



Is Code-Mixing Needed in English Teaching Process?: EFL Teacher's Experience

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Abstract

Abstract: This research investigates the EFL teacher's perspective on using code-mixing in EFL classes. The research design used narrative inquiry to uncover the story of the English teacher's experience in using code-mixing, and a personal narrative was conducted by interview as an instrument to collect data. The collected data were analyzed by transcribing and coding. The results of the study indicate that the teacher still needs code-mixing because it depends on the teaching method and the curriculum approach. The teacher utilizes code-mixing based on the student's skills, the material being taught, and the class circumstance during the teaching and learning process.

Keywords: *code-mixing, experience, teacher's perspective.*

Abstrak

Abstract: Penelitian ini menyelidiki perspektif guru Bahasa Inggris sebagai Bahasa asing (EFL) menggunakan *code-mixing* (campur kode) di kelas EFL. Peneliti ini menggunakan narative inquiry sebagai design untuk mengungkapkan kisah pengalaman guru Bahasa Inggris dalam menggunakan *code-mixing* dan wawancara sebagai instrument untuk mengambil data. Data yang terkumpul dianalisis dengan mengtranskrip hasil wawancara dan diberi kode. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa *code-mixing* masih diperlukan oleh guru karena bergantung pada metode pengajaran dan pendekatan kurikulum. Guru membutuhkan *code-mixing* berdasarkan kemampuan siswa, jenis materi yang diajarkan, dan keadaan di kelas ketika proses belajar mengajar berlangsung.

Kata kunci: *code-mixing, campur kode, pengalaman, prespektif guru.*

INTRODUCTION

Teaching in a multilingual society is different from teaching in a monolingual situation. For instance, teaching English in Indonesia is one of the phenomena in which many students use more than one language; Indonesian, local or traditional language, and English. So, teaching in a multilingual society can produce code when doing the teaching process. The code refers to a system of words, letters, figures, or symbols substituted for the word or letter. There are many codes. One of them is code-mixing which mixes two or more language varieties in the speech (Sutrisno & Ariesta, 2019). It is also stated by Nicoladis (2012) that code-mixing refers to a multilingual or a bilingual that uses two or more languages in a single unit of discourse, for instance, a

word, an utterance, or a conversation. Agus Rahmat (2020) stated that code-mixing is the consequent phenomenon of language contact and an essential feature of a multilingual society. Most teachers in multilingual situations use code-mixing during the teaching and learning process. This code is beneficial for teachers and students, especially in English classes.

According to Bonyadi et al., (2021), using code in the classroom can take two forms. First, as part of the curriculum approach, the code became the method of teaching activity. The last is for teacher strategy with bilingual students who lack English skills. Ramadhaniarti et al., (2018) said that achieving teaching goals can use code-mixing, a necessary tool for teachers when delivering the materials, making them more comprehensible to students. Furthermore, code-mixing became why teachers made learning easy to understand because of students' poor English proficiency (David & Su-Hie, 2009). Undoubtedly, code-mixing helped students to enjoy learning due to their ability to comprehend the teachers' input. The comprehensible input allowed them to feel comfortable and less stressed.

Meanwhile, teachers had a favourable view of code-mixing but had a negative view of the effect on student's performance and potential academic fields (Park-Johnson, 2020). Students' performance becomes the influence of the teaching and learning activity. If the teacher always mixes the conversation in the class, it will confuse students on grammar. The negative impact of code-mixing was also founded by Berthele (2012); he said that using code-mixing in the class can negatively influence the assessment outcomes, which is on linguistics skills and the general academic potential of the students. Moreover, the cons also came from Li (2008), code-mixing being socially constructed as bad language behavior. It can be said that there are pros and cons to using code-mixing in English class. So, the researcher wants to find out whether code-mixing is still needed for teaching English based on the teacher's experience (narrative inquiry) when he taught English in an EFL class. Narrative inquiry in English teaching gives a detailed description of the English teacher's lived experience, and it allows to help us "understand language teaching and learning from the perspectives of teachers and learners" in ways that other research designs and approaches cannot do (Barkhuizen, Benson & Chik, 2014).

Several previous researchers were concerned about code-mixing; first, Jiang et al., (2014) investigated code-mixing practices, Chinese as the L1 and English as L2. This research indicated that code-mixing preparations made by the teacher served five pedagogical functions, with all the functions being to increase the student's ability. Next is Alhamami (2020), who researched switching language varieties. The research focused on using code varieties in Saudi hospitals as a multilingual circumstance, and the result was positive using code-switching and code-mixing to increase work efficiency. The gap between the two previous studies is in the function of code-mixing. In China, code-mixing is the preparation method for improving students' skills.

Meanwhile, in Saudi hospitals, a worker's ability to use the language. Both of them have a positive impact on utilizing code-mixing. Next, researchers Novianti & Said (2021) investigated code-switching and code-mixing in English Teaching and learning. The result identified the kinds of code that researchers found; for instance, they used alternation and insertion in code-mixing. This research adds kinds of code that teacher always uses in the classroom that was a gap. Otherwise, Park-Johnson (2020) researched teachers' attitudes and beliefs about code-mixing. The result showed that code-mixing could negatively impact students' performance and ability. Based on previous studies, there were positive and negative impacts of using code-mixing.

In this late study, the researcher wants to determine the teacher's perception based on teaching experience about code-mixing in English classes where this research contributes theoretical significance regarding code-mixing that occurs in Indonesia, especially in the teaching and learning process. Through this research, it can be a way to provide more information and reasons why code-mixing is still needed and used by the teacher. This research will figure out the following:

1. What is the teacher's perspective on using code-mixing in EFL class based on the teacher's experience?

RESEARCH METHOD

I use narrative inquiry with a focus on studying a single person in reporting individual experiences and discussing the meaning of the experience (Creswell, 2012). This design allows the present research to closely investigate the participant's point of view through his experience applying code-mixing in an English classroom.

This study was initiated from constructive dialogue between me myself, Dina as the researcher, and one of the English teachers, Iqbal (pseudonyms), who has much experience in teaching English for all grades, such as teaching English for elementary school, junior high school, senior high school, English teacher for SBMPTN/UTBK/UMPTN Test (the test for entering university), TOEFL/TOEIC tutor, IELTS tutor, teaching English for AKPOL and AKMIL, and as the Academic Coordinator at English Academy Indonesia. He also obtained a C1 level of ITP TOEFL in his English proficiency and graduated with a master's degree in English education. It became the consideration for the selection of a participant who is interested in this research to find out his experience. Besides the consideration of participant selection, Iqbal and I have known each other for more than eight years. So, Iqbal is the collaborator in this research.

In collecting the data, a semi-structured interview adopted by Bonyadi et al., (2021), was used in this research. An intimate zoom meeting was served in Bahasa Indonesia to build trust between Iqbal and me. In-depth data lasted for one hour, in which Iqbal shared his detailed and nuanced experiences in teaching English. For the data analysis, this study was centered on Clandinin and Connelly (2000) narrative inquiry space that focuses on interaction, continuity, and situation. Interaction refers to the narrative's personal and social nature; continuity looks at past, present, and future experiences and situations.

Table 1. A semi-structured interview was adopted by Bonyadi et al., (2021):

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1. Do you practice code-mixing while teaching in the classroom?
 2. Which language do you usually switch to?
 3. What types of code-mixing are you practicing in the classroom?
 4. During which period of classroom time do you usually practice code-mixing?
 5. In which activities do you usually practice code-mixing more?
 6. Why do you resort to code-mixing in the classroom?
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RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The research findings are the narration given by the teacher, which I have summarized as the researcher. Those narrations will be divided into two topics: 1) the teacher's experience in teaching English as Foreign Language and 2) the teacher's experience with using code-mixing while teaching English.

1. Teacher's experience in Teaching English as Foreign Language

Iqbal is a young teacher because he started to teach in 2015 when he was in bachelor's degree. The motivation for teaching came from his lecture. Because of that, he tried to teach English, and until now, he has been a teacher at one of the Islamic universities in Bandung. He teaches English in the language center, and many students from any level become his students. Besides, he also still teaches in other classes, such as teaching formal education and informal education. Although he teaches many levels and different students skills, he believes he can give the best method for students to understand English materials.

"I was afraid to teach because I thought teaching was not simple. If people are afraid to teach, they must know that teaching is not an activity we can or cannot do. The correct one, teaching is about the students understanding what we have taught." -Iqbal.

Starting from his belief, he underlined that the key to teaching is the method or way he will deliver the material to students. Because every student has a different character, different skills, and different necessities to learn English, the English teacher should solve all the differences with his teaching method in the classroom.

"I have tried to teach all the levels since 2015. I taught in formal education, such as elementary, junior, senior, and vocational high school until university. I also taught in informal education like English courses, English preparation tests such as TOEFL, IELTS, English for entering University tests, etc. I have tried to teach all levels of English, and it has been a good experience because I can know how to teach differently. For me, myself, what I like most is teaching for preparation tests." -Iqbal.

Teaching is everything to him because he wants to help students learn about English. He believed that English was the key to achieving the goal. If every student had a good English teacher, he assumed everyone could understand English well.

2. Teacher's experience with using code-mixing while teaching English

Based on his experiences, so many stories he obtained from teaching and learning English. Teaching English as a foreign language automatically always uses another language, such as the local and national languages (Bahasa Indonesia). He usually mixes the language unconsciously or consciously conditions. Sometimes, he combines the word using Sundanese as the local language and Bahasa Indonesia when teaching and learning activities. This phenomenon also happens to other teachers. According to Agus Rahmat (2020), most teachers in multilingual situations use code-mixing when teaching and learning activities in English classes.

"Again, I teach not only in formal education but also in informal education. Let us say that when I teach in English for a preparation test, most students want to improve their English proficiency scores. So, I will use code-mixing while explaining the materials. The reason why I use code is for students' understanding." -Iqbal.

His statement told that code-mixing he used as the teaching technique; for example, he used code-mixing in the reading part. He had a purpose for translating words that students did not understand or clarifying new vocabulary. Bonyadi et al., (2021) stated that there are two forms when teachers use code in the class; the curriculum necessary and the teaching method. Every teacher has a reason for using code-mixing in English class. Brice (2000) also supports the use of code-mixing in the class. He stated that there are two forms of using code-mixing: First, part of a curriculum plan in approaching instruction or spontaneous language use. Usually, the use of code in curriculum occurs in bilingual education. Second, code-mixing is a transition language technique, especially in English instruction. Therefore, what Iqbal does in code-mixing is indeed what the teacher usually does.

“Also, I was teaching in formal education, such as senior high school. I always use code-mixing because I follow the curriculum approach.” -Iqbal.

In formal education, besides using code-mixing because of the curriculum approach, He also used code-mixing due to students' different skills. He wanted to make sure that the students understood the material or not, and code-mixing could help students to improve their understanding of English. Ramadhaniarti et al., (2018) stated that using code-mixing can help achieve teaching goals, make students understand the materials, and enjoy the teaching and learning process.

However, when Iqbal was teaching in a speaking class, whether the students were coming from different levels and skills, he minimized the use of code-mixing. He believed that, in the speaking class, everyone should speak in full English. All the activities used English, such as giving feedback to the students, replying to the student's opinions, and students interactions also used full English. In this circumstance, He suggested that code-mixing should be avoided or perhaps minimized the code because it will give advantages to students' ability to speak. Park-Johnson (2020) also said that using code-mixing can negatively impact students, especially in communication. Using code-mixing can influence the bad language behavior of students (Li, 2008).

Meanwhile, Peregoy & Boyle (2013) stated that code-mixing could positively impact students. Teachers who facilitate teaching and learning using L1 or mix the language will build confidence, security, motivation, and friendship. So that the students are more comfortable setting in which they can speak freely with no strict rules of English-only policy. This condition has motivated affirmation for code that is very helpful for teachers and students in the classroom. In addition, Jiang et al., (2014) said that code-mixing practices made and prompted by the teacher could increase five pedagogical functions. These increase students' bilingual and multilingual learning, review and consolidate content taught in all English, facilitate the cross-linguistic transfer, and foster an understanding of cross-culture. For the negative impact according to Sridhar, cited in (Brown, 2006), the negative impact is a sign of laziness, sloppiness, and lack of competency. If code is consistently implemented in classroom activities, it will be afraid that more disadvantages may affect students' communication. The teacher can solve the problem by distributing the language use 50/50 in L1 and L2, and alternation must be unconscious.

One question was coming up to give Iqbal's opinion about code-mixing “is code-mixing still needed for English teaching and learning activity?”. Iqbal believed that code-mixing could be used depending on the subject, the goal of learning English, and the circumstance.

“I will say yes and no for the code-mixing is still needed for teaching English because it depends. For example, when I teach in an advanced class in informal education and the goal is for public speaking, absolute I cannot use code-mixing in my class. In contrast, when I teach English in formal education, in senior high school, all the students have different skills in English, and the goal is to achieve the curriculum. It will be used code-mixing for teaching English in that class”. -Iqbal

Iqbal believed that code-mixing would still be used in teaching and learning. Sometimes, he uses code-mixing for methods that make a class interactive and make a joke by mixing Sundanese as the local language. This statement is interesting and highlights that code-mixing can be used to entertain students. Iqbal believes that code-mixing can have a positive impact on students' activity.

CONCLUSION

Code-mixing is a phenomenon in a multilingual society where everyone is always using code-mixing when speaking. One of the code-mixing phenomena is in the teaching and learning process, especially in English class, where the teacher or students always mix the code when speaking English in class. The use of code-mixing has a positive impact and a negative impact on students' abilities.

Based on Iqbal's story about using code-mixing when teaching English that code-mixing is indeed unavoidable when teaching in class. This is due to various aspects, such as the uneven abilities of students, the achievement of learning competencies in the curriculum that must be achieved, the class conditions that require code-mixing, and the methods used by the teacher. However, he can also refrain from using code mixing when teaching at a high level or in materials that are not taught to use code mixing, such as speaking class. Therefore, the use of code-mixing can be adapted by a teacher, whether it should be used or not in class.

This study has pedagogical implications: 1) the importance of teachers in determining whether to use code-mixing or not in class, 2) the importance of using code-mixing, which has a positive impact on student's skills, and 3) the importance of students understanding using code-mixing in teaching and learning process. Subsequently, the limitation of this study is only one story of the teacher's experience using code-mixing in the class without any analyze the kinds of code-mixing that the teacher always finds in the class. So, some recommendations can be considered by the further researcher are: 1) the teacher should try to solve the negative impact of code-mixing on the student's skills and abilities, 2) the researcher should try to find out the type of code-mixing that teacher and students always use in teaching and learning activity, and 3) adding more than two participants to get more deeply story of their experiences.

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