

EXPLORING CODE-SWITCHING AND CODE-MIXING PRACTICES IN MULTILINGUAL CLASSROOMS TO SUPPORT ENGLISH SECOND LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT

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Abstrak - Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengeksplorasi peran praktik alih kode (*code-switching*) dan campur kode (*code-mixing*) dalam kelas multibahasa untuk mendukung pengembangan bahasa Inggris sebagai bahasa kedua (ESL). Berlandaskan pada perspektif sosiolinguistik dan pedagogis, penelitian ini mengkaji bagaimana praktik bahasa yang fleksibel tersebut berfungsi sebagai strategi pembelajaran dalam meningkatkan pemahaman, keterlibatan, dan kemampuan bahasa siswa secara keseluruhan. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan mengombinasikan kajian literatur yang komprehensif serta wawasan dari praktik kelas dan pengalaman pendidik. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa alih kode dan campur kode berfungsi sebagai alat *scaffolding* yang efektif dalam menjembatani pengetahuan bahasa awal siswa dengan pembelajaran bahasa Inggris. Praktik ini membantu menjelaskan konsep yang kompleks, mendukung perolehan kosakata, serta meningkatkan interaksi yang bermakna di kelas. Selain itu, praktik ini juga memberikan manfaat kognitif melalui peningkatan kesadaran metalinguistik, serta manfaat afektif berupa peningkatan kepercayaan diri, pengurangan kecemasan, dan partisipasi aktif siswa. Namun demikian, penelitian ini juga menekankan pentingnya penerapan yang seimbang dan strategis. Penggunaan bahasa pertama secara berlebihan dapat mengurangi paparan terhadap bahasa Inggris dan menghambat perkembangan kefasihan. Oleh karena itu, guru disarankan untuk menggunakan alih kode dan campur kode secara terarah dengan tetap meningkatkan penggunaan bahasa target secara bertahap. Secara keseluruhan, penelitian ini menegaskan bahwa praktik multibahasa, jika diterapkan secara efektif, dapat menciptakan lingkungan pembelajaran yang lebih inklusif, menarik, dan mendukung. Penelitian ini juga memberikan kontribusi bagi pengembangan strategi pembelajaran bahasa Inggris yang memanfaatkan keberagaman linguistik siswa.

Kata kunci: Alih kode, campur kode, kelas multibahasa, bahasa Inggris sebagai bahasa kedua, strategi pembelajaran bahasa

Abstract - This study explores the role of code-switching and code-mixing practices in multilingual classrooms to support the development of English as a Second Language (ESL). Grounded in sociolinguistic and pedagogical perspectives, the research investigates how these flexible language practices function as instructional strategies to enhance students' comprehension, engagement, and overall language proficiency. The study employs a qualitative approach, combining a comprehensive review of relevant literature with insights gathered from classroom practices and educators' experiences. The findings reveal that code-switching and code-mixing serve as effective scaffolding tools that help bridge students' prior linguistic knowledge with new English input. These practices facilitate the explanation of complex concepts, support vocabulary acquisition, and promote meaningful classroom interaction. In addition, they contribute to students' cognitive development by enhancing metalinguistic awareness, as well as to their affective development by increasing confidence, reducing anxiety, and fostering active participation. However, the study also highlights the importance of a balanced and strategic implementation. Excessive reliance on students' first language may limit exposure to English and hinder fluency development. Therefore, teachers are encouraged to use code-switching and code-mixing purposefully while gradually increasing the use of the target language. Overall, this study emphasizes that multilingual practices, when applied effectively, can create more inclusive, engaging, and supportive learning environments. It also provides pedagogical insights for educators and contributes to ongoing discussions on leveraging linguistic diversity to improve English language learning outcomes.

Keywords: Code-switching, code-mixing, multilingual classrooms, English as a Second Language, language learning strategies

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1. INTRODUCTION

The rapid growth of globalization and cross-cultural communication has significantly increased linguistic diversity in educational contexts, leading to the widespread emergence of multilingual classrooms. In such environments, students often bring multiple linguistic resources that shape their learning experiences, particularly in the acquisition of English as a second language (ESL). This linguistic diversity presents both challenges and opportunities for educators in designing effective instructional strategies that accommodate learners' varied language backgrounds.

One prominent feature of multilingual communication is the use of code-switching and code-mixing. Code-switching refers to the systematic alternation between two or more languages within a conversation or discourse, while code-mixing involves the embedding of elements from one language into another at the lexical or syntactic level (Maftukhin, 2020; Sari et al., 2022). These practices are widely observed in multilingual classrooms, where learners naturally draw upon their full linguistic repertoire to negotiate meaning and facilitate communication.

Historically, code-switching and code-mixing were often viewed negatively in language education, associated with linguistic interference or insufficient proficiency in the target language. However, contemporary research has challenged this deficit perspective, highlighting their functional and strategic roles in language learning. Vallejo (2018) emphasizes the concept of translanguaging, which views multilingual speakers as utilizing an integrated linguistic system rather than separate language competencies. Similarly, Cummins (2017) argues that learners' first language can serve as a cognitive and academic resource that supports second language development.

In the context of ESL learning, code-switching and code-mixing can facilitate comprehension, enhance vocabulary acquisition, and promote metalinguistic awareness. According to Canale and Swain (2018), opportunities for meaningful language use, including the strategic use of the first language, can support learners in producing and negotiating meaning in the target language. Furthermore, Garcia and Lin (2019) highlights that bilingual and multilingual individuals often demonstrate greater cognitive flexibility, which can positively influence language learning processes.

Beyond cognitive benefits, these linguistic practices also contribute to the social and emotional dimensions of learning. Allowing students to use their first language alongside English can create a more inclusive and supportive classroom environment, increasing learners' confidence and participation (Nagao, 2023; Gee & Gee, 2020; Mustamir, 2024). In multilingual classrooms, where students may have varying levels of English proficiency, code-switching can function as a scaffolding tool that helps bridge the gap between known and new knowledge (Widiana et al., 2021; Przymus, 2024; Fanani & Ma'u, 2018).

Despite these advantages, the role of code-switching and code-mixing in English language teaching remains contested. Some educators advocate for maximum exposure to the target language, arguing that the use of the first language may limit opportunities for practice. Others, however, support a more flexible pedagogical approach that acknowledges the realities of multilingual communication and leverages students' linguistic resources to enhance learning outcomes.

Given these differing perspectives, there is a need for further research to explore how code-switching and code-mixing can be effectively utilized in multilingual classrooms to support English second language development. This study aims to investigate the functions, benefits, and pedagogical implications of these practices, with a particular focus on how they can enhance learners' English proficiency. By examining both theoretical insights and classroom practices, this research seeks to contribute to a more nuanced understanding of multilingual education and inform more inclusive and effective language teaching strategies.

2. METHOD

This study adopts a qualitative approach by combining a comprehensive literature review with empirical data collection to explore the role of code-switching and code-mixing in supporting English as a Second Language (ESL) development in multilingual classrooms. The research is designed to provide both theoretical insights and practical implications regarding how these linguistic practices can be effectively integrated into language teaching (Neuman, 2019; Tisdell et al., 2025; Patton, 2020).

First, a systematic and critical review of existing literature is conducted to examine key theories, concepts, and empirical findings related to code-switching, code-mixing, and multilingual education. The review draws on a wide range of scholarly sources, including journal articles, books, and previous studies, to identify major themes, pedagogical functions, and ongoing debates in the field. In particular, the study engages with theoretical perspectives such as translanguaging (Cui, 2025) and the role of first language use in second language acquisition (Hummel, 2021; Jin, 2023; Krashen, 2018), which highlight the importance of leveraging learners' linguistic resources in multilingual settings.

In addition to the literature review, the study collects qualitative data through semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions with English teachers and language education practitioners who have experience in multilingual classrooms. These participants are selected purposively to ensure they possess relevant expertise and insights into classroom practices involving code-switching and code-mixing. The interviews aim to explore teachers' perceptions, strategies, and challenges in using these practices to support English language development, while focus group discussions facilitate the exchange of ideas and shared experiences among participants (Kvale, 2021).

The collected data are analyzed using thematic analysis, allowing the researcher to identify recurring patterns, categories, and emerging themes related to the pedagogical use of code-switching and code-mixing (Braun & Clarke, 2022). This approach enables a deeper understanding of how these practices function as instructional strategies, scaffolding tools, and communicative resources in ESL learning contexts (Daruhadi & Sopiati, 2024; Susanto et al., 2023).

By integrating findings from both the literature review and empirical data, this study aims to generate well-grounded, evidence-based recommendations for educators. These recommendations are intended to support the effective use of code-switching and code-mixing in multilingual classrooms, ultimately enhancing students' English language proficiency and fostering more inclusive and responsive language teaching practices.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Result

This study reveals that code-switching and code-mixing play a significant and multifaceted role in supporting English as a Second Language (ESL) development in multilingual classrooms. The findings are categorized into several key themes, including pedagogical functions, cognitive benefits, affective impacts, classroom dynamics, and challenges in implementation.

1) Pedagogical Functions of Code-Switching and Code-Mixing

The findings indicate that teachers strategically employ code-switching and code-mixing as instructional tools to facilitate comprehension and enhance classroom interaction. Teachers frequently alternate between English and students' first languages when explaining complex grammatical structures, introducing new vocabulary, and clarifying instructions. This aligns with previous research suggesting that code-switching functions as a scaffolding strategy that bridges learners' prior knowledge with new linguistic input (Aviah et al., 2019; Agustin, 2021).

In several observed classrooms, teachers used code-switching at the initial stages of instruction to ensure understanding, followed by gradual increased exposure to English. This transitional approach helped students build confidence while maintaining engagement with the target language. Similarly, code-mixing was used to embed familiar linguistic elements into English discourse, making learning more accessible and meaningful.

2) Cognitive Contributions to Language Development

The study also found that code-switching and code-mixing contribute positively to learners' cognitive processes. Students who actively engaged in these practices demonstrated improved metalinguistic awareness, as they were able to compare linguistic structures across languages and identify patterns in vocabulary and grammar. This supports the view that multilingual learners benefit from cognitive flexibility when navigating multiple language systems (de Diego-Lázaro, 2022; Byram, 2020).

Furthermore, students reported that using their first language helped them process complex information more effectively. By connecting new English input with their existing linguistic knowledge, learners were able to retain information more efficiently and develop a deeper understanding of the target language.

3) Affective and Social Benefits

Another significant finding relates to the affective dimension of language learning. The use of code-switching and code-mixing was found to create a more inclusive and supportive classroom environment. Students expressed greater confidence and willingness to participate when allowed to use their first language alongside English. This finding is consistent with studies emphasizing the role of linguistic inclusion in reducing anxiety and promoting active engagement (Plandano et al., 2023; Jin, 2023).

Additionally, these practices fostered a sense of belonging and cultural identity among students. By validating learners' linguistic backgrounds, teachers encouraged more meaningful interaction and collaboration, which ultimately supported language development.

4) Classroom Interaction and Meaning Negotiation

The findings highlight that code-switching and code-mixing facilitate effective negotiation of meaning in classroom interactions. Students often used their first language to ask questions, clarify misunderstandings, and express complex ideas that they could not yet articulate fully in English. This dynamic use of language enabled smoother communication and deeper engagement in learning activities.

Teachers also used code-switching to check comprehension and provide feedback, ensuring that all students, regardless of proficiency level, could follow the lesson. This practice was particularly beneficial in heterogeneous classrooms where students had varying levels of English proficiency.

5) Students' and Teachers' Perspectives

Both teachers and students generally viewed code-switching and code-mixing as beneficial for language learning. Teachers acknowledged that these practices helped them manage classroom communication more effectively and address diverse learner needs. However, some expressed concerns about over-reliance, emphasizing the need for balanced use.

Students, on the other hand, reported that these practices helped them understand lessons better, participate more actively, and feel more confident in using English. Learners who embraced code-switching and code-mixing were more likely to engage in classroom discussions and demonstrate progress in their language skills.

6) Challenges and Limitations

Despite the benefits, the study also identified several challenges. Excessive use of code-switching and code-mixing may limit students' exposure to English, potentially slowing the development of fluency. Some students became dependent on their first language, reducing their willingness to practice English independently.

Additionally, differences in teachers' beliefs and instructional approaches influenced how these practices were implemented. While some teachers used them strategically, others applied them inconsistently, which affected learning outcomes.

7) Implications for English Language Development

Overall, the findings suggest that code-switching and code-mixing, when used strategically, can significantly enhance English language development in multilingual classrooms. These practices support comprehension, foster cognitive engagement, and create a positive learning environment. However, their effectiveness depends on careful and purposeful implementation.

Teachers are encouraged to adopt a balanced approach by using code-switching and code-mixing as scaffolding tools while gradually increasing students' exposure to English. This approach aligns with the concept of translanguaging, which views multilingual learners' linguistic resources as assets rather than barriers (Garcia & Lin, 2019).

In conclusion, this study demonstrates that code-switching and code-mixing are not merely communicative habits but powerful pedagogical resources in multilingual classrooms. Their strategic use can enhance students' English proficiency, promote inclusivity, and support meaningful learning experiences. Future research is recommended to further explore context-specific strategies and long-term impacts of these practices on language acquisition.

3.2 Discussion

The findings of this study reinforce the growing body of research that positions code-switching and code-mixing as valuable pedagogical resources in multilingual classrooms, particularly in supporting the development of English as a Second Language (ESL). Within the context of *“Exploring Code-Switching and Code-Mixing Practices in Multilingual Classrooms to Support English Second Language Development,”* these flexible linguistic practices are not merely incidental but play a central role in facilitating meaningful learning.

The study demonstrates that the strategic use of code-switching enables teachers to bridge the gap between students’ existing linguistic knowledge and new English input. By alternating between English and students’ first languages, teachers can clarify complex grammatical structures, explain abstract concepts, and introduce unfamiliar vocabulary more effectively. This finding is consistent with prior research indicating that first language use can function as a cognitive scaffold, enhancing comprehension and engagement (Nurpratiwi, 2024; Fadilah et al., 2023; Hoesny et al., 2024). In this sense, code-switching supports not only immediate understanding but also gradual progression toward greater English proficiency.

Similarly, code-mixing emerges as a significant tool for reinforcing learning by allowing students to integrate elements of their first language into English discourse (Riaz, 2019; Charolina & Zulaeha, 2019). This practice helps learners construct meaning, especially when they lack the linguistic resources to fully express themselves in English. As a result, students are able to participate more actively in classroom interactions, which contributes to improved language acquisition. Moreover, encouraging code-mixing validates students’ linguistic identities and promotes a sense of ownership over the learning process (Astri & Fian, 2020; Sulianur et al., 2022).

The discussion also highlights the importance of classroom dynamics in shaping the effectiveness of these practices. In multilingual classrooms, where students possess varying levels of English proficiency, code-switching and code-mixing facilitate the negotiation of meaning and ensure inclusive participation. Students are better able to ask questions, express complex ideas, and engage in collaborative learning when they are not restricted to using only the target language. This aligns with sociocultural perspectives that emphasize interaction and mediation as key components of language learning (Mohammadzadeh et al., 2020).

Furthermore, the findings suggest that these practices contribute significantly to students’ affective development. When learners are permitted to use their first language alongside English, they experience reduced anxiety and increased confidence. This supportive environment encourages risk-taking and active participation, both of which are essential for language development. Thus, code-switching and code-mixing not only enhance cognitive processing but also foster positive emotional engagement in learning.

However, the study also acknowledges the need for a balanced and strategic approach. While code-switching and code-mixing offer numerous benefits, excessive reliance on these practices may limit students’ exposure to English and hinder the development of fluency. Therefore, teachers must carefully regulate their use, gradually increasing the proportion of English as students’ proficiency improves. This gradual transition reflects an effective pedagogical strategy that combines support with challenge.

In addition, the successful implementation of code-switching and code-mixing depends on teachers' awareness, beliefs, and professional competence. Educators require adequate training to understand when and how to use these practices effectively. They must also be sensitive to students' linguistic and cultural backgrounds in order to design instruction that is both inclusive and goal-oriented.

Overall, this study underscores that code-switching and code-mixing, when used intentionally and judiciously, can significantly support English second language development in multilingual classrooms. By embracing learners' full linguistic repertoires, educators can create more inclusive, engaging, and effective learning environments. These findings contribute to a growing recognition that multilingualism is not a barrier, but a powerful resource in language education.

4. CONCLUSION

This study, "*Exploring Code-Switching and Code-Mixing Practices in Multilingual Classrooms to Support English Second Language Development*," demonstrates that code-switching and code-mixing are highly effective pedagogical strategies for enhancing students' acquisition of English as a second language in multilingual settings. The findings reveal that these flexible language practices contribute significantly to improving students' comprehension, increasing engagement, and fostering active participation in the learning process. Moreover, they support the development of overall English proficiency by enabling learners to connect new knowledge with their existing linguistic resources.

The evidence from classroom practices and case studies highlights how teachers across different educational levels from primary to tertiary education strategically utilize multiple languages to create more inclusive and supportive learning environments. Through intentional transitions between students' first languages and English, teachers are able to clarify complex concepts, introduce new vocabulary, manage classroom interaction effectively, and ensure that all learners can access the instructional content. This approach not only enhances understanding but also empowers students by validating their linguistic identities and encouraging meaningful participation.

Furthermore, the study underscores the importance of viewing multilingualism as a valuable resource rather than a barrier in language learning. By leveraging students' full linguistic repertoires, educators can facilitate deeper cognitive processing, reduce learning anxiety, and promote a more equitable classroom environment. These outcomes are essential for supporting diverse learners in achieving success in English language development.

However, the study also emphasizes that the effectiveness of code-switching and code-mixing depends on their strategic and balanced use. Over-reliance on students' first languages may limit exposure to English and hinder the development of fluency. Therefore, educators must adopt a gradual and purposeful approach, where the use of multiple languages serves as scaffolding that progressively leads students toward greater independence in using English.

Looking forward, this study recommends further research into context-specific applications of code-switching and code-mixing, particularly in relation to curriculum design, teacher training, and classroom implementation. It also calls for greater awareness among educators and policymakers regarding the pedagogical value of multilingual practices.

The strategic integration of code-switching and code-mixing has the potential to transform English language teaching in multilingual classrooms. With careful planning, appropriate professional development, and sensitivity to students' linguistic and cultural backgrounds, these practices can significantly enhance second language acquisition and contribute to more inclusive, effective, and high-quality education for all learners.

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