



THE USE OF CODE MIXING IN ELT: A CASE STUDY

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the phenomenon of code mixing in English Language Teaching (ELT) at SMP IT Al Hasanah Prabumulih, focusing on the types, frequency, and pedagogical relevance of its use in the classroom. Conducted between December 2023 and June 2024, this qualitative descriptive research utilized classroom observations and interviews to collect data. The findings indicate that both teachers and students employed three main types of code mixing: intra-sentential, intra-lexical, and phonological variation. Among these, intra-sentential code mixing emerged as the most dominant. Teachers perceived code mixing as an effective instructional strategy that supports vocabulary acquisition and facilitates learner comprehension, especially in a multilingual setting. Theoretically, this study enhances the understanding of code mixing as a communicative and instructional resource within ELT contexts. Practically, the findings offer valuable implications for educators, suggesting that code mixing, when used strategically, can bridge linguistic gaps and increase classroom engagement. Future research is recommended to further examine the long-term effects of code mixing on language proficiency and to explore its application in other educational settings. Additionally, comparative studies across different school levels and regions may yield broader insights into the pedagogical potential of code mixing.

Keywords: *Code Mixing, English Language Teaching, and Teacher Perceptions.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Language is inherently intertwined with human behavior, serving as a fundamental medium through which individuals express thoughts, emotions, intentions, and desires. As Garcia & Lin (2019) affirms, language cannot be separated from human behavior because it is the most deeply embedded tool of interpersonal interaction. Verbal communication is a primary mechanism by which people articulate internal states and engage socially. Supporting this view, Rahma (2023) notes that language use is a universal feature of human society, as all communities strive to use language effectively in everyday communication—including Indonesian society.

Indonesia represents a multilingual society shaped by its vast ethnic diversity. Various ethnic

groups, such as the Batakese, Minangnese, and Palembang Malays, each possess their own regional languages, which contributes to a broader sociolinguistic ability among Indonesians to communicate in multiple tongues. Zein et al. (2020) highlights that Indonesians are accustomed to navigating a multilingual environment due to their cultural heritage and linguistic traditions. This is further supported by Arhire (2023), who reports that the country is home to over 652 native languages, making multilingualism a defining characteristic of Indonesian identity. As a result, many Indonesians not only speak local and national languages but also engage with global languages like English.

In contemporary society, the phenomenon of code mixing has become increasingly prevalent, particularly in digital spaces such as social media and mass media, as well as in face-to-face communication. The blending of languages especially between Indonesian and English is now commonly observed across various sectors of society, including among public figures, students, and the general population. Gee & Gee (2020) emphasize that this linguistic trend reflects both the global influence of English and the adaptive communicative strategies of multilingual speakers in modern Indonesian society.

The researcher also observes that code mixing frequently emerges within the academic environment, particularly in higher education settings. As an English Education student, the researcher often finds themselves blending languages Indonesian and occasionally others during various academic activities such as classroom discussions, seminars, and both formal and informal events. Given Indonesia's rich linguistic landscape, with over 652 local languages, it is unsurprising that most Indonesians are exposed to and engage in multilingual practices. This multilingual exposure naturally encourages the acquisition of English as an international language, especially in the context of globalization and digital communication.

Today, English is recognized globally as the dominant international language. Davis and Tahrnun (2022) affirm that English is widely adopted for cross-cultural and international communication. Crystal (2018) reinforces this by presenting two key reasons for English's global status: first, it is taught and institutionalized outside its native-speaking countries, and second, it is used extensively across numerous nations. Graves (2019) highlights that English learning is often driven by practical purposes such as economic opportunities and global communication. Thus, acquiring English as a foreign language has become a priority for many.

In Indonesia, this trend is institutionalized through educational policy. As stated by Lesia Viktorivna et al. (2022), English has been designated a mandatory

subject by the Indonesian government, introduced from junior high school through university levels. Aisah et al. (2023) also emphasize the necessity for students and educators to actively engage in English language learning, developing core competencies in speaking, listening, reading, and writing. Among these, speaking is a critical skill, as it allows individuals to express opinions and emotions. According to Brown and Yule (2017), speaking facilitates interpersonal interaction and is deeply embedded within social and educational contexts. One effective method to enhance speaking skills, particularly among EFL learners, is through code mixing.

Febriyanti (2023) points out that language learners often employ code mixing as a strategy to bridge gaps in vocabulary and fluency. In classroom contexts, particularly in English Language Teaching (ELT), teachers and students frequently integrate Indonesian and English during instruction and discussions. This blending supports comprehension and clarity. As Charolina and Zulaeha (2019) notes, code choice often reflects a desire to communicate more effectively. Phrases such as "open your Latihan on page two" or "please kecilkan your sound" illustrate how code mixing functions in real classroom discourse. These instances occur when teachers acknowledge that some students may lack sufficient English vocabulary, prompting the intentional use of code mixing to facilitate understanding and engagement. Preliminary observations also reveal that in certain contexts, educators mix English, Indonesian, and even regional dialects like Palembangnese during instruction, employing various types of code mixing throughout the class session.

Several prior studies support the role of code mixing in language learning. Riaz (2019) demonstrated that code mixing can positively influence both teaching and learning outcomes in ESL settings. Fitria (2022) argued that integrating code mixing into ELT allows learners to express ideas more comfortably, providing clearer instructions and emphasizing key points. Similarly, Astri and Fian (2020) identified five main reasons for teachers' use of code mixing: enhanced clarity, improved student

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comprehension, increased enjoyment, diverse student backgrounds, and variations in language proficiency.

In alignment with contemporary linguistic trends, many individuals are motivated to learn foreign languages to enhance their productivity and global competence. Maftukhin (2020) highlight that code mixing may reflect a speaker's motivation to be more linguistically productive. Among the four core language skills reading, writing, listening, and speaking speaking is often prioritized by students for its immediacy and utility in expressing ideas. However, as Saptiany & Prabowo (2024) cautions, neglecting authentic language exposure can hinder the development of speaking proficiency. This challenge underscores the importance of communicative practices, including code mixing, in fostering effective language acquisition beyond the mother tongue.

Motivated by these observations and supported by a range of theoretical perspectives, the researcher is driven to explore the phenomenon of code mixing within the English teaching and learning process. This inquiry culminates in the present study, titled "Code Mixing in ELT: A Case Study at SMP IT Al Hasanah Prabumulih". The research aims to identify the types of code mixing utilized by teachers and students, examine the functions and benefits of such practices in the ELT classroom, and investigate the underlying reasons for their use. Additionally, the study seeks to capture the teacher's perceptions of students' use of code mixing. As noted by Novianti and Said (2021), code mixing holds the potential to enhance students' language skills by providing accessible entry points into English learning. Ultimately, this research aspires to offer meaningful contributions to ELT methodologies and serve as a valuable reference for future studies, supporting educators and learners in recognizing the role of code mixing in shaping effective language education, both within and beyond the classroom.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Bilingual

In initiating and reviewing a research study, it is essential to establish a strong theoretical foundation to prevent misinterpretation between the researcher and the readers. To strengthen the basis of this study, several key terms must be discussed to ensure a shared understanding of the topic.

According to Rojo-Ramos et al. (2025), humans are inherently social beings who live in circles such as families, neighborhoods, or communities. Within these social environments, language plays a crucial role in communication. In fact, language is a fundamental tool used by people around the world to carry out daily interactions (Veto Mortini et al., 2023). Jaya et al. (2025) also asserts that one of the main functions of language is to enable communication.

The intersection between language and society is the primary concern of sociolinguistics. As noted by Sukrisna (2019), sociolinguistics focuses on language as a means to build and maintain social relationships, as well as to signify group membership within different speech communities. Various linguists have provided definitions and insights into this field.

Cardona (2022) defines sociolinguistics as the study of the characteristics of language variation, the functions of language, and the features of language speakers who continuously interact within speech communities. Rajend (2019) describe sociolinguistics as an interdisciplinary field that merges concerns of linguistics (grammar) with those of social sciences. Trudgill (2019) sees sociolinguistics as the study of language within its social and cultural contexts. Similarly, Wardaugh and Fuller (2021) explain that sociolinguistics investigates the relationship between language and society to better understand the structure of language and the allocation of its functions in communication.

From these definitions, it can be concluded that sociolinguistics is a branch of linguistics that focuses on the relationship between language and society. Etymologically, the term combines "social," referring to society, and "linguistics," referring to language. According to Sukrisna

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(2019), sociolinguistics comprises three primary characteristics: (1) language variation, (2) language function, and (3) language speakers. These elements interact dynamically, meaning that the language used within a community can continuously change or evolve.

Sociolinguistics also explores how individuals use language to interact in their daily lives. It emphasizes that language is not only a system of symbols but also a social phenomenon through which humans relate to each other, forming and reflecting group identities. Every society thus has distinct linguistic characteristics that define how its members communicate.

One prominent topic within sociolinguistics is bilingualism and multilingualism. In many parts of the world, individuals frequently use more than one language (or code) in different social situations. Charolina and Zulaeha (2019) explains that individuals who use more than one code in interaction are considered bilingual or multilingual, depending on the number of languages used. According to Garcia and Lin (2019), the term "bilingualism" is derived from the prefix bi- (meaning two) and lingua (from Latin, meaning tongue or language), and thus literally means having two languages.

Although the basic meaning of bilingualism is consistent across definitions, there are various interpretations. Hoffman (2019) defines bilingualism as the ability of individuals or social groups to effectively use two or more languages in daily life. Waode (2015) describes it as the ability to speak two languages for communicative purposes. Bialystok (2024) expands this by stating that bilingualism refers to an individual's capacity to access and use two or more languages in different contexts, noting that this ability can begin to develop in childhood.

Tsan et al. (2023) explain that a bilingual person typically masters a native language and another language used for communication in specific contexts. Fishman (2020) adds that bilingualism can occur not only at the individual level but also within families or communities, emphasizing that as social beings, people frequently use more

than one language in both formal and informal interactions.

According to Sukirman (2021), the term "bilingualism" in English corresponds to *kedwibahasaan* in Indonesian, referring to the ability of individuals to communicate using two languages in their daily lives. Ardianta (2019) distinguishes bilingualism from multilingualism, which refers to the ability to speak more than two languages. While the concepts are similar, the main difference lies in the number of languages spoken and the contexts in which they are used.

There are generally three main reasons why individuals become bilingual: membership, education, and administration. European aristocratic societies, French was historically used to signify elite membership. Baker (2019) states that bilingual education enhances cultural understanding, improves language skills, and offers social and economic advantages. For instance, Indonesians, Germans, Dutch, and Scandinavians often use English in academic, technological, and business settings. In many social contexts, bilingualism is a practical necessity rather than a special skill.

In conclusion, sociolinguistics provides a theoretical framework for understanding how language functions within society, while bilingualism and multilingualism highlight the practical realities of language use in a diverse and interconnected world. These concepts are essential for understanding the dynamics of communication in multilingual communities and for analyzing how language reflects and shapes social identities.

In the context of bilingual competence there are different levels of language use. The levels can be categorized into several terms based on ability to use them. Bilingual competence is adjusted to categories according to the level of proficiency in the two languages. The types are explained below:

Balanced Bilingual

According to (uprayogi et al. (2024), individuals who demonstrate equal

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proficiency in two languages across various linguistic domains such as vocabulary, grammar, and overall language competence are referred to as balanced bilinguals. These individuals are capable of functioning at comparable levels in both languages in diverse contexts. In contrast, a dominant bilingual, as described by Suharyo and Nurhayati (2021), exhibits greater proficiency in one language depending on the context and purpose of communication. For instance, a person may prefer using a second language in academic or professional settings despite having a different native language.

The term passive bilingual, to individuals who understand two languages but actively use only one. This often results from reduced exposure or limited need to use the other language, eventually leading to a gradual decline in proficiency. Such situations are common among migrants or students who primarily engage in one language outside of formal learning environments.

Semi-lingualism or limited bilingualism characterizes individuals with inadequate language skills in both languages. Semi-lingual individuals often show limited vocabulary, incorrect grammar, reduced ability to express emotions and thoughts, and a lack of spontaneity or creativity in language use. This condition typically stems from limited exposure, insufficient formal education, or dominance of one language in daily interactions. However, these limitations are not fixed and can improve over time with increased practice and targeted learning.

In bilingual or multilingual societies, the phenomena of code switching and code mixing are common. These occur when bilingual speakers alternate or blend elements of two or more languages within a conversation—particularly code mixing, which is the primary focus of this research.

Code mixing

Code mixing is a common linguistic phenomenon in bilingual and multilingual communities, particularly in countries like Indonesia where cultural and linguistic diversity is widespread. As noted by Astri and Fian (2020), the blending of languages in

daily communication is natural and frequently observed in Indonesian society, where languages such as Javanese, Batak, Indonesian, and English coexist and interact fluidly. This practice often emerges in informal interactions, but is also increasingly evident in formal settings like classrooms, social media, and professional discourse. According to Chan and Fugard (2018), the act of alternating between languages has become normalized as a strategy to facilitate communication, express identity, or adapt to social contexts.

Scholars define code mixing as the insertion of linguistic elements from one language into another within a single utterance or sentence. Wardaugh and Fuller (2021) describes it as a switch that occurs within a single communicative instance, where a speaker blends lexical items or grammatical structures from two distinct languages. Similarly, a linguistic symptom where different language varieties are mixed in the same clause. This linguistic blending may result from bilingual speakers' efforts to convey nuanced meanings, bridge lexical gaps, or align with specific sociolinguistic identities. Code mixing is an asset of bilingual individuals, enabling them to adapt their language use according to context, audience, or purpose, though it is often guided by the dominance of one language over another (Sulianur et al., 2022).

The motivations behind code mixing are multifaceted and dynamic. Factors such as educational background, cultural affiliation, business environment, media exposure, and social status contribute to the frequency and form of language mixing. Nababan (2019) asserts that code mixing often arises in natural communication scenarios, regardless of whether the context is formal or informal. For instance, speakers may mix languages to appear modern, show affiliation with global cultures, or highlight their linguistic competence. Distinguishes between internal code mixing (mixing native language variants) and external code mixing (inserting foreign language elements). Muysken further categorizes this practice into intra-sentential, intra-lexical, and phonological mixing, reflecting how deeply integrated this phenomenon is within bilingual speech. Overall, code mixing

represents a rich, adaptive form of linguistic expression that mirrors the complex realities of multilingual communication.

3. METHODS

Research Design

In this research, researcher used qualitative research methods to examine the results of this research. As is known, the qualitative research method is a method or way to research and study findings that are naturalistic because they are done naturally (Sugiyono, 2021). This research is included in qualitative descriptive research which examines linguistic phenomena using a language study or sociolinguistics approach, observing the results of the expressions from the object of the research or observing the expressions of students and teacher in the ELT class. And in this research the researcher used descriptive qualitative research methods.

Qualitative descriptive research aims as a method to answer and explain in detail the problem to be studied by studying the entire context of individuals, groups or events. Based on Tisdell et al. (2025) and Patton (2020) The essence of qualitative research is humans as research instruments, this means that researchers are directly involved in collecting and analyzing data and the results obtained are a reflection of word forms that are truly natural and in accordance with real situations.

Data Collection Method

In this research, there are 2 data, namely, the first data is in the form of expressions spoken by the English teacher with students in the ELT class at SMP IT Al Hasanah Prabumulih use code mixing such as English-Indonesia or used code mixing with other language when they interact in the teaching and learning process, where the conversation between the two research objects came the main data for observation. for analysis and the second data is in the form of an interview conversation between the researcher and the English teacher at SMP IT Al Hasanah Prabumulih, where this data contain the reason regarding code mixing at SMP IT Al Hasanah Prabumulih.

Data Analysis Procedures

According to Miles and Huberman (2019) an analysis activity has parts consisting of three series simultaneously, namely the first is data reduction, then the second is data analysis and then the third or final stage of drawing conclusions.

In this research, as mentioned in the explanation of the instruments used in this research, namely observation and interviews to obtain data, the data was analyzed using qualitative descriptive methods. The recorded data will be converted into a written transcript, and then the data will be identified, selected and classified. Therefore, the researcher determined the choice of data analysis in accordance with the quote.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Result

The researcher found several findings, where the researcher presented and explained the data results which were intended to answer the problem of study and of course explained the results of the focus and sub-focus of this research regarding types of code mixing, dominant types of code mixing, Teachers' perceptions of reasons why teacher use code mixing in ELT classes in the teaching and learning process. This research used Muysken's theory in Wibowo et al., regarding three types of code mixing, namely intra-sentential code mixing, intra-lexical code mixing, and involving changes in pronunciation.

Types of Code Mixing Used by English Teacher and Students in Teaching and Learning Processes in ELT Classes

The Types of Code Mixing Dominantly Used by English Teacher and ELT Class Students in the Teaching and Learning Process.

After conducting research, the researcher analyzed the types of code mixing used when speaking by English teacher and students, so as with the problem formulation explained by the researcher, they were able to find out the types of code mixing that were often used by teacher and students in the

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teaching and learning process. After that and at this stage the researcher combines the findings from observations to find out the dominant types of code mixing used by English teacher and students in the teaching and learning process.

No	Types of Code Mixing	Frequency
1	Intra Sentential Code Mixing	57
2	Intra Lexical Code Mixing	1
3	Involving Change of Pronunciation	5
	Total	63

Teacher and Student at VIII SMP IT Al Hasanah

No	Types of Code Mixing	Frequency
1	Intra Sentential Code Mixing	38
2	Intra Lexical Code Mixing	2
3	Involving Change of Pronunciation	6
	Total	46

No	Types of Code Mixing	Frequency
1	Intra Sentential Code Mixing	49
2	Intra Lexical Code Mixing	2
3	Involving Change of Pronunciation	4
	Total	55

Perceptions of English Teacher to use Code Mixing in Teaching and Learning Process in ELT classes

Based on the findings obtained from the previous interview session, the researcher analyzed the reasons teacher used code mixing in teaching ELT classes.

English teacher Based on an interview session with the SMP IT Al Hasanah English teacher, it was discovered that the teacher was aware of using code mixing in his learning process.

She said she used it because it was to make students understand the material and then he found several words that had not been represented in other languages. According to the English teacher, she also said that the use of code mixing is quite effective in this era because nowadays there are lots of Indonesian public figures, people, whether from government circles, employees, artists or influencers who use code mixing in speaking, perhaps this is one of the reasons for the effective use of code mixing. And English teacher also feel that they have used teaching methods that are fun and flexible, and the results have been effective. The students enjoyed what he said and often they responded to what I said. This approach not only increases their interest in learning, but also helps them expand discussion.

Discussion

The findings of this study indicate that both teachers and students in the English Language Teaching (ELT) classroom frequently engage in intra-sentential code mixing, where elements of English are embedded within Indonesian sentences or vice versa. For instance, the teacher might say, “let you drink, and tarik nafas”, or “yes it's good, yang lain”, where English phrases are inserted within otherwise Indonesian utterances. Likewise, students demonstrate similar patterns, such as “without add a or an in the kalimat apakah boleh taza?” or “because I was play soccer tadi”. These instances illustrate how the mixing of two languages occurs within the boundaries of a single sentence, aligning with Wardaugh and Fuller (2021) definition of code mixing as the alternate use of two languages within one

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utterance. This also supports Muysken's (2000) classification of insertion-type code mixing, where words or phrases from a second language are inserted into a base language structure.

In addition to intra-sentential mixing, intra-lexical code mixing was also found, particularly in teacher speech. For example, when the teacher uses a phrase such as "explanation-nya", it combines an English root word with an Indonesian suffix. This form of mixing occurs at the level of word morphology and is considered a more integrated type of code blending. According to Askhatova (2020), this occurs when a speaker blends grammatical or lexical elements from both languages into a single word form, indicating a deeper level of bilingual proficiency or at times a workaround due to vocabulary limitations. In the case of student data, however, intra-lexical code mixing was not observed, suggesting that teachers tend to use more complex code forms due to their greater control over both languages.

The reasons behind this prevalent use of code mixing in the classroom can be traced back to both linguistic and social motivations. As outlined by Nababan (2019), factors such as bilingualism, the communicative situation, vocabulary limitations, and the desire to convey specific cultural nuances contribute to the practice. Teachers often use English to familiarize students with target vocabulary, while reverting to Indonesian to ensure comprehension. Meanwhile, students mix codes due to limited vocabulary or to align with classroom norms set by the teacher. This blending of languages fosters a more flexible and inclusive learning environment, facilitating understanding while gradually enhancing students' exposure to English. Overall, the use of code mixing in the ELT context reflects not only linguistic challenges but also adaptive strategies for effective communication in a multilingual setting.

5. CONCLUSION

Based on the findings and interpretations presented in the previous chapter, this study concludes that both

teachers and students frequently engage in code mixing during the English Language Teaching (ELT) process. The types of code mixing observed include intra-sentential code mixing, intra-lexical code mixing, and code mixing involving phonological variation, as classified. The use of these forms of code mixing is not incidental but rather serves specific communicative, pedagogical, and affective purposes. Teachers employ code mixing to scaffold understanding, simplify complex concepts, and create a more inclusive and supportive classroom atmosphere, especially in multilingual or EFL contexts like Indonesia.

Furthermore, it was found that teachers perceive code mixing as a beneficial pedagogical strategy. The deliberate use of code mixing enables teachers to bridge gaps between students' prior linguistic knowledge and the target language, making the learning process more accessible. Teachers also noted that code mixing facilitates clearer explanations, fosters student engagement, and reduces classroom anxiety. The role of bilingualism in classroom interaction as a natural and effective tool to aid communication and comprehension.

The implications of this research highlight the necessity to recognize code mixing as a valid and strategic linguistic practice in EFL settings rather than as a sign of linguistic deficiency. Language policy makers, curriculum developers, and teacher trainers should reconsider rigid monolingual norms and instead support a more flexible pedagogical approach that acknowledges the sociolinguistic realities of the classroom. Teacher education programs should include training on the purposeful and context-sensitive use of code mixing to enhance classroom interaction and student learning outcomes. Moreover, school policies should not discourage bilingual practices but instead promote them as cognitive and communicative resources.

For future research, it is recommended to examine the impact of code mixing on students' English language proficiency over time, especially in relation to vocabulary acquisition, grammar retention, and speaking fluency. Longitudinal studies involving diverse regions and educational

levels could offer broader insights into the pedagogical effectiveness and limitations of code mixing. Additionally, further investigation could explore students' perceptions of code mixing and how it influences their motivation, identity construction, and classroom participation. As Indonesia continues to embrace multilingual education, understanding how code mixing shapes classroom dynamics will be crucial for the advancement of inclusive and culturally responsive teaching practices.

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