

# Code-Switching: EFL Classroom Interactions in Boarding School Context

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## Abstract

The pervasive use of English has a significant effect on language development. It has demonstrated that English is crucial in many facets of contemporary life, including commerce, the economy, politics, and tourism, notably in education. Code-switching is a teaching method that provides explanations and tools for students with limited English skills. The short duration of the English specialization class encourages the teacher to code-switch so that students can receive and understand the material well. This study aims to analyze the types and reasons for code-switching used by teachers in teaching English as a foreign language in Islamic boarding schools. This research uses descriptive qualitative research. The subjects of this study were teachers who taught English specialization classes at one of the boarding schools in Sidoarjo, Indonesia. Data collection was carried out through observation and interview techniques. Research data were analyzed using analytical methods. This study's results indicate three types of data on the use of code-switching by teachers: tag-switching, intra-sentential switching, and between-sentence switching. The reasons teachers use it in the learning process in the classroom are four types: facilitating learning, getting good feedback from students, making the classroom atmosphere more interactive, and establishing good relationships with students. This research found that using code-switching to deliver learning can positively impact teachers and students in the classroom.

**Keywords:** Code-switching; English Foreign Language; Teaching English.

English is the most widely spoken language in the world (McKay, 2018). English's widespread use significantly impacts language development. English is important in many aspects of modern life, including commerce, the economy, politics, and tourism, particularly regarding education (Sudarmawan, 2022). As a result of using this language, people worldwide are acquiring English as a second or foreign

language. One of these is Indonesia, where English is taught as a foreign language in the curriculum from elementary to university education (Mulenga, 2018). Referring to the background of Indonesian people, who are more bilingual, learning English encourages students to become multilingual directly. Mastering more than one language triggers the phenomenon of language transfer in various

contexts, called code-switching (Ansar, 2017).

The use of code-switching is often found in the communication process between bilinguals in society, where they will switch from one language to another depending on the situation of the conversation they are having (Bhatti et al., 2018; Fachriyah, 2017). Code-switching is used in formal and non-formal communication, particularly in education (Harya, 2018). Code-switching frequently occurs during the teaching and learning process at all levels of education, especially in English classes, where teachers frequently transition from Indonesian to English or vice versa when presenting material (Sudarmawan, 2022). Teachers often use code-switching as one of the easiest methods of teaching English in class because the use of this language-switching can assist teachers in guiding students who find it difficult to understand an instruction or topic of the lesson being carried out (Cahyani et al., 2018; Sudarmawan, 2022).

In the learning process, using code-switching in classroom learning can reduce the communication gap between teachers and students (Mabule, 2015). It means that code-switching is not always considered a speaker's inability to express herself but is used to impart new knowledge to students. Code-switching can meet the need to provide explanations and suggestions for students with limited English skills (Brown, 2000). In the pedagogic function, code-switching is applied in delivering learning materials that can make students feel difficulty in learning, such as explaining the context of learning or defining difficult terms (Kustati, 2014). In addition, the use of the first language in a foreign language learning context can be a reference that helps students receive English lessons by orienting the target language through the first language or connecting an incident between the target language and the first language (Fathimah, 2016). The teacher can use code-switching if the target language is inefficient and creates misunderstandings for students, such as with

explanations that are too difficult and take a long time to process and understand the lesson. Using code-switching in the learning process is an important strategy to facilitate the learning process in the classroom (Cook, 2008).

Teaching English in schools where English is not the main language poses several challenges for teachers. Especially in schools that have Arabic language-based backgrounds, or what are commonly called Islamic boarding schools. Beside that, there are several Islamic boarding schools that implement English subjects in the school curriculum, one of which is SMP Muhammadiyah 9 Boarding School Tanggulangin. In an era of increasingly technological developments that use English as the system language, the school decided to add another class. The additional class formed by the school is an English specialization class. In regular English learning, it is not too burdensome for students to speak English, but in English specialization classes, students are required to be able to master English well. In addition, specialization classes are also prepared for students who are ready to take part in English competitions. In this class, of course, students are required to quickly understand when the teacher explains the material in class. So, the teacher certainly has a special strategy in her teaching method, one of which is by providing many interesting ways to make students more interested in learning English, namely by using code switching as a sociolinguistic approach method. Using code-switching in the learning process provides an alternative understanding for students (Naha et al., 2018). The use of code-switching must be initiated by the teacher first so that students more easily understand and follow the learning process.

Code-switching is a sociolinguistic phenomenon in which a speech community uses two or more languages. Many linguists have explained the term "code-switching" in their writings. According to Poplack (2004), code-switching is using two languages in the same speech, sentence, or element. Poplack

mentions three types of code-switching: tag switching, intra-sentential switching, and inter-sentential switching. Previous research discovered that teachers are important in using code-switching, making students feel more comfortable and making the material easier to understand when learning English in class (Sudarmawan, 2022; Yudita, 2019; Zainura, 2022). Moreover, the researchers examine some of the studies that have been mentioned but using different theories, methods, schools, and student levels.

In the previous research conducted by Zainura and Edwar, they focused on code-switching research conducted by teachers and students in Islamic boarding schools. They conducted research on conversations that were carried out in class because code-switching was considered a good interaction tool when learning (Edwar, 2018; Zainura, 2022). The researchers conducted research by focusing on the way the teacher explained the material in class by using code switching. Based on the results of observations made by researchers at SMP Muhammadiyah 9 Pondok Pesantren Tanggulangin, the phenomenon of code switching is often found when teachers teach language, especially when the teacher delivers material in class. Because English specialization classes have a shorter learning time than general classes, teachers must use code switching to ensure that the material delivered to students is received and understood quickly. In conveying learning, the teacher sometimes changes the language from English to Indonesian. With the use of code switching that occurs in class interaction, it can affect the level of students' understanding of the material presented. When students are encouraged to master an additional language, namely English, they will not feel confused about understanding the material being explained. The researchers have two research questions:

1. What type of code-switching does the teacher use when doing code-switching in English class?

2. Why does the teacher use code-switching in the learning process in class?

This research was conducted by researchers at SMP Muhammadiyah 9 Boarding School Tanggulangin and aimed to explain the types of code-switching used by teachers and why teachers use code-switching when teaching in English specialization classes. This study also aims to enable teachers to combine the strategies used in teaching English in class.

### **Method**

This study uses qualitative research with a phenomenological approach to explain the phenomenon of teachers using code switching to assist student learning in English specialization classes. Creswell claims that qualitative research is a particular type of research design that reflects the role played by researchers in research, describes a growing list of different kinds of data sources, uses specialized equipment to record data, analyzes information through several steps of analysis, and mentions methods to demonstrate the veracity or accuracy of the data collected (Creswell, 2014). The purpose of implementing descriptive qualitative approaches is to evaluate data, particularly in code-switching analysis, and verbally and fully express it without statistical or numerical information. To collect data, the researchers observed classes and conducted interviews.

The English specialization class is a new additional classes that has been held since 2021. Enthusiasts for this class are still small compared to other additional classes. Then, the principal decided to open only one specialization class and divide it into two schedules. The specialization class is divided into two schedules because the school is based on Islam, so the male and female classes must be separated. Because there was only one class, the class was taught by an English teacher at the school. The teacher has experience teaching English for five years at SMP Muhammadiyah 9 Boarding School Tanggulangin.

Researchers employed two techniques to gather data: observation and interviews. Voice-recording devices were used to document observations made during English-specific classes. The gathered data will be written down for easier classification, and then the Poplack theory will be used to examine the data. Three different tools will be used in this study to collect data: observation notes, audio recorders, and interviews.

Data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions or verification are the three stages of the analytical methodology used to examine this research data. The subjects of this study were teachers who taught English specialization classes at SMP Muhammadiyah 9 Boarding School Tanggulangin. The teacher is a teacher who has taught English for 5 (five) years. The teacher chosen as the subject is a teacher who is directly appointed to teach English specialization classes. In collecting data, researchers used two methods, namely observation and interviews. The observation and interview instruments will be adapted from Danaparamita (2016) and Harahap (2020). Observations were made during English specialization classes by recording the learning process using a voice recorder and writing sentences containing code-switching. In the interview, the researchers asked the teacher about learning in English class and why teachers tend to use code-switching when teaching. The data collected was transcribed into written form to facilitate classification. Then the data was analyzed using the theory from Poplack. This study used three instruments to collect data: observation sheets, audio recorders, and interviews. Research data were analyzed using analytical methods, which were divided into six stages: organizing and preparing data for analysis; reading and viewing all data; starting data classification; using the data classification process to produce a background image to be analyzed; writing descriptions that will be represented in qualitative narratives; and making interpretations in qualitative research (Creswell, 2014).

## Results and Discussion

Based on the results of interviews and observations conducted by researchers with teachers at SMP Muhammadiyah Boarding School Tanggulangin, it can be found that there is a phenomenon of code-switching that occurs when the learning process for English specialization classes is carried out.

### Type of Code-Switching Used by The Teacher

In Poplack's definition, code-switching is when two languages are used in the same speech, sentence, or component. According to Poplack (2004), there are three types of code-switching: tag switching, intra-sentential switching, and inter-sentential switching. Reyes (2004), stated that the function of code-switching is divided into three parts: topic switching, affective function, and repetitive function. First, the topic-switching function is needed to make it easier for listeners to understand a topic. In this function, the teacher translates English into Indonesian for students to increase their understanding of the learning process. The teacher usually conveys learning topics or carries out further activities in the learning process. Second, the effective function is one of the functions of code-switching, which positively impacts good relations between teachers and students. The teacher carries out the phenomenon of code-switching to provide affirmations to students in the teaching and learning process. Third, the repetitive function refers to conveying the same information in two languages for clarity in a material or utterance made by the teacher so that students can easily understand what the teacher said. These types of code-switching are used as guidelines for observations. The researchers described the types of code-switching according to the theory adopted.

#### *Tag-Switching*

This type of code-switching usually occurs at boundaries to emphasize speech, take the listeners' attention, and indicate an action (Harahap, 2020). This type of code-switching is



usually used as a speech-highlighting strategy that does not change the utterance's meaning. Teachers usually use this type when repeating or affirming their words, changing topics, or giving affirmations to their students. For example:

T : "Ulangi ya, reply. Dari awal diulang ayo."

T : "Next, *selanjutnya ayo. Nomor selanjutnya dibaca aja langsung.*"

T : "I'm fine. And you? *Bagaimana kabarnya?*"

In the pronunciation of the first part, the teacher mentions, "Ulangi ya, reply." It showed that the students mispronounced words in the learning process. Then the teacher gives affirmation of word repetition by including code-switching in command sentences. In the pronunciation of the second part, the teacher said, "Next, *selanjutnya ayo,*" which is shown to students to read the next number. The teacher then emphasizes the repetition of the word by including code-switching in his speech. In the third part, the teacher says, "And you? *Bagaimana kabarnya?*" was shown as an answer to the affirmation question given by the student. The teacher gives repetition of affirmations by including code-switching in his speech. This code-switching can improve the teacher-student relationship and help students feel close to their teacher. Bhatti (2018), emphasized that this tag-switching is usually used more as a social function, emphasizing building solidarity and relationships between teachers and students in the classroom environment.

### ***Inter-sentential Switching***

Inter-sentential code-switching is a type of code-switching that occurs between clauses, phrases, or words in an utterance (Harahap, 2020). This type of code-switching refers to switching from one language to another in a sentence involving a phrase, clause, or word from a certain language. This type of code-switching usually occurs when the teacher explains or repeats words in a different

language in one utterance. For example:

T : "*Menyebutkan lima kata kerja aja. Only five verbs. Ditulis dulu nggapapa.*"

T : "You should write in every fold. *Ditulis di setiap kotaknya. Paham?*"

T : "Like we make the sentences in Indonesia. *Sama kayak kita buat kalimat kayak biasanya. Kayak SPOK itu.*"

In the first part, the teacher mentions, "Menyebutkan lima kata kerja aja. Only five verbs", which means that the teacher tells the students to mention only five verbs. The teacher then uses repetition in these words, using English, so that students pay attention to the command words spoken by the teacher. In the second part, the teacher mentions, "You should write in every fold. *Ditulis di setiap kotaknya*", which means that the teacher tells the students to write down the word they use in each box on the fold of a piece of paper they are holding. The teacher expects students to understand what she is saying by giving English orders and repeating them in Indonesian. In the third part, the teacher mentions, "Like we make sentences in Indonesia. *Sama kayak kita buat kalimat kayak biasanya,*" which means that the teacher tells the students to make sentences in English grammar and gives an affirmation that writing a sentence in English is as easy as making sentences in Indonesian. By repeating sentences in Indonesian, it is hoped that students can better understand what the teacher means.

Another function of inter-sentential switching is that it is used as a device for focusing student attention. In most cases, it was observed that when teachers were explaining material that was quite difficult, but they wanted to get their students' attention, they usually switched from a lower pitch to a higher tone of voice along with a change of language, which served two purposes: to simplify an explanation and to make students pay attention to what was described (Bhatti et al., 2018). The analysis of code-switching also clearly shows that this intra-sentential switching has

an educational effect, with the main objective of facilitating student learning.

### ***Intra-sentential Switching***

Intra-sentential switching is code-switching that occurs within clause or word boundaries (Harahap, 2020). This type of translation occurs at the boundary of the sentence. It is often seen among bilingual speakers in sentence spans such as the first sentence using English and the second using Indonesian, or vice versa. Intra-sentential switching is usually said by the teacher when she explains or confirms the previously spoken sentence. For example:

T : “*Kalau Tuesday itu Selasa, kalau Thursday itu Kamis. Jangan sampai ketuker ya.*”

T : “*Kalau sholat itu prayer. Sama kayak berdoa.*”

T : “*Peraturannya you can't mengulang the same verb. Sebutkan kata yang lain aja.*”

In the first part, the teacher mentions, “*Kalau Tuesday itu Selasa, kalau Thursday itu Kamis.*” The teacher caught the students mispronouncing the day’s name. Then the teacher explained how to pronounce Thursday and Tuesday differently. In the second part, the teacher mentions, “*Kalau sholat itu prayer.*” The teacher answers students who ask the difference between sholat and berdoa. Then the teacher gives a statement using the word ‘prayer, saying that it is the same as sholat and berdoa so that students will remember the word easily. In the third part, the teacher mentions, “*Peraturannya, you can't mengulang the same verb.*”. The teacher gives a rule when the student wants to write a word. She emphasized that students could not write down the same verbs to become familiar with new ones.

The result of the analysis of intra-sentential switching use is that it is used for educational purposes. This code-switching technique is useful for students in associating concepts and definitions explained from foreign languages with their mother tongue (Bhatti et al., 2018; Yao, 2011). Therefore, the

main purpose of this transition is to provide subject matter associations on the part of students.

### **The Reasons for Using Code-Switching**

Based on the results of interviews conducted by researchers with teachers who teach English specialization classes at Muhammadiyah 9 Boarding School Tanggulangin, it is in line with what Yao said in her research that there are four advantages to using code-switching (Yao, 2011). The researchers then describe it according to the results of the interviews that have been conducted.

### ***Make Students Easier to Understand the Lesson***

In an interview conducted by the researcher with the teacher, she said:

R: “How often does an *Ustadzah* use code-switching in class while teaching?”

T: “For me, it is probably almost 50% because each lesson meets different students and competencies, so we have to facilitate students who do not like English by giving Indonesian vocabulary, so it is not full English.”

R: “Is code-switching one of the teaching methods applied in learning English in specialization classes?”

T: “Yes. English is a vocabulary, so if we give students all English pronunciation, they will automatically dislike it, and if they are less able, they do not like it more and cannot. Unless it is a student who has much vocabulary in his brain, he immediately understands what we mean.”

Her speech means that when the teacher explains learning material in English, students unfamiliar with the vocabulary will find it more difficult to understand what the teacher explains. Then using code-switching as one of the teaching methods used by the teacher will make the teaching and learning process more easily accepted and understood by students of all levels of intelligence. She also stated that code-switching was a method she used while teaching English classes, especially in this specialization class. She thinks that code-

switching is the only teaching method students consider easily accepted when learning a foreign language. It is also supported by the theory from Ustunel, which states that teachers and students, when in certain situations, choose to adjust their language to fit or to show their status in the current interaction, as is done in a bilingual class (Ustunel, 2016). In this study, the teacher showed how her efforts to use Indonesian in the context of learning in class facilitated the process of delivering material so that students could understand it well.

### ***Providing New Vocabulary, Words of Encouragement, and Good Feedback for the Students***

In an interview conducted by the researcher with the teacher, she said:

R: "What are Ustadzah's thoughts on the benefits of code-switching?"

T: "The advantage of code-switching earlier is that students who do not speak English can understand what the purpose of learning is; if it is negative, it is not good because maybe the students do not seem motivated to find vocabulary in English, but we as teachers have to be able to combine the advantages and disadvantages of code-switching earlier. We still use code-switching but teach new vocabulary when teaching."

When teaching, the teacher realizes that if she speaks too much Indonesian in the learning process, it will make students less able to develop their skills, especially speaking skills. According to research conducted by Megawati & Mandarani (2016), there are three obstacles to someone having difficulty speaking: low vocabulary mastery, thinking bad grammar makes speech bad, and nervousness because they are not used to speaking English. Therefore, even though the teacher still uses code switching as a teaching method, she still incorporates new types of vocabulary so that students can increase the number of words they know. As stated by Gardner-Chloros (2009), using code-switching in the classroom

should not be considered a lack of teacher and student language competence but a strategy to enhance the learning process. By applying this method, teachers also hope to get good student feedback so that the learning and communication process between teachers and students can be well established.

### ***More Interactive and Enthusiast Learning Vibes***

In an interview conducted by the researcher with the teacher, she said:

R: "What are the specific goals of using code-switching in class?"

T: "By implementing code-switching, students can get along well before entering full English. Here, they mainly use Arabic, so let them get used to it first. Right now, many use English. So I want them to be able to understand and use English well even though it is not as perfect as the language of native speakers."

The learning process certainly has communication going on, which must be two-way. What is meant is that teachers and students interact equally in the classroom. If the teacher makes English utterances difficult for them to understand, the students will not be able to respond and will not feel enthusiastic about the class. The teacher said during the interview that the aim of using code-switching as a teaching method is to make students able to speak and understand English as well as possible, especially in English class. With a background of using Arabic as their main language, of course, using English is a challenge. Hancock (1997) also mentioned that students must practice classroom communication to promote communicative competence. The teacher must communicate more English to increase interactive classes and an enthusiastic atmosphere. Moreover, the teacher also hopes that by using this code-switching as a teaching method, students can easily recognize and be able to use English well even though they are not native speakers.

### ***Strategy to be a Better Negotiator and Closer to Students***

In an interview conducted by the researcher with the teacher, she said:

R: "According to Ustadzah, how effective is code-switching in teaching English to middle school students?"

T: "We know that many students are not good at English and do not like it. If we force everything to be native, they will not be able to and will not pay attention to us. So yeah, it is effective because I understand they still know what we want even though they do not like it and cannot speak English."

Teachers who use the right teaching method in the learning process can control the conditions in the class during the learning process. A good learning process requires conducive classroom conditions for receiving material. Teachers must have specific strategies for using teaching methods, one of which is code-switching, especially when teaching English as a foreign language. In the observation process by researchers, it was found that if the teacher used English too often, students felt confused and tended not to pay attention to what the teacher was saying. With such class conditions, code-switching is needed to attract their learning interest and make them pay attention to the material provided. One of its functions in code-switching is to attract students' attention so they can focus on the material presented (Fhitri, 2017).

In this study, it was also announced when the teacher used code-switching as a means of conveying her aims and objectives when speaking. Using code-switching like that can help students better understand the meaning of the words spoken by the teacher. In the results of the teacher interviews, it was also stated that code-switching can make students pay more attention to learning even though they are not proficient in English. This teaching method also has a good impact on classroom learning, namely that there is no gap in the communication relationship between

the teacher and students so that the learning objectives can be achieved properly.

### **Conclusion**

The researcher concluded that teachers who teach English classes at SMP Muhammadiyah 9 Boarding School in Tanggulangin use the code-switching method as a learning tool in class. Teachers can be found using code-switching of three different types: the first is tag switching, the second is intra-sentential switching, and the third is inter-sentential switching. This method is considered effective by the teacher because students who are not used to using English become familiar with the language. Of course, in using code-switching, the teacher must present new vocabulary variations so that students who do not have much vocabulary can learn them easily. Using this method, the teacher also wants students to more easily understand and learn English more, even though their pronunciation is not as good as native speakers. Within a school environment with Arabic as the main language, the right English teaching strategy will positively impact a student's mastery of a foreign language. That way, as an educator, we have to try our best so that these students can achieve the learning targets. In addition, this study also aims to facilitate future researchers in collecting data on the use of code-switching in secondary schools.

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