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# ETHNOGRAPHIC INSIGHTS INTO CODE-SWITCHING PRACTICES AMONG ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS IN CLASSROOM INTERACTIONS

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**ABSTRACT**

This study investigates the types, functions, and motivations of code-switching among English learners in an Indonesian university through an ethnographic lens. The research aimed to uncover how code-switching operates pedagogically and socially during classroom interactions. Using classroom recordings, observation logs, and interviews, the study applied thematic coding and functional categorization to analyze naturally occurring language use. The findings revealed three dominant types of code-switching: inter sentential, intra sentential, and tag switching, each strategically employed by learners and instructors. Code-switching fulfilled multiple functions such as clarifying instructional content, managing classroom behavior, facilitating game based activities, and expressing cultural identity. These insights suggest that code-switching enhances learning and supports learner engagement by bridging linguistic and cultural contexts. The study contributes to the growing body of sociolinguistic research on bilingual classroom practices and highlights the need for teacher training that legitimizes and harnesses code-switching. Future research should expand to multiple sites and include learner perceptions to further understand the pedagogical and affective impact of code-switching in English as a Foreign Language environments.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Code-switching, the alternation between two or more languages within a communicative context, has become a significant phenomenon in multilingual classrooms, particularly in environments where English is taught as a foreign language. This phenomenon is increasingly recognized as a valuable communicative resource in educational settings, enabling students to enhance their learning experiences by bridging language gaps (Zhao & Su, 2023). For example, in many Indonesian classrooms, English language learners (ELLs)

frequently shift between English and Bahasa Indonesia during interactions with teachers and peers. Such linguistic practices carry considerable pedagogical, social, and psychological implications (Moradi & Chen, 2022; Manel et al., 2019). Despite its prevalence, the complex dynamics of code-switching remain underexplored, particularly in real-time classroom interactions (Gámez, 2023).

This study aims to investigate the everyday classroom experiences of English language learners by specifically examining how, when, and why they engage in code-switching during their learning activities. Researchers have noted that viewing code-switching as a form of linguistic deficiency is misguided; instead, it reflects learners' underlying strategies for enhancing comprehension, active participation, and identity negotiation (Dewaele & Zeckel, 2016; Zwane & Mavuru, 2023). The focus on junior high school students who navigate between their native language and a foreign language highlights the institutional and social dynamics that shape their interactions both formally and informally (Nguyen et al., 2016).

The central issue motivating this research is the gap between policy-driven expectations of full English immersion and the actual linguistic practices observed in EFL classrooms. While many educational institutions advocate for the exclusive use of English during instruction, students often resort to their first language to clarify instructions or express emotions, which serves to strengthen peer solidarity (Suek, 2017; Ousseini, 2024). This contrast between language policy and classroom reality has substantial implications for teaching methodologies and language acquisition theories, yet it is frequently overlooked in detailed ethnographic studies (Ulfah et al., 2021; Barcelona, 2023). Therefore, there is a critical need to understand the functions and motivations behind learners' code-switching behaviors as they naturally occur in classroom contexts (Sneida et al., 2023).

The novelty of this study lies in its ethnographic approach, which captures authentic, situated language use over an extended period. Through classroom observations and informal interviews, this research aims to provide insights that go beyond surface-level categorizations of code-switching types. It critically examines how learners fluidly use language to create meaning and negotiate social roles while participating in the learning process (Subon & Tarmim, 2021; Wijaya et al., 2020). This approach fosters a more comprehensive understanding of code-switching, not only as a communicative strategy but also as a cultural practice embedded in the lived experiences of learners (Lanza & Wei, 2023).

The implications of this research extend across multiple domains. For educators, it challenges the perception of code-switching as a disruptive behavior, advocating instead for its strategic use as a scaffolding tool in language instruction (Dewaele & Wei, 2013; Dewaele & Wei, 2014). For curriculum developers, this study provides evidence to support more flexible language policies that accommodate students' linguistic realities (Nawaz et al., 2023). Furthermore, for scholars, this research contributes to the broader discourse on multilingualism by centering learners' voices and agency in analyzing language practices within educational contexts (Aparece & Bacasmot, 2023; Shinga & Pillay, 2021).

This research offers an in-depth ethnographic account of how English language learners engage in code-switching during classroom interactions. By exploring both the types and functions of these linguistic choices, it provides insights into the complex interplay between language use, identity, and learning processes. By focusing on natural classroom settings, this study aims to enrich our understanding of language learning as not only a cognitive endeavor but also a significant social and cultural experience (Songxaba et al., 2017; Nawaz et al., 2023).

This research is guided by two primary research questions: What patterns of code-switching are used by English learners in classroom settings?, What are the communicative functions and motivations behind code-switching?, Accordingly, the objectives of the study are twofold: To examine the forms and frequency of code-switching in classroom interactions,

To analyze the reasons behind learners' use of code-switching from a sociolinguistic perspective, By addressing these questions and objectives, this study aims to offer deeper insights into how language learners utilize their full linguistic repertoires as strategic tools in their educational journeys.

## 2. METHODS

### 2.1 Research Approach

This study employs a qualitative ethnographic approach to investigate the patterns and functions of code-switching among English language learners during classroom interactions. Ethnography, as a research tradition rooted in anthropology and sociolinguistics, is particularly suited to uncovering the sociocultural meanings of language use in naturalistic settings. Through prolonged engagement in the classroom, the researcher aims to understand how code-switching emerges as a communicative practice within real-time educational discourse. The research was conducted in an English Education Department classroom at Lancang Kuning University level, where students were enrolled in an English language education program. The participants were undergraduate students majoring in English, who regularly used both English and their native language during classroom activities. A purposive sampling strategy was used to select one class consisting of approximately 20–25 students. The participants were informed of the purpose of the study, and ethical procedures were followed, including obtaining informed consent and ensuring confidentiality.

### 2.2 Data Collection Instruments and Procedures

To capture the complexity of language interactions, three main instruments were employed: classroom recordings, observational logs, and semi-structured interviews. Classroom recordings were used to document spoken interactions among students and between students and the lecturer during naturally occurring lessons. Both audio and video recordings were utilized to capture verbal and non-verbal cues that might signal or accompany code-switching behavior. Observational logs were kept by the researcher throughout the classroom sessions. These field notes documented classroom events, contextual factors (such as lesson topics or group activities), and initial impressions of communicative patterns. The researcher adopted a non-participant observer role to minimize disruption.

### 2.3 Data Analysis

The recorded data were transcribed and analyzed using thematic coding and functional categorization. First, all instances of code-switching were identified and categorized by type, such as intrasentential, intersentential, or tag-switching. Next, each instance was analyzed in its contextual setting to interpret the communicative function it served such as clarifying meaning, expressing identity, managing classroom tasks, or fostering peer solidarity.

Interpretation was supported by triangulating data from the classroom recordings, observational notes, and interview responses. Thematic patterns were developed inductively, allowing insights to emerge from the data rather than imposing rigid categories. To strengthen the credibility and trustworthiness of the findings, member-checking was conducted by sharing sample analyses with student participants for feedback and validation.

## 3. FINDINGS

### 3.1. Types of Code-Switching Used by English Learners in Classroom Settings

Classroom observation of a student-led English lesson, where student 1 acted as the Student 1, revealed that code-switching occurred frequently, fluidly, and strategically. English and Indonesian were used interchangeably during various stages of instruction, including greetings, material delivery, games, and classroom control. Three major types of code-switching were identified:

#### 3.1.1. Inter-Sentential Code-Switching

Inter-sentential code-switching refers to the alternation between languages across sentence boundaries, where each sentence remains grammatically independent in a single language. In the context of the classroom, this type of switching is commonly used by Student 1s and learners to maintain communication flow, support comprehension, and clarify concepts. The following transcript excerpts illustrate how English language Student 1s strategically switch between English and Indonesian during instruction. Each switch serves a specific pedagogical or communicative function, such as transitioning between lesson stages, clarifying meaning, or establishing classroom rapport.

> **Student 1s**: Why learn to write? *Kenapa kita harus belajar menulis?*"
> **Student 1s**: "Writing helps us in learning. Writing helps improve our memory. And the last, writing expands vocabulary."
> **Student 1s**: "Is there anything you can add? Why do we have to learn how to write? What is it for?"
> **Student 1s**: "Be smart. You answered it earlier."

The first sentence is in English, followed by the second sentence in Indonesian. This is a typical example of **inter-sentential code-switching** because both sentences stand independently. The sequence of utterances shows a shift from one sentence to another between English and Indonesian. There is a clear syntactic break, and each sentence often serves a different rhetorical function.

> **Student 1s**: "Good morning, class. Miss Icebreaking first, before the class starts."
> **Student 1s**: "Good morning! If Miss says, good morning everyone, how are you? I'm good. The answer is, "I'm fine." → "I'm great!"

Although this occurs in a drill setting, there is a transition between sentences that switch languages completely.

> **Student 2**: "Okay, Miss."
> **Student 1s**: let's go straight to the PPT, to our lesson today."
> **Student 1s**: "Kenapa kita harus belajar menulis? Belajar menulis itu bisa kita... Biar pintar."

The first sentence is in English, followed by an explanation in Indonesian.

**Student 1s**: "Sit down, please."
"Hey, sit down, please."
"One, two, three..."
*"No, no, no, no, no, no, no, no, no."*
*"Kalian gak boleh jawab sebelum Miss hitung."*

After a series of instructions in English, additional instructions are given in Indonesian.

From the transcript data, it is evident that inter-sentential code-switching is not used randomly, but rather in a highly strategic manner. Student 1s tend to begin with English, especially for formal instructional structures such as greetings, learning objectives, or key questions, and then continue in Indonesian to clarify, reinforce, or guide the flow of classroom activities. This practice not only reflects the Student 1's bilingual competence but also demonstrates pedagogical sensitivity to students' needs in understanding content while maintaining exposure to the target language.

This type of switching serves a dual function: Student 1 as a tool for content clarification, and Student 1 as a bridge between the academic domain (English as the language of instruction) and the students' social world (Indonesian as their everyday language). Inter-sentential switching reveals that language is not merely a tool for communication, but also a means of social and cognitive navigation in multilingual classroom settings.

### 3.1.2. Intra-Sentential Code-Switching

A second and frequently observed type of code-switching is intra-sentential code-switching, in which speakers alternate between two languages within a single sentence. Unlike inter-sentential switching, this form involves inserting words, phrases, or clauses from one language into the grammatical structure of another. It often demands a high degree of bilingual competence, as the speaker must navigate and integrate the syntactic and lexical rules of both languages simultaneously.

**Student 1s**: "Why learn to write? *Kenapa kita harus belajar menulis?*"
**Student 1s**: "Writing helps us in learning. Writing helps improve our memory. And the last, writing expands vocabulary. Is there anything you can add? Why do we have to learn how to write? What is it for? Be smart. You answered it earlier. What else? Smart and clever. Smart and clever. More or less the same, Sasha. There's more."
**Student 1s**: "Okay, Miss, let's go straight to the PPT, to our lesson today."
**Student 1s**: "*Menulis itu bisa untuk kita menceritakan apa yang kita ceritakan, pengalaman kita, daily kita.*"
**Student 1s**: "This is an example that can be filled in English."

The examples presented above illustrate the occurrence of intra-sentential code-switching, where elements from English and Indonesian are blended within a single sentence or continuous idea. In several instances, an English sentence is immediately followed by an Indonesian one, maintaining a unified thought flow without discursive breaks. For example, the Student 1's shift from an English explanation to student responses like "be smart" or "smart and clever" represents a continuous bilingual exchange within the same idea unit. Additionally, phrases such as "Okay, Miss, let's go straight to the PPT" demonstrate the fusion of English sentence structure with the

Indonesian address term “Miss,” commonly used in local educational contexts. Another instance is the phrase “daily kita,” where the English word “daily” is seamlessly integrated with the Indonesian pronoun “kita,” showing how lexical items from both languages are naturally combined. When these mixed-language sentences appear after predominantly Indonesian explanations, they further reflect intra-sentential code-switching, as the transition occurs smoothly within the same instructional flow without syntactic disruption.

**Student 1s**: "*Miss akan kasih beberapa acak letter, nanti kalian tebak."*
**Student 1s**: "Okay, let’s game and get gift, okay?"

The phrase “acak letter” serves as a clear example of intra-sentential code-switching, in which a single noun phrase combines Indonesian and English elements “acak” meaning “random” in Indonesian, and “letter” in English forming a mixed-language construction commonly found in bilingual speech. Similarly, sentences like “Okay, let’s game and get gift” follow English syntactic structure but reflect the semantics and communicative intent of a direct translation from Indonesian, illustrating how speakers creatively blend languages to maintain clarity, context, and engagement. These instances show how intra-sentential switching not only facilitates expression but also reveals the influence of local language logic on English sentence formulation in the classroom setting.

### 3.1.3 Tag-Switching

Tag-switching involves the insertion of simple fixed expressions, such as interjections, commands, or tags, from one language into an utterance that is otherwise in another language. This form of code-switching is often spontaneous and serves pragmatic functions such as gaining attention, expressing politeness, or maintaining classroom routines. In a language learning context, tag-switching reflects both the learners’ and Student 1’s familiarity with certain formulaic expressions in the target language and their functional integration into communication.

**Student 1s**: "Okay, Assalamualaikum warahmatullahi wabarakatuh."
*"Okay" here is an insertion in the Indonesian/Arabic greeting sentence.*

**Student 1s**: *"Kenapa kita harus belajar menulis? Belajar menulis itu bisa kita... Biar pintar. Ya, biar pintar juga."*

“*Ya*” can be categorized as tag switching when said in an English-dominant context, although this is highly contextual.

**Student 1s**: *"Okay, kita mulai ya."*

Use of "Okay" at the beginning of an Indonesian sentence.

**Student 1s**: "Sit down, please. Hey, sit down, please."

If this is said after a predominantly Indonesian conversational section, then this phrase could be a switching tag.

**Student 3:** "Thank you, Miss."

switching of "thank you" in the Indonesian dominant context.

**Student 1s**: "Miss, count first. Until three. Until three."

The word "Miss" is repeated and used as a greeting (tag) even though the content of the sentence can be in Indonesian or a mixture.

**Student 4** : "Yes, miss!" / "No, no, no." / *"Yakin?"* / "Okay!"

These short phrases are often used flexibly in two languages and are characteristic of tag switching.

**Student 1s**: "Bye-bye. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you."

Closing sentences that mix standard phrases in English after a session that may have been predominantly Indonesian.

The exchange demonstrates the use of polite tag expressions in English, which are commonly taught as part of classroom etiquette. This interaction reflects both comprehension and habitual use of English politeness formulas. Tag-switching in the classroom setting demonstrates how simple English expressions are naturally and strategically embedded within Indonesian discourse to manage routines, express politeness, and encourage interaction. These instances reflect both Student 1 and student familiarity with formulaic language and show how English tags are functionally integrated into bilingual classroom practices to support engagement and language exposure.

### 3.2. Communicative Functions and Motivations Behind Code-Switching

Data triangulation from interviews, observation logs, and classroom recordings indicated that code-switching served multiple communicative, pedagogical, and socio-affective purposes.

#### 3.2.1 Pedagogical Clarification

A commonly observed communicative function of code-switching in the classroom is pedagogical clarification, where the Student 1 intentionally switches between English and Indonesian to enhance students' understanding of instructional content. This function is especially prominent when introducing abstract concepts, setting lesson objectives, or posing reflective questions. Pedagogical clarification is used not to replace English instruction, but rather to scaffold student comprehension, especially for learners who are still developing proficiency in the target language.

**Student 1:** "Why learn to write? *Kenapa kita harus belajar menulis? Belajar menulis itu bisa kita... Biar pintar. Ya, biar pintar juga.*"

**Student 1**: "*Kita menulis itu bisa untuk kita menceritakan apa yang kita ceritakan, pengalaman kita, daily kita."*

**Student 1**: "To share ideas, writing also to train our creativity and abilities means to practice practice what?"

The data excerpt illustrates how code-switching functions as a tool for pedagogical clarification. Student 1, acting in a teaching role, switches between English and Indonesian to explain the purpose and benefits of writing. Beginning with a question in English and immediately repeating it in Indonesian ensures comprehension. The use of mixed phrases like *"daily kita"* bridges vocabulary gaps and reflects an effort to make the concept relatable. The final sentence, although in English, follows local syntax patterns and aims to prompt critical thinking. Overall, code-switching here supports clearer understanding, reinforces key points, and maintains student engagement in a bilingual context.

**Student 1**: "Writing helps us in learning. Writing helps improve our memory. And the last, writing expands vocabulary. Is there anything you can add?"
**Student 1**: "Okay. Does anyone know what is write? *Menulis. Selain menulis? Tulisan."*
**Student 1**: "This is an example that can be filled in English."

The student as a Student 1's use of code-switching between English and Indonesian in the classroom serves a clear pedagogical purpose: to support students' comprehension and engagement. By alternating languages, the Student 1 clarifies abstract concepts such as the importance and benefits of writing, making them more accessible for bilingual learners. English is used to present academic content and stimulate critical thinking through questions, while Indonesian reinforces understanding and vocabulary development. Instructions are also delivered in English to familiarize students with target language use in authentic contexts. This strategic blending of languages enhances both content learning and language acquisition simultaneously.

**Student 1 (during game explanation)**: "Let's game and get gift, okay? This is the condition of the game. Miss will give... For example, you give a few acca letters, then you will guess what the word of the acca letter is in English."

Mixed code is used to explain the rules of educational games. It shows the pedagogical function of ensuring that students understand the procedures while still being exposed to English.

The code switching serves to preserve the instructional flow while addressing diverse levels of English proficiency among students. Rather than disrupting the learning process, the language alternation facilitates comprehension and reinforces key learning points. Pedagogical clarification through code switching thus fulfills several instructional purposes. It reinforces concepts by restating complex or abstract ideas in the first language. It fosters inclusive instruction by making content accessible to all learners regardless of proficiency level. It helps maintain the lesson's rhythm by allowing real time clarification without pausing or derailing the flow of teaching. Observational logs

reveal that this form of code switching occurred most often during key transitions, particularly at the beginning of lessons or when introducing new topics.

### 3.2.2. Classroom Management and Control

Another key communicative function of code-switching observed in classroom discourse is for classroom management and control. Student 1s frequently alternated between English and Indonesian when giving behavioral directives, managing transitions, or maintaining discipline during lessons. This form of code-switching was often immediate, brief, and context-driven, allowing Student 1s to assert authority while ensuring that instructions were clearly understood by all students.

**Student 1**: "Sit down, please. Hey, sit down, please."

**Student 1**: "No, no, no, no, no, no, no, no, no."

**Student 1**: "Don't be here, Maira. Stay there. Be careful."

**Student 1**: "Sarnia, no. I got it, got it, I got it! Please return my permit, Sarnia. Sarnia? Sarnia? Sarnia? Sarnia? Please return my permit."

**Student 1**: "Class, class, class. Attention please."

**Student 1**: "Okay, everyone has to come. Miss, pay attention from the front, those who don't come can't come to the next game. Okay?"

**Student 1**: *"Miss hitung dulu, baru angkat tangan ya.*"

**Student 1**: *"Don't raise your hand before you finish counting."*

**Student 1**: "Shut up. No big sound in this class. Sit down."

The Student 1's use of code-switching for classroom management is evident through a variety of short, clear commands aimed at maintaining order and ensuring student compliance. English phrases such as "sit down, please" and "shut up" are commonly used to calm students or control noise, as they are widely understood and carry authoritative weight. Repetition, like calling a student's name multiple times or saying "no" repeatedly, is employed to gain attention and emphasize urgency. Instructions such as maintaining distance or following rules during games are expressed in both English and Indonesian, depending on context and clarity needed. The use of Indonesian ensures rules are understood precisely, while English is often used in more formal or instructional moments. Overall, the strategic language alternation supports discipline, directs participation, and keeps students focused throughout various classroom activities.

### 3.2.3 .Interactive Game Instructions

Code-switching was also frequently observed during interactive and playful segments of the lesson, particularly when Student 1s facilitated games or warm-up activities. In these moments, switching between English and Indonesian was used not only to convey instructions but also to create a relaxed and engaging atmosphere. This form of code-switching tended to be informal, fluid, and well-received by students, often.

**Student 1**: "Let's game and get gift, okay? This is the condition of the game. Miss will give..."
**Student 1**: "For example, you give a few acca letters, then you will guess what the word of the acca letter is in English."

The game is introduced in a relaxed manner using mixed-language sentences to help students understand the objective and feel motivated to participate. The technical explanation of the rules is delivered in English, though influenced by Indonesian sentence structure, serving both as a pedagogical strategy and a source of engagement for the students.

**Student 1**: "Raise your hands forward. And write down the answer. You can't answer first. If you answer first, the person will be replaced immediately."
**Student 1**: "Miss hitung dulu, baru angkat tangan ya. Three, two, one."
**Student 1**: "Don't raise your hand before you finish counting."

Instructions are delivered directly in English to train students' listening skills and ensure hey follow the game rules accurately. The Student 1 switches between Indonesian and English to reinforce understanding and make sure all students comply with each step. Repeating the rules in English also functions as language practice while maintaining control over student participation.

**Student 1**: *"Ya* understand *atau* Miss *suruh baca ulang lagi tadi syarat-syaratnya?"*
**Student 1**: "Question number four! Three, two..."

Mixed-language sentences are used by the Student 1 to clarify students' understanding of the rules that have been explained. The game is consistently led in English to create an engaging and interactive language learning atmosphere.

The use of code-switching in interactive game instructions serves several communicative and pedagogical functions. It maintains student engagement by making the activity feel exciting and less formal, using English as a language of motivation and reward. At the same time, the switch to Indonesian ensures that task expectations are understood by all students, reducing cognitive load and preventing confusion. This approach enables the teacher to manage the balance between language exposure and comprehension, especially in situations that rely on immediate participation and understanding.

### 3.2.4. Cultural and Identity Expression

In addition to pedagogical and managerial functions, code-switching in the classroom also plays a meaningful role in expressing cultural identity and fostering shared social understanding. This type of code-switching emerges in moments where language use reflects local norms, humor, or informal expressions that resonate with students' cultural backgrounds. In such instances, switching to the first language (Indonesian) is less about instruction and more about building rapport, affirming group identity, or grounding abstract concepts in familiar cultural references.

**Student 1:** Smart and clever.
**Student 1 :** More or less the same, Student 2 . There's more.?

The combination of expressions in English and Indonesian illustrates the effort to balance global academic values and local communication.

**Student 1**: *"Eh, tangan kiri, kiri jalan."*

This expression reflects a typical custom or direction in a local cultural context. Used spontaneously in Indonesian amidst English-speaking activities, it signifies the cultural identity and values internalized by teachers and students.

**Student 1**: *"This is TK normal, okay?"*
**Student 1:** "It's hard to control the children of the TK!"

Although this sentence is partly in English, the term "TK" (taman Kanak-Kanak) is local and not translated, showing how the identity of the Indonesian education system remains present in bilingual interactions.

Code-switching for cultural and identity expression fulfills social-affective functions rather than purely instructional ones. It allows the teacher to connect with students on a more personal and culturally familiar level, fostering a sense of belonging and comfort in the classroom. These instances often occur in spontaneous, unscripted moments such as reminding students of behavior, giving directions, or making light-hearted comments that reinforce group norms and social cohesion. The use of culturally familiar language can also ease classroom tensions, making the environment more emotionally supportive and less rigidly formal.

## 4. DISCUSSION

This study was designed to investigate how code-switching operates in English language classrooms not as a linguistic deficiency, but as a pedagogical and social strategy that learners and instructors employ to navigate multilingual interactions. Previous research highlights that code-switching can serve strategic functions beyond mere linguistic necessity, acting as a bridge between learners' realities and formal educational objectives (Phyak et al., 2022; Putri, 2022). The introduction identified a notable gap between official language policy, which often mandates English-only instruction, and actual classroom practice, which is more fluid and bilingual; indeed, studies have documented that these gaps can lead to significant misalignments between pedagogical intentions and learners' linguistic practices (Prosper & Nomlomo, 2016), Poudel, 2023)).

This study was designed to investigate how code-switching operates in English language classrooms not as a linguistic deficiency, but as a pedagogical and social strategy that learners and instructors employ to navigate multilingual interactions. Previous research highlights that code-switching can serve strategic functions beyond mere linguistic necessity, acting as a bridge between learners' realities and formal educational objectives (Phyak et al., 2022; Putri, 2022). The introduction identified a notable gap between official language policy, which often mandates English-only instruction, and actual classroom practice, which is more fluid and bilingual; indeed, studies have documented that these gaps can lead to significant misalignments between pedagogical intentions and learners' linguistic practices (Prosper & Nomlomo, 2016; Poudel, 2023).

The ethnographic findings presented in this study offer empirical insights that confirm the strategic, intentional, and context-sensitive use of code-switching in real classroom settings. Specifically, research has shown that code-switching facilitates comprehension and acts as a social tool among peers (Qin & Beauchemin, 2022; Nursanti, 2021). The following discussion elaborates on two central aspects derived from the research questions.

### 4.1 Types of Code-Switching Used by English Learners in Classroom Settings

The findings confirm that learners engage in three primary types of code-switching: inter-sentential, intra-sentential, and tag-switching. This typology reinforces the idea that language alternation is not random but structurally and functionally organized. Compared to the theoretical expectations set in the introduction which anticipated a mix of forms based on bilingual competence the data show a stronger prevalence of inter-sentential code-switching, especially during formal instruction, indicating that specific types of switching are employed strategically depending on the situational demands of the classroom (Ulfah et al., 2021; Khairunnisa & Lukmana, 2020). In contrast, intra-sentential switching was observed more frequently in informal peer exchanges, suggesting that learners utilize different types of switching based on the task, audience, and intention (Zhou & Mann, 2021; Ningsih & Luthfiyati, 2020).

The presence of tag-switching, despite being often overlooked in prior studies, was equally significant. It served as a linguistic glue binding English utterances within local Indonesian discourse norms, reinforcing classroom etiquette through informal, culturally relevant expressions such as "okay" and "yes, miss" (Sutrisno, 2023; Esbert & Birello, 2020). Overall, the types of code-switching observed align with the notion that learners possess a functional command of both languages and exercise agency in selecting language forms to suit communicative needs (Ataş, 2023; Saragueta et al., 2022).

While the study identified distinct types of switching, it did not account for frequency distribution across different proficiency levels, which remains a gap that can be addressed in future research. Future studies might categorize patterns based on learner linguistic competence, classroom roles, or teaching styles to understand how these variables influence switching behavior (Alisaari et al., 2019; Csillik & Golubeva, 2020).

### 4.2 Communicative Functions and Motivations Behind Code-Switching

The second research question explored the functions and motivations underlying code-switching. Consistent with initial assumptions, the findings showed that switching was not only pedagogical but also social, emotional, and managerial. The most dominant function was pedagogical clarification; learners and instructors regularly shifted between English and Indonesian to ensure comprehension, particularly when introducing abstract concepts or framing learning objectives, effectively bridging gaps within curriculums (Mwinda & Walt, 2015; Чайка, 2023).

Another frequent function was classroom management, where switching enabled instructors to assert authority and provide clear instructions. Contrary to prior assumptions that English should dominate classroom control, the findings reveal that utilizing Indonesian was often more effective for behavioral directives, especially when clarity and immediacy were required (Ningsih & Luthfiyati, 2020; Yuvayapan, 2019). Code-switching was also instrumental during interactive activities like games, where it

maintained student engagement and reduced affective barriers (Cenoz & Gorter, 2020; Anindita, 2022).

Cultural and identity expression emerged as an unanticipated yet powerful motivation for code-switching. By facilitating the fluid integration of local references and humor in English-medium instruction, code-switching supported social bonding and reinforced group identity, thus emphasizing that classroom discourse is not merely academic but also relational and contextual (Nursanti, 2021; Esbert & Birello, 2020). These findings suggest that educators should reconsider rigid English-only policies to allow for strategic code-switching, which can enhance participation, clarity, and emotional engagement (Duarte, 2016; Ticheloven et al., 2019).

Further investigations should explore student perspectives on code-switching to understand its perceived impact on learning and confidence. Mixed-method approaches combining discourse analysis with surveys or language diaries may yield richer insights into this field (Putri, 2022; Prosper & Nomlomo, 2016). Cross-institutional studies are also recommended to determine how institutional policies shape language practices across different learning environments (Phyak et al., 2022; Zhou & Mann, 2021).

## 5. CONCLUSION

This ethnographic study investigated the types, functions, and motivations of code-switching among English learners in an Indonesian EFL classroom, revealing that inter-sentential, intra-sentential, and tag-switching were used strategically to support instruction, manage the classroom, and express cultural identity. Rather than indicating linguistic deficiency, code-switching emerged as a purposeful tool for enhancing comprehension, maintaining engagement, and reinforcing social connection. Pedagogical clarification was the most prominent function, with language alternation used to scaffold meaning and reduce confusion, while classroom management and interactive activities demonstrated how switching sustained order and motivation. Cultural expressions embedded in code-switching further highlighted the importance of affirming learners' identities in the classroom space. These findings affirm that bilingual practices are valuable assets in EFL instruction, encouraging teachers to adopt flexible, responsive strategies that reflect students' linguistic realities. Future research should broaden the scope across varied contexts, explore learner perceptions more deeply, and incorporate mixed methods to capture the frequency and impact of code-switching in real time.

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