

Code Switching of Preservice EFL Teachers in the Classroom at SMKN 1 Mataram

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze the types of code-switching, the underlying factors, and the stages of English lessons in which code-switching occurs in an EFL classroom. This research employs a descriptive qualitative method. Data were collected through classroom teaching videos involving two preservice teachers, as well as brief interviews to support deeper understanding of classroom practices. The data were analyzed through processes of transcription, identification, classification, and interpretation, based on the frameworks proposed by Poplack (1980) and Hoffman (1991). The findings indicate that three types of code-switching were utilized. Intra-sentential switching emerged as the most dominant type, followed by inter-sentential switching, while tag switching was the least frequently used. Furthermore, repetition for clarification was identified as the primary factor influencing code-switching, followed by discussing particular topics and the desire to ensure comprehension. In addition, code-switching was often used as a pedagogical strategy to facilitate students' understanding and engagement. It was observed to occur across almost all stages of the English lesson, including opening, explanation, practice, and closing activities.

Keywords

code switching, preservice teachers, EFL classroom

INTRODUCTION

In multilingual and bilingual speech community, it is very rare and even difficult to find someone who only uses one language to communicate. People often switch and mix their first language with other languages, such as national languages, regional languages and foreign languages. This phenomenon is known as code switching. According to Poplack (1980), code switching is the alternation between two or more languages within a single conversation, sentence, or discourse without violating the grammatical rules of either language. We can see people do code switching in family domain, friendship domain, religion domain, government domain, and also in education domain when teaching English as a foreign language at school (Holmes, 2013).

In Indonesia, teaching English is essential at all educational levels. It is due to the fact that the globalization is contemplated to force English as a precondition. English and Indonesian are very different in terms of vocabulary, grammar, sentence structure, and even pronunciation. These differences can create significant challenges for students in learning English, potentially leading to frustration. Therefore, English teachers including the preservice teachers have a very important role in helping students face these challenges. In order to convey information and knowledge effectively while teaching and helping students acquire English, the teacher must communicate with them clearly (Hadhanah et al., 2023).

Preservice teachers, described as those who engaged in teacher preparation programs before becoming certified educators (Kennedy, 1999), also have the same role. Preservice teachers must be able to prepare themselves to help students deal with the challenges and existing gaps that

occur due to differences in language proficiency levels. In a process to be a good and real teacher, a preservice teacher must also understand his or her role as the key source of input to learners. This input is important in the language acquisition process because it helps students understand the structure, comprehension, and use of language in meaningful contexts.

Preliminary observations at SMKN 1 Mataram revealed that preservice teachers frequently employed code switching during English lessons. One preservice teacher frequently alternated languages to facilitate students' understanding, while another applied code switching more selectively, using it only to clarify instructions or vocabulary. Both acknowledged its usefulness in supporting comprehension but emphasized the need for moderate use to avoid students' overreliance on the first language. These situations reflect the real challenges faced by preservice teachers in maintaining English as the medium of instruction while ensuring students' understanding. Code switching can be a useful pedagogical strategy to facilitate comprehension. but it may prevent students' English development if overused.

Several studies have examined the use of code switching in EFL classrooms. Flores and Balmeo (2021) found that preservice teachers viewed code switching as an effective strategy to support students with low English proficiency, although excessive use could lead to overdependence on the first language. Similarly, Ulfah et al. (2021) and Munawaroh et al. (2022) identified various types, factors, and pedagogical functions of code switching in English teaching. However, most of these studies focus on inservice English teachers or on general classroom interaction, with limited attention given to how preservice

teachers apply code switching during actual teaching practice, particularly across different stages of classroom instruction. Therefore, this study seeks to address this gap.

In order to increase the relevance and contextual understanding, this study aims to analyze and describe the types of code switching, factors influencing the use of code switching, and also at which stages of learning, such as greetings, checking attendance, and beginning the lesson (Hughes, 1989; Willis, 1971), preservice teachers use code switching.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research employed a descriptive qualitative research design to analyze the code switching practices of preservice teachers in EFL classroom. According to Cresswell (2009), qualitative method is a method used to explore and comprehend the meanings that individuals or groups assign to a social or human issue. This research focused on describing the collected data to get a comprehensive understanding of the types of code switching, factors of code switching, lesson stages where code switching was used.

This study used multiple sources of qualitative data, including audio and visual materials type and also interview (Cresswell, 2009). The data in this research were videos of two preservice teachers who did the teaching practice in EFL classroom uploaded on YouTube on November 27, 2024 and on March 1, 2025 (reuploaded).

The data collection started with the researcher asked for video links from preservice teachers selected as subjects of this study. Afterwards, the researcher watched the videos to analyze the videos then. In order to facilitate the process of analyzing the existing data, the researcher transcribed the videos. The transcription process was conducted carefully to ensure that every utterance are accurately documented. The researcher also conducted small interviews with preservice teachers to enrich and support the data regarding the factors behind the occurrence of code switching during the teaching process in the classroom.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

After gathering the data using the data instruments and doing the data analysis, there are some several findings about code switching used by two preservice teachers who conducted their teaching practice at SMKN 1 Mataram in academic year 2024/2025. The presentation of findings is organized based on the research questions: (1) What types of code switching are used by preservice teachers in EFL classroom?, (2) What factors that influence the use of code switching by preservice teachers in EFL classroom?, and (3) At which stages of English lesson is code switching mostly used by preservice teachers in EFL classroom?

1. Types of Code Switching used by Preservice Teachers

This section presents the types of code switching identified in classroom interactions performed by the two preservice teachers, referred to as Preservice Teacher 1 (T1) and Preservice Teacher 2 (T2). The analysis focuses on three types of code switching according to Poplack (1980). Those are tag switching, intra-sentential switching, and inter-sentential switching. Table 1 and 2 provide an overview of how each type of code switching appears in the data.

No.	Types of CS	Data	Percentage
1.	Tag Switching	2	5,71%
2.	Intra-sentential S	24	68,58%
3.	Inter-sentential S	9	25,71%
TOTAL		35	100%

Table 1 Percentage of Types of Code Switching (PT1)

No.	Types of CS	Data	Percentage
1.	Tag Switching	2	4,55%
2.	Intra-sentential S	33	75%
3.	Inter-sentential S	9	20,45%
TOTAL		35	100%

Table 2 Percentage of Types of Code Switching (PT2)

Based on the analysis of code-switching types used in the EFL classroom, the data in Table 1 indicate that PT1 most frequently used intra-sentential switching with the total 68.58%. This was followed by inter-sentential switching at 25.71%, while tag switching appeared as the least used type, comprising 5.71% of the data. Meanwhile, as shown in Table 2, PT2 shows a pattern similar to PT1 in terms of the most frequently used type of code switching. Intra-sentential switching appears as the dominant type used by PT2 with the total 75%. This is followed by inter-sentential switching at 20.45%, and tag switching is the least frequent category, accounting for 4.55% of the overall data.

2. Factors of Using Code Switching

This section reports the several factors that influenced the preservice teachers to switch between languages, English and Indonesian during classroom instruction. The analysis focuses on several key factors adapted from Hoffman’s (1991) theory. According to him, those factors are talking about particular topic, being emphatic, repetition for clarification, and desire to be well understood. An overview of the code switching factors used by PT1 and PT2 can be found in Table 3 and Table 4.

No.	Factors of CS	Data	Percentage
1.	Talking about particular topic	10	28,57%
2.	Being emphatic	1	2,86%
3.	Repetition for clarification	16	45,71%
4.	Desire to be well understood	8	22,86%
TOTAL		35	100%

Table 3 Percentage of Factors of Code Switching (PT1)

No.	Factors of CS	Data	Percentage
1.	Talking about particular topic	17	38,64%
2.	Being emphatic	1	2,27%
3.	Repetition for clarification	20	45,45%
4.	Desire to be well understood	6	13,64%
TOTAL		44	100%

Table 4 Percentage of Factors of Code Switching (PT2)

An analysis of the factors influencing code switching use reveals distinct patterns in the classroom practices of PT1 and PT2. According to Table 3, PT1 applied code switching most frequently for repetition aimed at clarifying meaning with the total 45.71%. The second most dominant factor was talking about particular topic, accounting for 28.57%, followed by desire to be well understood, which appeared 22.86%, and being emphatic is the least frequent category, accounting for 2,86% of the overall data. On the other hand, based on Table 4, the most frequent factor was repetition for clarification with the total 45.45%. This is followed by talking about particular topic with 38.64%, the desire to be well understood with total 13.64%, while being emphatic factor remained the least prevalent with only 2.27% appeared.

3. Code Switching in Different Stages of English Lesson

It has been found in chapter two that there are several stages of lesson in the classroom. Those stages are greetings, checking attendance, beginning the lesson, stating objectives, presenting new material, textbook activity, giving feedback, reviewing the lesson, and closing. The findings of this study show that code switching occurred at several stages of the English lesson with varying frequency across each phase. In PT1's classroom practice, code switching appeared in nearly all instructional stages. The most dominant pattern was Stage 3 (equally used English and Indonesian) the total four times, followed by Stage 2 (use more English) appeared three times and Stage 5 (no Indonesian used at all) was found twice. When greeting and closing the lesson, it was seen that full English interaction was limited to formal classroom expressions.. Meanwhile, the results of the data analysis from PT2 showed that across all lesson stages, the most frequent language pattern was Stage 3 which appeared four times, followed by Stage 4 occurred twice, while Stage 2 and Stage 5 each appeared once, primarily in brief classroom routines. No stage involved full Indonesian use. It shows that English was consistently present even when code switching occurred.

Discussion

The findings indicate that both preservice teachers showed similar patterns in how they shifted between English and Indonesian, although the frequency of each type varied slightly. The dominant use of intra-sentential switching can be seen when both teachers combined English and

Indonesian within a single sentence to deliver explanations without interrupting the flow of instruction. From the examples below, it can be seen that English and Indonesian appear together to keep the explanation flowing while making sure students understand. Both preservice teachers tended to alternate languages across full sentences when shifting the tone of instruction or stressing a point.

Datum #8 of PT 1: *"Itu bisa jadi report text kalau kalian tulis dia dengan structure piece of writing jadi terstruktur nulisnya"*

Datum #4 of PT 2: *"So, before we start our lesson, sebelum kita mulai pelajaran hari ini tentang report text, kakak mau nanya nih,"*

On the other hand, tag switching appeared only occasionally and was mostly used for brief confirmation rather than for delivering substantial content. For examples,

Datum #5 of PT1: *"Yang menyampaikan informasi, ok."*

Datum #3 of PT2: *"Bagi yang dipanggil namanya bilang present ya artinya hadir, ok?"*

These examples indicate that while all three types were present, their distribution reflects different communicative purposes.

After identifying and categorizing the types of code switching used by the preservice teachers, the discussion now moves beyond classification to a deeper analysis of how and why these types appeared during classroom interaction. The findings show that both preservice teachers used code switching mainly to support students' understanding, although the frequency of each factor differed slightly. The most dominant factor for both PT1 and PT2 was repetition for clarification. This finding indicates that the students could understand the meaning more easily. It can be seen from these examples.

Datum #6 of PT1: *"So, report text is a structured piece of writing that presents factual information. Dia menyajikan informasi yang faktual atau fakta"*

Datum #2 of PT2: *"So now I will check your attendance. Saya akan periksa absensi kalian"*

The second most frequent factor was talking about a particular topic. Both preservice teachers switched languages when discussing material that required specific explanation, especially when introducing academic terms or concepts. Desire to be well understood also appeared in both classrooms when preservice teachers purposely adjusted their language to match students' comprehension needs, especially during explanation or instruction delivery. The examples are,

Datum #19 of PT1: *"Jadi, di report text yang kalian terima tadi ada dua informasinya, ada general ada detail"*

Datum #38 of PT2: *"People who makes books apa namanya?"*

Being emphatic was the least used factor for both preservice teachers. This finding shows that code switching was rarely used just to express emotion, urgency, or emphasis. Instead, the overall pattern indicates that code switching was primarily driven by pedagogical needs rather than emotional expression. For example, when PT1 stated *"Ok, boleh maju ke depan"* (**Datum #24 of PT1**). The word "Ok" serves as a marker of emphasis and direct students' attention to the action to be taken.

After discussing the types and functions of code switching, it is also important to examine when it most frequently occurs during the teaching process. Both PT1 and PT2 used code switching most often when explaining lesson content to support student understanding. During the delivery of learning objectives and explanation of lesson content, the highest use of code switching for both teachers was found in Stage 3 (equally used English and Indonesian). This indicates that both preservice teachers tended to combine the two languages when presenting complex information to maintain clarity while still exposing students to English input. These are the examples of both preservice teachers's utterances when they presented new material to students.

Datum #5 of PT1: "So, report text is a structured piece of writing that presents factual information. *Dia menyajikan informasi yang faktual atau fakta*"

Datum #5 of PT2: "***So, what is report text? Report text is a text that contain information about something in general based on research, ok. Jadi, report text itu merupakan teks yang berisi informasi tentang sesuatu yang sifatnya umum yang berbasis sebuah research ya.***

The difference between the two preservice teachers appeared in classroom management and task instructions. PT2 used more Stage 4 (use more Indonesian) when explaining assignments. Meanwhile, PT1 used more Stage 2 (use more English) for the interactions such as checking attendance and giving feedback. Both teachers rarely used Stage 5 (no Indonesian used at all). They only appeared in short classroom expressions such as greetings and closing the lesson. Nevertheless, English was not delivered in a completely pure form. Both preservice teachers used small Arabic insertions for opening and closing the class. For examples,

Datum #1 of PT1: "*Assalamu'alaikum warahmatullahi wabarakatuh. Good afternoon, everyone.*"

Datum #9 of PT2: "*You're welcome. Wassalamu'alaikum warahmatullahi wabarakatuh.*"

CONCLUSION

The purpose of this study was to examine the types, factors, and stages of code-switching used by preservice teachers in the EFL classroom. The results revealed that both preservice teachers frequently employed code-switching in their teaching, with intra-sentential switching as the most dominant type. Inter-sentential and tag switching appeared less frequently, indicating more limited use in classroom interaction. The findings also showed that the use of code-switching was influenced by several factors, particularly the need to clarify meaning, emphasize important points, and ensure students' understanding of the material.

Additionally, code-switching occurred in almost all stages of the English lesson, although the proportion of English and Indonesian varied depending on the classroom situation and instructional purpose. These findings suggest that code-switching can function as a supportive instructional strategy when used appropriately according to students' proficiency levels. Therefore, preservice teachers are encouraged to apply code-switching purposefully to facilitate comprehension while maintaining meaningful exposure to English in the classroom.

For future research, it is recommended to involve a larger number of participants and diverse educational contexts to obtain more comprehensive findings. Future researchers are also encouraged to explore the impact of code-switching on students' learning outcomes and language proficiency development.

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