

Code-Mixing Practices of Efl Lecturers in Classroom Settings

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Abstract

The use of code-mixing in the context of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) instruction has become a common strategy employed by lecturers to bridge linguistic gaps between educators and students. In the Indonesian context, where English is not the primary language, this strategy is considered essential in helping students grasp complex learning materials. This study aims to identify the types of code-mixing used by EFL lecturers and analyze their impact on students' learning behavior, cognitive abilities, and emotional responses in the classroom. The research employed a qualitative approach using a case study method. Purposive sampling was used to select lecturer participants, while snowball sampling was applied to recruit student participants. The study was conducted at Campus 1 of the Christian University of Indonesia Toraja. Data were collected through classroom observations and in-depth interviews with both lecturers and students. The findings reveal that four types of code-mixing were employed by lecturers: insertion, alternation, congruent lexicalization, and shifts in pronunciation. Overall, the use of code-mixing had positive effects, such as enhancing students' comprehension of the material, increasing their learning motivation, and creating a more inclusive and comfortable classroom atmosphere. However, the study also identified a potential drawback, students' growing dependence on lecturers for understanding English, which may hinder their ability to learn independently. These findings highlight the importance of implementing a balanced teaching strategy to ensure that code-mixing serves as an effective instructional aid without diminishing students' opportunities to develop their language skills autonomously. This research is expected to contribute to the development of more reflective and contextually relevant English teaching practices in higher education.

Keywords: *Sociolinguistics, Code Mixing, EFL Lecturers, Impact, Multilingualism*

Introduction

Language plays a crucial role in human communication, serving as the primary medium for expressing thoughts, feelings, and information. It fosters relationships and eases knowledge exchange, reflecting the culture and identity of its speakers (Gayatri et al., 2023). A society's ideals, customs, and beliefs are often reflected in its language (Cong, 2023). In multicultural and multilingual contexts, language not only preserves cultural heritage but also aids in adapting to diverse interactions (Asani et al, 2024). In Indonesia, English is a core subject across educational tiers, motivating both students and educators to engage effectively with the language (Henry, 2023). Multilingualism, defined as the ability to use multiple languages in everyday interactions, is a common phenomenon in diverse societies such as Indonesia. This linguistic diversity plays a crucial role not only in enhancing communication among people but also in shaping individual and group identities (Istifci, 2019). In educational settings, multilingualism influences how students learn and engage with the curriculum, often requiring teachers to adapt their instructional methods to accommodate different language backgrounds (Rohmana et al, 2024).

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The presence of multiple languages within a learning environment can enrich students' cognitive abilities and cultural understanding, fostering a more inclusive and dynamic classroom experience (Fisher et al., 2020).

The most frequently observed linguistic phenomena in bilingual or multilingual environments is code mixing, which involves blending two or more languages within a single sentence or conversation (Fadliyah et al, 2023). In educational contexts, code mixing serves as a practical tool to clarify meaning and facilitate deeper comprehension among students (Upa et al., 2022). It allows educators to bridge gaps in students' understanding by using familiar language resources alongside the target language, helping students relate new information to their existing knowledge and making learning more meaningful and effective (Situmorang et al., 2023). Despite the benefits, it is important to recognize the potential drawbacks of relying too heavily on code mixing in the classroom (Haryati et al, 2020). While this practice can help reduce anxiety and overcome language barriers, especially in learning English as a foreign language, overuse may inadvertently limit students' opportunities to fully engage with the target language (Murtiningsih et al., 2022). Excessive dependence on code mixing might hinder students from developing their proficiency and confidence in using English independently. Therefore, educators need to find a careful balance, using code mixing strategically to support comprehension while also encouraging students to practice and immerse themselves in the language (Nurpiana et al, 2023).

The use of code-mixing by lecturers has become a widely adopted strategy to improve the teaching and learning process, especially in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) settings. Code-mixing involves blending two or more languages, often English and Indonesian, within a single sentence or conversation (Rahmat, 2020). This technique allows lecturers to bridge communication gaps when students struggle with English vocabulary or complex grammatical structures (Sumali et al., 2021). By integrating both languages, lecturers can clarify difficult concepts more effectively, making the subject matter more accessible and easier to grasp. According to this approach not only facilitates smoother communication but also supports students in overcoming language barriers that may otherwise hinder their learning progress (Murtiningsih et al., 2022). The strategic use of code-mixing can accelerate students' comprehension and help reduce the anxiety often associated with learning a new language (Siddiq et al, 2020). When students hear familiar terms alongside English explanations, they tend to feel more comfortable and confident in their learning environment. This bilingual approach creates a supportive atmosphere that encourages participation and engagement (Charmilasari et al, 2024). However, it is crucial to strike a balance, as excessive reliance on code-mixing may limit students' exposure to English and reduce their opportunities to practice and develop their language skills independently. Therefore, while code-mixing can be a powerful tool for enhancing understanding, it should be used thoughtfully to maximize its benefits without hindering students' overall language acquisition.

The use of code mixing by lecturers has appeared as a commonly used approach to enhance the teaching and learning experience (Wu et al., 2020). For lecturers, code mixing serves as a valuable mechanism to address language barriers, particularly when students meet difficulties with English vocabulary or grammatical structures. This practice can aid students in understanding the subject matter more effectively and help faster comprehension of material, while also reducing the anxiety associated with learning English. However, it is important to note that over-reliance on this practice may limit students' opportunities to engage with the English language itself. The Indonesian Christian University of Toraja, lecturers often employ code mixing to elucidate learning materials. However, some students still struggle to engage and

understand the content, leading to a lack of interaction in class. This observation raises questions about the effectiveness of code mixing as a pedagogical tool and its implications for student learning. Therefore, this study aims to investigate the types of code mixing used by lecturers and the impact of these practices on student comprehension and engagement.

The novelty of this study lies in its focus on the code-mixing practices of EFL lecturers within a local context, specifically at the Indonesian Christian University of Toraja, which has rarely been examined in previous research. This study not only identifies the types of code-mixing used by lecturers but also analyzes their impact on students' comprehension and classroom engagement. Furthermore, the research highlights the ambiguity of code-mixing as a pedagogical strategy, especially in cases where students remain passive despite its implementation.

Method

This study employed a qualitative method to explore the phenomenon of code mixing used by EFL lecturers in classroom environments. A case study approach was adopted because it allows for an in-depth exploration of complex language behaviors within specific, real-world settings. This method helped the collection of rich, real-time data through observations and interviews, capturing the dynamics of interactions between lecturers and students. The primary aim was to understand the experiences of the participants, focusing on their behaviors, perceptions, and motivations in relation to code mixing during instruction. The participants included two EFL lecturers from the UKI Toraja English Education Study Program, both of whom frequently employed code mixing during their instructional sessions. Additionally, three students were selected from each lecturer's class, resulting in a total of eight student participants. Purposive sampling was used for the lecturers, while snowball sampling was employed for the students. Observations were conducted to directly assess the use of code mixing in real-time classroom interactions, while semi-structured interviews offered deeper insights into the lecturers' and students' perspectives on the effectiveness and challenges of code mixing.

The analyze data, thematic analysis was employed. This technique involved transcribing the interview and observation data, followed by coding and categorizing key themes related to the forms, functions, and underlying motivations of code mixing. Codes were generated inductively from the data, then grouped into categories to show emerging themes. This approach ensured a comprehensive understanding of the types and functions of code mixing, including insertion, alternation, congruent lexicalization, and pronunciation changes within the context of English language education. Ethical clearance was obtained, and informed consent was secured from all participants prior to data collection. The research flow in two paragraphs in English. This study began with the identification of the phenomenon of code mixing used by EFL (English as a Foreign Language) lecturers in classroom settings. The main objective was to gain a deep understanding of the behaviors, perceptions, and motivations of both lecturers and students regarding the use of code mixing during English language instruction. A qualitative approach with a case study design was employed because it allows for an in-depth exploration of complex language behaviors in real-world contexts. The participants included two EFL lecturers from the English Education Study Program at UKI Toraja, selected through purposive sampling, and six students (three from each lecturer's class) chosen using snowball sampling. Data were collected through direct classroom observations and semi-structured interviews to capture rich insights into the interactions and perspectives of the participants.

Data analysis was conducted using thematic analysis. The observation and interview data were transcribed and then coded inductively to identify significant patterns. These codes were grouped into categories and themes reflecting the forms, functions, and motivations behind the use of code mixing in teaching. The study focused on various types of code mixing, including insertion, alternation, congruent lexicalization, and pronunciation changes. To ensure ethical compliance, ethical approval and informed consent were obtained from all participants prior to data collection. This approach aimed to provide a comprehensive understanding of the dynamics of code mixing in the context of English language education.

Results and Discussion

This section discusses the results of a study conducted through observations and interviews with two EFL lecturers at the Christian University of Indonesia Toraja. The primary focus of this research was to explore the types of code mixing used in classrooms and the impact of these practices on student engagement and understanding. Observations were conducted from December 7, 2024, to December 21, 2024, while interviews with eight seventh-semester students were conducted from December 21, 2024, to February 12, 2025.

Types of Code Mixing Used by Lecturers

The findings reveal that both lecturers employed distinct types of code-mixing strategies, including:

Insertion

Both lecturers frequently employed insertion as a key strategy to integrate English vocabulary seamlessly into Indonesian sentences. This technique involved inserting English words, particularly verbs and nouns, into predominantly Indonesian utterances to clarify and emphasize specific concepts. For example, Mr. C often used phrases like, "Kita itu di anggap appreciate, kita menghargai bahasa mereka," where the English word "appreciate" was embedded within an Indonesian sentence. Such insertions served to highlight important terms or ideas that might not have a direct or equally expressive equivalent in Indonesian, thereby enriching the students' linguistic exposure.

This method of code mixing not only helped bridge linguistic gaps but also facilitated better comprehension among students. By blending familiar Indonesian structures with English vocabulary, lecturers created a learning environment where students could connect new English terms to their existing language knowledge. This strategy proved effective in making abstract or challenging concepts more accessible and relatable, ultimately enhancing students' understanding and retention of the material. It also encouraged students to become more comfortable with English words in context, supporting their overall language development.

Alternation

Alternation as a code-mixing strategy was prominently observed among the lecturers, where they seamlessly switched between languages within a single sentence. This practice involves toggling between English and Indonesian, often mid-sentence, to deliver meaning more effectively or to emphasize particular points. Such language alternation serves as a bridge, helping students grasp complex concepts by blending familiar and target languages in a fluid manner. For example, Mr. C frequently employed this technique during his teaching sessions. One notable instance was when he said, "Kan kita belajar bahasa Inggris kan to fluently and then similar with native speaker." In this sentence, Mr. C started with Indonesian to establish a familiar context for the students, then smoothly switched to English to model the language they were

learning. This back-and-forth switching not only maintained the students' attention but also demonstrated practical language use in an engaging way.

The effectiveness of alternation lies in its ability to create a dynamic and interactive learning environment. By mixing languages within a single utterance, lecturers can cater to different proficiency levels and learning needs simultaneously. This approach encourages students to follow the flow of ideas without feeling overwhelmed, while also exposing them to authentic language use. Ultimately, alternation fosters better comprehension and keeps students motivated to participate actively in classroom discussions.

Congruent Lexicalization

This type of code mixing, known as congruent lexicalization, involves the use of English and Indonesian within the same grammatical structure, seamlessly blending elements of both languages. Unlike simple insertion or alternation, congruent lexicalization maintains the syntactic framework of one language while integrating lexical items from another. This allows speakers to produce sentences that are grammatically consistent yet enriched with vocabulary from both languages, reflecting a natural bilingual communication style. The example provided by Mr. C, one of the lecturers, is the phrase "*Students tidak punya percaya diri*," which directly combines the English noun "students" with an Indonesian predicate. Here, the English lexical item is inserted into an Indonesian grammatical frame, allowing the sentence to retain its original syntactic order while incorporating a familiar English term. This form of code mixing not only preserves grammatical clarity but also makes the message accessible and relatable for students who navigate both languages daily.

The use of congruent lexicalization plays an important role in facilitating comprehension, especially in multilingual educational settings. By maintaining grammatical consistency, lecturers can reduce confusion that might arise from frequent language switching. At the same time, integrating English terms helps students become more comfortable with academic vocabulary and bilingual discourse. This strategy supports effective communication by striking a balance between linguistic familiarity and instructional clarity, ultimately enhancing the learning experience.

Involving Pronunciation Changes

Both lecturers also utilized pronunciation changes as a deliberate strategy to enhance students' understanding during classroom interactions. For instance, Mr. C consistently pronounced English terms following their standard English pronunciation, which helped maintain the authenticity and clarity of the English language elements within the lesson. At the same time, he adapted the pronunciation of Indonesian terms to align with the local pronunciation norms familiar to the students. This balanced approach ensured that students could easily recognize and differentiate between the two languages, thereby facilitating smoother communication and reducing potential confusion.

This pronunciation strategy proved particularly beneficial for students who were more accustomed to hearing English terms in their original form but might struggle with unfamiliar Indonesian pronunciations. By adjusting the Indonesian terms to fit local speech patterns, the lecturers created a more inclusive learning environment where students felt comfortable and supported. This careful modulation of pronunciation not only reinforced language comprehension but also helped bridge cultural and linguistic gaps, making it easier for students to grasp complex concepts and engage more confidently in classroom discussions.

Impact of Code Mixing

The impact of code mixing on student engagement and understanding was significant, categorized into several areas:

On Learning

The use of code mixing was found to significantly enhance students' comprehension of the learning material. Many students reported that when both English and their native language were used during lessons, they were better able to grasp the content. This bilingual approach created a familiar and comfortable learning environment, which helped reduce confusion and cognitive load. By hearing explanations in two languages, students could connect new information with prior knowledge more effectively, leading to a deeper understanding of the subject matter.

The code mixing proved especially helpful in delivering complex or abstract concepts that might otherwise be difficult to explain using only one language. The strategic use of both languages allowed lecturers to clarify difficult terms, provide examples, and reinforce meanings in ways that made the material more accessible to a diverse group of learners. This dual-language strategy not only supported comprehension but also encouraged students to actively engage with the content, fostering greater participation and confidence in their learning process.

On Student Behavior

Code mixing had a positive impact on student participation and interaction in the classroom. When lecturers incorporated both English and Indonesian in their instruction, students appeared more at ease and willing to engage actively. This bilingual approach created a more inclusive environment where students felt empowered to ask questions without the fear of making mistakes in either language. The use of both languages lowered the affective filter, encouraging more spontaneous and confident communication. As a result, classroom discussions became livelier and more dynamic, fostering a collaborative learning atmosphere where students could express their ideas more freely.

Despite these benefits, some students reported occasional confusion due to the switching between languages. For certain learners, adapting to the mixed vocabulary required extra cognitive effort, especially when unfamiliar terms or phrases were introduced without sufficient explanation. This occasional confusion suggests that while code mixing can enhance engagement and understanding, it also demands that students develop flexibility in processing language shifts. Therefore, lecturers need to be mindful of students' varying language proficiencies and provide appropriate support to ensure that code mixing remains an effective tool rather than a barrier to comprehension.

On Cognitive Ability

Both lecturers and students unanimously agreed that code mixing plays a significant role in enhancing the comprehension of learning materials. By incorporating both English and Indonesian during instruction, lecturers were able to clarify complex concepts more effectively, making the content more accessible to students with varying levels of language proficiency. This bilingual approach helped bridge gaps in understanding, especially for students who might struggle with full English explanations. The ability to switch between languages allowed for more nuanced communication, enabling students to better grasp difficult ideas and retain information longer.

Students reported that learning through code mixing enabled them to understand concepts more quickly compared to when only one language was used. The combination of English and

Indonesian provided familiar linguistic cues that made it easier for them to follow the lesson and connect new information to their existing knowledge. This dual-language approach not only facilitated faster comprehension but also boosted students' confidence in using English, as they felt supported by the inclusion of their native language. Overall, the practice of code mixing was seen as an effective strategy to accelerate the learning process while maintaining student engagement and motivation.

On Affective Aspects

The use of code mixing positively impacted students' motivation and emotional responses. Lecturers noted that students appeared happier and more engaged when code mixing was employed, as it created a supportive learning environment. However, some students expressed feelings of discomfort or confusion, highlighting the need for sensitivity to individual preferences and emotional responses in teaching. This section presents a discussion based on the findings of this study. The research reveals that code mixing is a customary practice among EFL lecturers at the Christian University of Indonesia Toraja, serving as a valuable strategy to enhance the teaching and learning experience. Based on the data analysis, several types of code mixing and their impacts were shown.

The findings of the study identified four primary types of code mixing used by EFL lecturers: insertion, alternation, congruent lexicalization, and pronunciation changes. Insertion emerged as the most dominant type, where English vocabulary is embedded into Indonesian sentences. This result aligns with the study which showed insertion as the most common code-mixing practice among EFL teachers (Nurpiana et al, 2023). In this study, insertion was used to bridge linguistic gaps, making abstract or unfamiliar English terms more accessible to students. Students reported that this strategy helped them better understand new vocabulary and increased their engagement with the learning material.

Alternation, another frequently observed form, involves switching between two languages within a sentence. The lecturers employed this type to clarify complex concepts or provide emphasis. This finding is supported, who suggest that alternation allows instructors to adapt their language to meet the needs of learners, particularly when explaining difficult topics (Rini, 2021). Students in this study appreciated this technique as it helped them grasp the content more effectively. Congruent lexicalization, as observed in the classroom interactions, refers to the blending of elements from both languages that share similar lexical forms and grammatical structures. This practice, in line highlights the lecturers' linguistic flexibility and encourages an inclusive classroom environment (Siddiq et al., 2020). By integrating familiar structures and terms, lecturers created a more accessible and relatable learning context. The final form, involving pronunciation changes, was less frequent but still significant. In this strategy, lecturers adapted the pronunciation of English words to better align with Indonesian phonological patterns. Argues that such adaptation aids students in processing information more easily (Hardianto, 2017). The findings of this study support this view, as pronunciation changes helped students with varying language abilities follow lessons more clearly. The study also explored the effects of code mixing on various aspects of the teaching and learning process, including learning comprehension, student behavior, cognitive development, and affective factors. In terms of learning, the findings support assertion that code mixing helps understanding in EFL classrooms by providing linguistic support (Al-Asmahi et al., 2022).

Students in this study stated that explanations involving both languages enabled them to absorb updated content more quickly and confidently. This dual-language approach served as an effective tool for clarifying abstract or difficult material. The study found that code mixing

encouraged more active classroom participation. The research noted that students are more inclined to engage in discussions when allowed to use both English and their native language (Bhatti et al., 2018). This study confirms that students felt more comfortable expressing ideas and asking questions when code mixing was used, leading to more dynamic and inclusive class interactions. The findings are consistent with the study who emphasized the role of code mixing in helping learners process complex ideas (Khan et al., 2022). Participants showed improved comprehension and analytical thinking when lessons included both languages. However, the study also uncovered a potential drawback, some students became overly reliant on translations provided by the lecturers, which might inhibit their motivation to explore and understand English independently. Based an affective perspective, the results align with study view that effective language strategies can enhance student motivation (Damayanti et al., 2024). Code mixing was shown to foster a supportive learning atmosphere, especially for students who struggled with full-English instruction. Many participants expressed that they felt more encouraged to learn and less anxious about making mistakes. Nevertheless, the findings also highlighted a cautionary note: if overused, code mixing may lead to reduced student effort in mastering English, as reliance on native language support could diminish the drive for language acquisition.

Conclusion

This study explored the types of code-mixing used by EFL lecturers at the Christian University of Indonesia Toraja and examined its effects on students' learning behavior, cognitive development, and emotional engagement. The findings revealed that lecturers commonly employed four types of code-mixing: insertion, alternation, congruent lexicalization, and pronunciation shifts. These strategies were found to facilitate the understanding of complex content, fill vocabulary gaps, enrich meaning through cultural context, and foster a supportive and emotionally comfortable classroom atmosphere. However, while code-mixing proved pedagogically beneficial, it also introduced unintended consequences. Students began to rely heavily on their lecturers for translation and explanation, which reduced their initiative to engage independently with English. This overdependence may undermine their confidence and autonomy, two essential elements in mastering a foreign language.

Despite its valuable insights, the study had several limitations. It was confined to a single institution, employed a purely qualitative approach, and was conducted over a limited time frame. These constraints limit the generalizability and depth of the findings. The presence of the researcher during classroom observations and potential biases in student interviews also pose threats to data authenticity. Therefore, future research should adopt a broader scope by involving multiple institutions and incorporating mixed-methods approaches. Longitudinal studies are also recommended to examine the long-term effects of code-mixing. Moreover, exploring intervention strategies to strengthen students' independent learning skills is crucial to ensure code-mixing supports rather than hinders language development. Investigating code-mixing across different proficiency levels and digital platforms, as well as examining institutional language policies and lecturer perspectives, will further enrich our understanding of this teaching strategy. Ultimately, such research can contribute to the development of more effective and balanced EFL pedagogical practices.

Acknowledgment

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