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"THE INFLUENCE OF CODE-SWITCHING ON ENGLISH LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY AMONG BILINGUAL UNIVERSITY STUDENTS"

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ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini mengkaji pengaruh penggunaan *code-switching* terhadap kemampuan berbahasa Inggris di kalangan mahasiswa bilingual di Universitas Muhammadiyah Bogor Raya. Dengan menggunakan pendekatan metode campuran (*mixed-method*), data dikumpulkan melalui kuesioner skala Likert, wawancara semi-terstruktur, dan observasi kelas. Temuan kuantitatif menunjukkan bahwa *code-switching* umum digunakan, terutama ketika mahasiswa mengalami kesulitan dalam mengekspresikan diri. Uji korelasi Spearman menunjukkan adanya hubungan positif yang signifikan antara fungsi *code-switching* dan persepsi terhadap kemampuan bahasa Inggris. Selain itu, hasil regresi linier berganda menunjukkan bahwa fungsi *code-switching* secara signifikan berkontribusi terhadap perkembangan bahasa, sementara frekuensinya saja tidak. Data kualitatif mendukung temuan ini dengan menggambarkan bagaimana *code-switching* membantu mahasiswa memperjelas makna, membangun rasa percaya diri, dan menyesuaikan diri dengan konteks sosial. Penelitian ini menyimpulkan bahwa *code-switching*, jika digunakan secara tepat, dapat menjadi alat bantu yang mendukung bagi pembelajar bilingual dalam konteks EFL (English as a Foreign Language).

Kata Kunci: Code-switching, kemampuan berbahasa Inggris, mahasiswa bilingual, pembelajaran bahasa, metode campuran.

ABSTRACT

This study investigates the influence of code-switching on English language proficiency among bilingual university students in Universitas Muhammadiyah Bogor Raya. Employing a mixed-method approach, data were gathered through Likert-scale questionnaires, semi-structured interviews, and classroom observations. The quantitative findings reveal that code-switching is commonly used, especially when students encounter difficulties in expression. The Spearman correlation test shows a significant positive relationship between code-switching function and perceived English proficiency. Furthermore, multiple linear regression indicates that the function of code-switching significantly contributes to language development, while frequency alone does not. Qualitative data support these findings by illustrating how code-switching helps students clarify meaning, build confidence, and adjust to social contexts. The study concludes that code-switching, when used purposefully, can be a supportive tool for bilingual learners in EFL settings.

Keywords: Code-switching, English proficiency, bilingual students, language learning, mixed-method

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INTRODUCTION

In the era of globalization and rapid advancement in higher education, bilingualism has become a common phenomenon, especially in university settings. Students who are learning foreign languages, such as English, often switch between two languages in their daily activities. One of the most frequently encountered linguistic phenomena among bilingual students is code-switching, which refers to the alternation between two languages within a conversation or even within a single sentence. This practice not only reflects the students' linguistic competence but also demonstrates how they adapt to complex communication situations (Zhong, Ang, & Sharmini, 2023).

In the context of learning English as a Foreign Language (EFL), code-switching is often used as both a pedagogical and social strategy. For example, lecturers or students may deliberately switch from English to Indonesian (or vice versa) to clarify meaning, reduce confusion, or build rapport in academic interactions (Aprilianti & Baa, 2024). On the other hand, the use of code-switching may also indicate limitations in mastering English structure or vocabulary, leading to a switch to the mother tongue as a convenient shortcut (Mauliddiyah, Munir, & Mustofa, 2020).

Several studies suggest that code-switching has strategic value in language learning. Fitriyah (2025), for instance, found that students tend to view code-switching used by lecturers as a means of facilitating their understanding of the material. They feel more comfortable and better able to follow the lesson. In other countries, such as China, research by Chen (2024) revealed that students with higher oral proficiency levels show more positive attitudes toward code-switching practices, suggesting that this linguistic flexibility may be an indicator of language competence.

However, not all perspectives on code-switching are positive. There is an argument that excessive language switching may hinder the development of the target language by reducing direct exposure time. This view is supported by several studies that highlight the increased cognitive load experienced by bilinguals in processing two languages simultaneously (Tenés et al., 2023). Therefore, it is important to investigate whether code-switching serves as a supportive strategy or rather an obstacle in improving English language proficiency.

Given the pros and cons of code-switching, and the lack of studies that specifically link the frequency and function of code-switching to the level of English proficiency among bilingual students in Indonesia, this research is relevant. It will not only observe how often and in what contexts code-switching occurs but also assess its impact on various aspects of language skills, both spoken and written. Thus, the findings are expected to offer new insights for developing effective English teaching strategies in bilingual environments.

REASEACH METHOD

This study designed to explore the influence of code-switching on English language proficiency among bilingual university students. To obtain accurate and comprehensive results, a

mixed-methods approach is adopted, as it combines the strengths of both quantitative and qualitative data to deeply analyze linguistic phenomena (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2017). This approach is considered appropriate since code-switching is a language practice that can be both statistically measured and contextually understood from a sociolinguistic perspective. Thus, this research aims not only to explain the relationship between the two variables numerically but also to understand the experiences, perceptions, and social contexts underlying students' use of code-switching.

Source of Data

This study was used primary data collected from students of the English Education Study Program at Universitas Muhammadiyah Bogor Raya. The participants were students who had completed at least the second semester and who were use both Indonesian and English in their daily academic contexts. A purposive sampling method was employed to select participants relevant to the research topic, namely, the influence of code-switching on English language proficiency (Etikan, Musa, & Alkassim, 2016).

In addition, secondary data was obtained from supporting documents such as course syllabi, video transcripts of classroom interactions, and English proficiency test results (particularly in speaking and writing), provided by the department with official permission. These data were used to strengthen the analysis and support triangulation of the research findings (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Data Collection

This research was adopted a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative and qualitative methods to gain a comprehensive understanding of the code-switching phenomenon (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2017).

For the quantitative data, a five-point Likert-scale closed-ended questionnaire was used, covering three main aspects: the frequency of code-switching, perceptions of its functions, and self-assessed English proficiency. The questionnaire was distributed to around 45 students through google form methods. Content validity was ensured through expert judgment, and reliability was tested using Cronbach's Alpha (Taber, 2018).

For the qualitative data, semi-structured interviews were conducted with 4 selected participants. These interviews aimed to explore students' reasons, contexts, and perceptions regarding code-switching in academic and social situations. Additionally, non-participant classroom observations were carried out to record the actual practice of code-switching during teaching interactions. This method is effective for capturing the natural dynamics of language use (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

Data Analysis

Quantitative data was analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics were used to illustrate the frequency and distribution of code-switching. Spearman correlation analysis

was applied to examine the relationship between code-switching frequency, function and students' English proficiency scores (Field, 2018). There was a significant relationship were found, regression analysis was conducted to determine the extent to which the independent variable affects the dependent variable.

Meanwhile, qualitative data was analyzed using thematic analysis as developed by Braun and Clarke (2006). This procedure involved six steps: data transcription, thorough reading, initial coding, theme identification, theme review, and result reporting. This method allowed the researcher to identify patterns of meaning in the narrative data and to interpret the social and linguistic meanings behind bilingual students' use of code-switching. To enhance credibility, methodological triangulation was conducted by comparing findings from the questionnaire, interviews, and observations. This step was intended to ensure the reliability and validity of the research findings (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter presents the findings of the study along with their interpretation and analysis. The aim is to answer the research questions regarding the influence of code-switching on English language proficiency among bilingual university students. The results are divided into two parts: quantitative findings obtained from the questionnaire and qualitative findings derived from semi-structured interviews and classroom observations.

The quantitative data are described using descriptive and inferential statistics, illustrating the frequency of code-switching, students' perceptions of its function, and the correlation between code-switching and English proficiency. The qualitative data are analyzed thematically to reveal deeper insights into students' reasons for code-switching and the contexts in which it occurs.

The discussion integrates these findings with relevant theories and previous studies to provide a comprehensive understanding of how code-switching may support or hinder language development. This chapter not only highlights the patterns and trends observed in the data but also explores their pedagogical and linguistic implications in bilingual academic

Table 1. The Frequency of code-switching

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
1. I often mix Indonesian and English when speaking	45	3.56	.813
2. I use code-switching when finding difficulties saying something in one language	45	3.40	1.031
3. In academic interaction, I feel comfortable using the code-switching	45	3.27	.986
4. I use code-switching in daily speaking	45	3.00	.953
Valid N (listwise)	**45**		

Based on Table 1, the frequency of code-switching among bilingual university students varies across different communicative contexts. The statement **"I often mix Indonesian and English when speaking"** received the highest mean score of **3.56** (SD = 0.813), indicating that many respondents regularly mix Indonesian and English during conversations. This suggests that code-switching is a common practice in their daily communication.

The second-highest mean is **3.40** (SD = 1.031) for the statement **"I use code-switching when finding difficulties saying something in one language"**, showing that students often rely on code-switching as a compensatory strategy when experiencing language limitations. The statement **"In academic interaction, I feel comfortable using the code-switching"** follows with a mean of **3.27** (SD = 0.986), reflecting a moderate level of comfort in using code-switching during academic interactions. Meanwhile, the lowest mean score is **3.00** (SD = 0.953) for **"I use code-switching in daily speaking"**, suggesting a relatively lower frequency of code-switching in casual conversations compared to academic contexts. This is in line with the interview result which indicates the highlight of the frequency of code-switching in students' academic process.

"Yes, several times in daily conversations." – Respondent 1.

"Very often, usually during classroom presentations or conversations with friends who also commonly use English." – Respondent 2.

"Often, I frequently do code-switching during presentations." – Respondent 4.

Table 2. The Function of code-switching

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
5. I use code-switching to affirm a word or a sentence	45	3.64	.908
6. Code-switching helps me express an idea effectively	45	3.64	.802
7. Code-switching improves my self-confidence when speaking	45	3.62	.834
8. I use code-switching for self-adjustment to others	45	3.58	.917
Valid N (listwise)	**45**		

Table 2 presents students' perceptions regarding the **functions** of code-switching. The statements **"I use code-switching to affirm a word or a sentence"** and **"Code-switching helps me express an idea effectively"** both yielded the highest mean score of **3.64**, with standard deviations of 0.908 and 0.802 respectively. These findings indicate that students perceive code-switching as a practical and helpful tool in enhancing clarity and expressiveness in communication.

The next statement, **"Code-switching improves my self-confidence when speaking"**, received a mean of **3.62** (SD = 0.834), suggesting that code-switching contributes positively to students' self-confidence in speaking. Lastly, the statement **"I use code-switching for self-adjustment to others"** obtained a mean of **3.58** (SD = 0.917), showing that students also see code-switching as a strategy for social adaptation and interpersonal alignment. The result above supported by the interview result were conducted as follow.

"In my opinion, it is very effective in supporting the English learning process because by using it, I feel more confident to improve my English." – Respondent 1.

"It tends to support the learning process because some lecturers who use English or code-switching in class help make the learning absorption more effective." Respondent 2.

"It is very helpful because it makes learning English and memorizing English vocabulary easier." – Respondent 3.

"In my opinion, the use of code-switching can be helpful at the early stages of learning and in certain situations. …" – Respondent 4.

Table 3. The Self – assessment of Language Proficiency

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
9. I use code-switching to affirm a word or a sentence	45	3.64	.908
10. Code-switching helps me express an idea effectively	45	3.64	.802
11. Code-switching improves my self-confidence when speaking	45	3.62	.834
12. I use code-switching for self-adjustment to others	45	3.58	.917
Valid N (listwise)	**45**		

Table 3 presents students' self-perceptions of how code-switching affects their English language proficiency. These items focus on how students believe code-switching contributes to the **development of their language skills**, rather than merely its function in communication.

The statements **"I use code-switching to affirm a word or a sentence"** and **"Code-switching helps me express an idea effectively"** both received the highest mean score of **3.64**, with standard deviations of 0.802 and 0.908, respectively. These high scores suggest that students perceive code-switching as a **cognitive bridge** that allows them to access and organize linguistic knowledge more clearly when formulating English expressions. This perception indicates that code-switching is not seen as a hindrance, but rather as a support mechanism that aids in **language processing and clarity**, especially when students encounter lexical or syntactic limitations.

The item **"Code-switching improves my self-confidence when speaking"** also received a high mean score of **3.62** (SD = 0.834). This implies that for many students, the ability to alternate between languages during communication **boosts their self-confidence**, particularly in oral expression. This confidence likely stems from the reduced anxiety associated with making mistakes, as code-switching provides a safety net when struggling to find appropriate English words or expressions.

Additionally, the statement **"I use code-switching for self-adjustment to others"** garnered a mean score of **3.58** (SD = 0.917), showing that students perceive code-switching as a **socially adaptive strategy**. This suggests that they are aware of the need to adjust their language depending on the listener's background, comprehension level, or context, which is an essential component of

pragmatic language proficiency. Some interview results also emerged some positive perspective of students' code-switching.

> "Very good, as it helps train understanding in using English." – Respondent 1.
> "Yes, it can affect my self-confidence. By using code-switching, I feel more confident because it helps make a sentence clearer." – Respondent 2.
> "Yes, I feel that code-switching really helps boost my confidence in using English. When lecturers or friends use code-switching, I don't feel as afraid of making mistakes because the atmosphere feels more flexible." – Respondent 3.

Overall, the consistently high mean scores across all four items indicate that students generally view code-switching as a **facilitative tool** in their English language development. Rather than impeding their progress, it appears that code-switching helps students become more fluent, articulate, and socially responsive in their use of English. These perceptions align with current pedagogical perspectives that recognize code-switching as a **legitimate learning strategy** in multilingual settings, especially for learners still navigating the complexities of a second language.

The normality test

After getting the mean score using Fifth Likert Scale, the researcher used a normality test from the Kolmogorov-Smirnova to see whether the data followed a normal distribution. The result of the normality test can be seen in the table.

Table 4. Tests of Normality used One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov

		Total.X1	Total.X2	Total.Y
N		45	45	45
Normal Parameters[a,b]	Mean	13.22	14.49	14.87
	Std. Deviation	2.883	2.769	2.793
Most Extreme Differences	Absolute	.131	.173	.124
	Positive	.131	.137	.067
	Negative	-.092	-.173	-.124
Test Statistic		.131	.173	.124
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)		.052[c]	.002[c]	.079[c]

To determine whether the data in this study followed a normal distribution, a **Kolmogorov–Smirnov one-sample test** was conducted on the three main variables: Total.x1 (frequency of code-switching), total.X2 (function of code-switching), total Y (English language proficiency)

The results showed that for the first variable The Frequency of Code-switching was 0.052 which is greater than 0.05, indicating that the data for this variable is normally distributed. The second variable The Function of Code-switching, the significance value was 0.002 which is less than 0.05,

suggesting that this data is not normally distributed. The third Language Proficiency, the significance value was 0.079, which is greater than 0.05, indicating that this data is also normally distributed.

Based on these results, only one variable the function of code-switching violated the assumption of normality. Therefore, since at least one variable was **non-normally distributed**, the researcher appropriately used a **non-parametric correlation test**, namely **Spearman's rho**, for the next stage of analysis.

Table 5. Spearman Correlation Analysis

			Total.X1	Total.X2	Total.Y
Spearman's rho	Total.X1	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.567**	.487**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000	.001
		N	45	45	45
	Total.X2	Correlation Coefficient	.567**	1.000	.572**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.	.000
		N	45	45	45
	Totax.Y1	Correlation Coefficient	.487**	.572**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	.000	.
		N	45	45	45

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

To examine the relationship between the frequency and function of code-switching and students' English language proficiency, a **Spearman's rank-order correlation** was conducted. The results are as follows:

1. The correlation coefficient between **frequency of code-switching** and **language proficiency** was **0.487**, with a **p-value of 0.001**. This shows a **moderate and significant positive correlation**. It implies that students who reported using code-switching more frequently also tended to rate their English proficiency more highly.
2. The correlation between **function of code-switching** and **language proficiency** was even stronger, with a **coefficient of 0.572** and a **p-value of 0.000**. This indicates a **strong and significant positive relationship**, meaning that students who perceived code-switching as functional (e.g., for clarification, confidence, or adaptation) also tended to believe they had better English proficiency.
3. Additionally, there is a **positive correlation of 0.567** between **frequency (X1)** and **function (X2)** of code-switching, with **p = 0.000**, indicating that students who switch languages more often also tend to recognize more functions or benefits from doing so.

All three correlations are significant at the **0.01 level**, confirming the robustness of the relationships observed.

Multiple Linear Regression Test

Table 6. Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.627[a]	.393	.364	2.227

Based on the result above R = 0.627, this shows a significant correlation between independent variables (Frequency & Function) with dependent variable (Language Proficiency). R square = 0.393, which is indicated 39% that variety in students' language proficiency are affected by frequency and function of code-switching factors.

Table 7. ANOVA

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	134.864	2	67.432	13.594	.000[b]
	Residual	208.336	42	4.960		
	Total	343.200	44			

F value = 13.594 with significancy (p-value) = 0.000 shows that, the model regression is significant in statistic. It means, both independent variables are significantly affected to the student's English language proficiency.

Table 8. Coefficients

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	5.309	1.865		2.847	.007
	Frequency of code-switching	.193	.153	.199	1.261	.214
	Function of code-switching	.484	.159	.480	3.044	.004

It can be described from the table above as follow:

1. Constan = 5.309, which is meant if frequency and function of code-switching = 0, means the prediction value of students'English language proficiency is 5.309.
2. The frequency of code-switching has a significancy value 0.214, greater than 0.05, indicating that this variable particularly was not significantly affected to students'English language proficiency in this model.
3. The function of code-switching has B value = 0.484 and p-value = 0.004, less than 0.005, indicating that the function of code-switching has significantly positive through students' English language proficiency.

Based on the output of multiple linear regression test, it's implied the regression model is statistically significant overall, with the two predictor variables explaining 39.3% of the variation in English language proficiency. The frequency of code-switching does not have a significant direct

effect on English language proficiency. The function of code-switching (such as clarifying meaning, boosting self-confidence, and adapting to conversation partners) has a significant and positive effect, which means that the higher the students' perception of the functions of code-switching, the higher their self-reported English language proficiency.

Discussion

The findings of this study affirm that code-switching is not only prevalent among bilingual students but also serves a meaningful function in their language development. From a descriptive standpoint, most students frequently use code-switching, especially in academic interactions and when encountering lexical or syntactic difficulties. This behavior aligns with previous research which suggests that code-switching often functions as a strategy for managing linguistic limitations while maintaining communication fluency (Chen, 2024).

The positive correlations found in the Spearman analysis indicate that students who perceive more functional value in code-switching also tend to rate their English proficiency higher. In particular, functions such as clarifying meaning, boosting confidence, and adapting to conversational partners were identified as key benefits. These results support Fitriyah (2025) who noted that students find code-switching helpful for understanding lessons and enhancing their communicative confidence.

Regression analysis further revealed that only the function of code-switching significantly influenced students' self-reported English proficiency. This suggests that the benefit of code-switching lies not merely in its frequency but in how strategically it is employed. The finding reinforces Aprilianti and Baa's (2024) conclusion that pedagogical code-switching enhances comprehension and learner engagement.

Qualitative data provided richer context, confirming that students deliberately switch codes to clarify complex ideas or vocabulary gaps, especially in academic discourse. Some participants reported feeling more confident and less anxious when allowed to switch between languages. These responses echo the social-pragmatic view of code-switching as a flexible tool for adjusting speech based on audience, topic, and communicative goals (Zhong et al., 2023).

Taken together, these findings challenge the notion that code-switching hinders language acquisition. Instead, they present a nuanced view: that purposeful and context-aware code-switching can reinforce linguistic competence and socio-communicative adaptation. Educators in EFL contexts may thus consider integrating code-switching as a strategic tool, rather than discouraging it entirely.

CONCULSION

This study concludes that code-switching plays a significant and positive role in the development of English language proficiency among bilingual university students. While the

frequency of code-switching alone does not significantly influence language ability, its functional use contributes meaningfully to students' perceived proficiency. Students use code-switching as a strategy to manage communication challenges, clarify ideas, boost self-confidence, and align with social dynamics in academic settings.

The study highlights the pedagogical value of code-switching and suggests that rather than being viewed as a barrier, it can be embraced as a facilitative practice in EFL environments. Future research should explore long-term impacts of code-switching on actual performance-based proficiency and consider its role in different cultural and linguistic contexts.

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