that the teacher frequently switched between English and Indonesian (even Palembangnese, the L1 of most students) in the classroom. In the process of code-switching, the teacher used complete English utterances, but she also inserted some Indonesian words into her English sentences. In certain cases, she used mostly Indonesian utterances, but she also inserted some English words into her Indonesian sentences.

##### *Factors of Code Switching Done by Teacher*

The results of the transcripts showed that there were several main factors in terms of purpose for teachers to use code switching during the teaching and learning process, namely:

##### (1) *Repetitive functions*

The repetitive function was the mostly used function found during the observation. In order to clarify the meaning of the instructions, the teacher code switches from the target language to the native language. Here, he/she stresses the importance of the foreign language content for efficient comprehension. The teacher repeats what has been said, usually in the form of translation or approximate translation.

##### **Extract 1**

T: Which one is true? Which one is true? *Yang mana yang benar?* Second one or the first one...

The English teacher (T) was asking the same questions for second times. However, the students kept remaining silent. She wanted to make sure everybody understood the material, so she repeated her sentence in Indonesian for emphasizing.

She switched from English to Indonesian; here a code switching from English to Indonesian occurred.

**Extract 2**

T: Okay, *ini dalam bentuk positif ya, ini juga dalam bentuk positif*. It means that it is negative, it is also in negative.

A code switching from Indonesian to English occurred here in which the teacher (T) repeated the clause for clarifying and emphasizing on the important point she wanted to focus on, although she did not directly translate the words in English with the same words in Indonesian.

(2) *For translation of new and unfamiliar words and expressions*

Teachers' concern for unfamiliar vocabulary or expression often prompts them to code switch. When the teacher is not sure whether the students know the meaning of the target language word or expression, it is common for him/her to offer the Indonesian translation for clarification.

**Extract 3**

T: What verb do we use in present? What verb? *Kata kerja keberapa? Kata kerja? Di present kata kerja keberapa? Pertama. Iyakan?*

A code switching of English and Indonesian is shown in this extract. Here, the teacher (T) asked about the 'verb', she then switched to the phrase '*Kata kerja keberapa*', which leads the students to think of the forms of 'verb one, two, or three' which are commonly used by Indonesian students to recall the form of 'basic, past, and past participle verbs'.

(3) *For ease of expression*

The teachers may switch between Indonesian and English for ease of expression. It is when an English word or expression finds its equivalent in several Indonesian terms or when its Indonesian equivalent is not easy to retrieve.

**Extract 4**

*T: Nah disini kan bukan kata kerja, disini kita kan been. Di sini kenapa ada kata been? Karena di sini adalah a princess, ya kan. Jadi noun. Okay. Jadi disini kita perlu adanya to be.*

**Extract 5**

*T: Kenapa tidak doesn't? Karena doesn't adalah auxiliary dalam bentuk present. Iya kan? Ini kan turunnya menjadi past tense, not present*

Instead of using the Indonesian equivalent, the teacher (T) inserted the English terms to her Indonesian utterance. The English terms 'noun', 'to be', 'auxiliary', 'present', and 'past tense' are popular terms related to English structure. She inserted those terms in her utterances merely for convenient purpose because she assumed that the students were more familiar with those English terms rather than their Indonesian equivalent.

(4) *Socializing functions*

Although the most important task of the teachers is to impart knowledge to the students, it is still inevitable that teachers should perform sometimes even as actors to use any kind of devices to attract the students' attention. It is impossible to communicate with one who does not even listen to you. In the course of instruction, teacher may switch between English and Indonesian for interpersonal purposes, such as to develop or maintain solidarity or friendship between teacher and students, to show understanding of problems, to joke or to warn their students.



**Extract 6**

S8: S1: *Jadi quote yang* [pointing at her book] *yang ini*, miss?

T: “Where do you come from?” That’s it. Without this one. You should do like this. Okay? *Nah kan sudah terlanjur, nah yang ini salin yang ini bae.*

Here the teacher (T) was walking around the class monitoring the students doing the exercise. A student (S8) was asking her a question related to the exercise which she then answered directly in English. When the teacher (T) found out that the student had made mistakes in the writing format, she switched from English to Indonesian (CS) for showing understanding of students’ problems.

**Extract 7**

S10 : Destia is writing a letter in her room.

T : Destia is writing a letter in her room. *Masih zaman ye nulis surat?*

Ss : [laughing]

A code switching from English to Indonesian occurred in this utterance. The student (S10) mentioned her sentence, “Destia is writing a letter in her room”. The teacher (T) repeated the sentence, and asked “*Masih zaman ye nulis surat?*” which means “Is it still common to write letter nowadays?”, which then followed by a laugh from the student and her other friends in the class. This switching was made in order to joke and to make the students laugh.

(5) *To follow the usage that is found in one’s culture*

The language used by someone is closely related to his/her culture. Sometimes the switching occurs since the speaker is following the common usage of the word in his/her culture, which can be slightly different from the culture in the target language.

### **Extract 8**

T: Miss *lupa*, pelajaran SMA ya. But, *konteksnya, konteksnya, lihat dulu konteksnya*.

The extract shows that the teacher inserted the English word “miss” in her mostly Indonesian expression. The insertion of the word “miss” showed the culture of Indonesian which is not common to use the word “I” to call him/herself as a teacher while talking to the students.

#### *(6) Students' response*

The data from the observation showed another important factor that made the teacher code switched, namely the students' response. Students' response here refers to the students' direct reaction especially when asking questions using Indonesian during the teaching and learning process.

### **Extract 9**

S5: Miss, *tau* “Descendant of the Sun” *dak*?

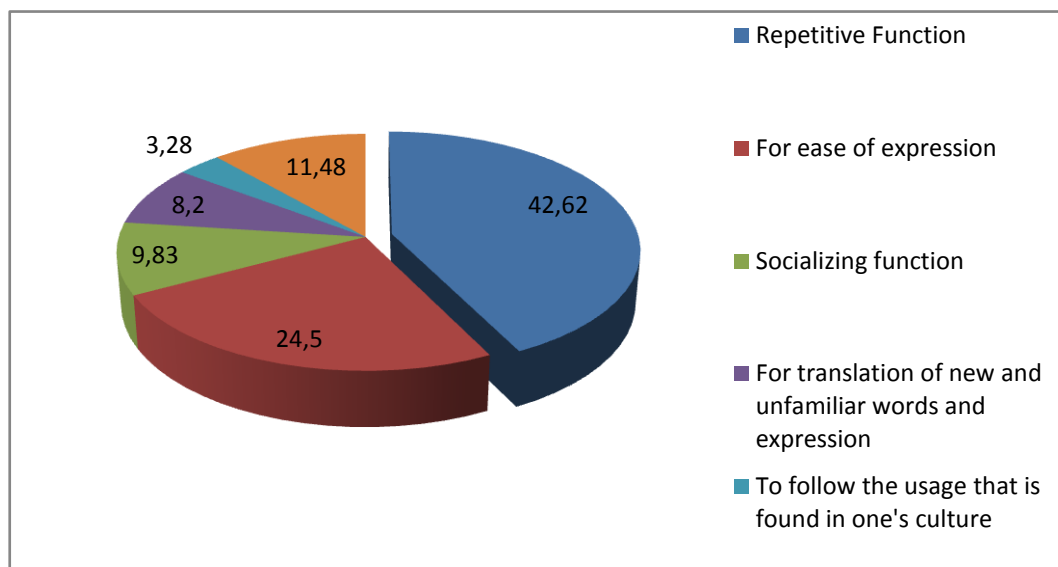
T : Korean drama? Yes, I know it.

S5: *Apo artinya*, miss?

T : *Keturunan. Keturunan matahari*. Descendant is *keturunan*

As shown in Extract 9, while the teacher (T) was walking around the class to monitor the students doing their exercises, one of the students asked her about a Korean film. She still answered in English, while the students gave response in Indonesian. The student even directly asked her the meaning, so she had to answer in Indonesian. This showed that the students' direct response and needs were also the factors that made the teacher code switch.

The data of the frequency and the comparative occurrence of the factors that made the teacher code switched between English and Indonesian in the teaching and learning process is shown in Figure 1.



**Figure 1**

**The Factors of Code Switching Done by The English Teacher (Observation)**

The data showed that the teacher code switched between English and Indonesian 42.62% for repetitive function and 8.20% for translation of new and unfamiliar words and expressions. These two functions had a very similar function namely to clarifying and emphasizing the utterances and the explanation of the teachers. Meanwhile, the teacher code switched 24.50% for ease of expression (by inserting the common English terms, such as ‘verb’, ‘past tense’, ‘present tense’, ‘conditional’, and other terms). Furthermore, students switched from English to Indonesian 9.83% for socialing function. Only 3.28% code switching conducted by the teacher is for following the usage that is found in one’s culture. Finally, 11.48% code switching conducted by the teacher during the teaching and learning process is

because of the students' responses, in which usually the students kept asking questions to the teacher in Indonesian.

*The Language Aspects Involved in Code Switching Done by The Teacher*

The transcripts also showed that there were some language aspects involved in the phenomenon of FKIP Unsri lecturer's use of code switching during the teaching and learning process. The language aspects were in terms of oral language since the focus of this study was on the lecturer's oral language. There were three aspects involved, namely pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammar.

(1) *Pronunciation*

The aspect of pronunciation involved within the use of code switching related to the way the teacher pronounced each utterances based on its real pronunciation, namely if the words or sentences are in Indonesian, then it is pronounced in Indonesian accent and/or pronunciation.

**Extract 10**

S8: [asking about the verb 'read']

T : read... *bentuk ke... bentuk ke satu, dua, tiga dari read sama tulisannya. read itu cuma tulisan ee.. bacaannya yang beda read /red/ verb two and three bacanya. Tulisannya sama.*

Here the teacher (T) tried to explain to the students the material related to the pronunciation. The teacher inserted the English term 'verb' and mentioned the word 'read' in her explanation, and she consistently pronounce the English terms in English pronunciation and the Indonesian expressions in Indonesian pronunciation.

(2) Vocabulary

This study showed that the lecturer involved the rules of word formation within the utterances of code switching she conducted.

**Extract 11**

L: Any question? If no question, we will do exercise. Okay? *Kita latihan kalo gak ada yang ditanya.*

This extract showed the occurrence of code switching (CS) from English to Indonesian in the utterances. The teacher (T) was trying to clarify her explanation by translating her English sentence “If no question, we will do exercise” into Indonesian. The sentence in English was in Active, and then she translated it into Indonesian (but it was in Passive) by following the Indonesian rule of word formation.

**Extract 12**

T4: *Jadi dari past perfect kita turunkan factnya menjadi past tense. Kalo negativenya itu menggunakan didn't. Okay?*

The utterances showed the use of code switching of English and Indonesian. The use of the vocabulary showed the combination of the use of English and Indonesian vocabulary. Especially the insertion of the suffix ‘*nya*,’ in ‘*factnya*’ and ‘*negativenya*’ is used to replaced the article ‘*the*’ in English.

(3) Grammar

Grammar here refers to the rule of the language structure. The use of code switching in this study involved the combination of two grammatical rules, English and Indonesian rules.

### **Extract 13**

T: *Okay, jadi kalau ketemu soal seperti itu, lihat subjectnya. Apakah dia shhe, it? terus tambahinlah "s".*

The word 'subjectnya' functions as an object in Indonesia context, the teacher (T) inserted the word in the position of an object in her Indonesian sentence. The insertion of the word 'subjectnya' indicated the occurrence of code switching of English and Indonesian in the utterance.

### **Extract 14**

T: *Dikumpul kapan? Dikumpulnya before we have final exam.*

The teacher (T) combined or mixed the grammatical rules of English and Indonesian languages. The clause 'before we have final exam' was put as an adverb of time to modify the Indonesian verb 'dikumpulnya' which means 'should be submitted'. So, the utterance should mean "The assignment should be submitted before the final exam'.

### **Interview**

According to the collected data from the interview, the teacher often switched between English and Indonesian during the teaching and learning process. The first and most important factor or reason of her code switching is the repetitive function, in which she switched English and Indonesian in the classroom for clarifying the explanation by translating her English utterances into Indonesian.

Furthermore, the teacher said that she sometimes switched English and Indonesian in the classroom for socializing function, namely for joking. She also declared that she sometimes forgot certain English terms, so she would mention the terms in Indonesian.

The results of the interview also show the students' reaction and/or perception based on their teachers' observation. According to the teacher, in relation to her use of code switching during the teaching and learning process, she believed that (1) the students had better comprehension in understanding her explanation and (2) the students were happier and more enthusiastic during the teaching and learning process.

Finally, the teacher claimed that when she used full English, her students would be confused and feel under pressured. However, when she switched between English and Indonesia, most of her students would understand her utterances, especially the utterances related to the material or topic of the lesson in class.

### **Questionnaire**

The questionnaire consists of 13 questions. The results of the questionnaire are shown in Table 1.

**Table 1**  
**The Analysis of the Questionnaire Results**

<b>Item No.</b>	<b>Statements</b>	<b>Responses</b>	<b>Percentage of Responses</b>
1.	English is very important.	Strongly Disagree	0
		Disagree	0
		Agree	25.58
		Strongly Agree	74.42
2.	Studying English is easy.	Strongly Disagree	13.95
		Disagree	48.84
		Agree	30.23
		Strongly Agree	6.98
3.	The students and the teacher can communicate well.	Strongly Disagree	0
		Disagree	4.65
		Agree	74.42

		Strongly Agree	20.93
4.	Students have problem in understanding the lesson because of the language used by the teacher in the classroom.	Strongly Disagree	13.95
		Disagree	53.49
		Agree	27.91
		Strongly Agree	4.65
5.	The use of English as the medium of instruction during the English teaching and learning process.	Strongly Disagree	9.31
		Disagree	18.60
		Agree	55.81
		Strongly Agree	16.28
6.	The English teacher uses English as a medium of instruction.	Strongly Disagree	2.33
		Disagree	30.23
		Agree	46.51
		Strongly Agree	20.93
7.	Students face problems in comprehending the lessons if the teacher keeps using English during the class.	Strongly Disagree	2.33
		Disagree	18.60
		Agree	32.56
		Strongly Agree	46.51
8.	The English teacher uses Indonesian as a medium of instruction.	Strongly Disagree	2.33
		Disagree	34.88
		Agree	48.84
		Strongly Agree	13.95
9.	The English teacher switches between English and Indonesian in explaining the materials during the teaching and learning process.	Strongly Disagree	0
		Disagree	0
		Agree	39.53
		Strongly Agree	60.47
10.	The English teacher switches between English and Indonesian in teaching in order to make it easier for the students to	Strongly Disagree	2.33
		Disagree	0
		Agree	20.93



	comprehend the lessons during the teaching and learning process.	Strongly Agree	76.74
11.	The English teacher translates certain terms/vocabulary in English to Indonesian (switches between English and Indonesian) in order to make it easier for students to comprehend the terms, vocabulary, or definition.	Strongly Disagree Disagree Agree Strongly Agree	2.33 0 20.93 76.74
12.	The English teacher switches between English and Indonesian while telling joke in the classroom.	Strongly Disagree Disagree Agree Strongly Agree	4.65 4.65 53.49 37.21
13.	Switching between English and Indonesian in teaching is one of the effective learning strategies.	Strongly Disagree Disagree Agree Strongly Agree	2.33 4.65 25.58 67.44

### ***Students' Perceptions***

Most students had a positive perception towards their teacher's use of code switching during the process of teaching and learning. The results of the questionnaire showed that 25.58% students agreed and 67.44% students strongly agreed with the statement "Switching between English and Indonesian in teaching is one of the effective learning strategies", while only 4.66% students disagreed and 2.33% students strongly disagreed with that statement.

Meanwhile, 2.33% students strongly disagreed, 76.74% students strongly agreed and 20.93% students agreed with their lecturer's use of code switching during the teaching and learning process for making them easier to understand the material/lesson, the vocabulary, the terms, and/or the definition of the topic.

## **Discussion**

The results of the observation and the interview show that basically the factors that make the English teacher in FKIP Unsri use code switching in the teaching and learning process are as follows: (1) repetitive function, in which for clarifying and emphasizing their utterances, because they believed the students would face problem if they only used English instruction, (2) translation of new and unfamiliar words and expressions, both from English to Indonesian and Indonesian to English, which was also for clarifying certain terms, (3) expressing equivalent term found in both languages including specific terms in the lesson, such as the word ‘verb’, ‘past’, ‘present’, ‘auxiliary’, ‘conditional sentence’, and some others, (4) socializing function, in which the teacher would switch to make the students laugh, and (5) students’ response and needs, in which the student would prefer the teacher to switch between English and Indonesian in order to make them comprehend the lessons more, and (6) following the usage that is found in one’s culture, in which the teacher would call herself ‘miss’ although when she was talking in Indonesia since it is not common to use the word “I” to call herself as a teacher while talking to the students

The teacher uses code switching in order to maintain her teaching and learning process to run smoothly. The main factor why the teacher code switched is because she wanted to have a better communication with her students so that the students would understand her teaching better. The teacher also believed that the students would have better comprehension on the lesson as well as higher enthusiasm and motivation because of their teacher’s use of code switching during the teaching and learning process.

The phenomena of the teacher’s use of code switching involve the combination of two different linguistic systems, namely English and Indonesian within one context. The code switching conducted by the teacher involves the aspects of pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammar of English and Indonesian.

The results of the questionnaire show that in general the students have positive attitude toward English, including having English as a medium of instruction

during the teaching and learning process. However, they find it more helpful if the teacher switches between English and Indonesian in the class.

## **5. Conclusion and Remark**

The finding indicates that code switching is still a useful strategy teachers can try to use to help learners, including in learning a language, especially if the teachers are mostly focused on the content of the lesson. In addition, the teachers' use of code switching during the teaching and learning process also represents one of the strategies that the teachers often use to accommodate the students' level of foreign language proficiency.

Furthermore, most students have positive attitude to the teacher's use of code switching in their EFL classroom since switching between English and Indonesian also contributes to the smooth flow of classroom interaction and communication among the teacher and the students.

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