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AN ANALYSIS OF CODE MIXING BY EFL LEARNERS DURING ENGLISH SPEAKING PRACTICE

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Abstract

This study investigates code mixing among Indonesian learners of English as a Foreign Language (EFL). Particularly, the study focuses on learners' use of code mixing during a responsive English speaking class. The main objective of the study is to identify the types of code mixing used, the contexts in which it occurs, and the reasons behind its usage. The study employed a descriptive qualitative approach, with data collected through classroom observations and semi-structured interviews. Observations revealed that the learners frequently employed code mixing during group discussions and presentations. Furthermore, four main types of code mixing were identified. These include word insertion, phrase insertion, hybrid forms, and clause mixing. Regarding motivations, interview findings suggest that code mixing enables learners to articulate their ideas more effectively, particularly when they struggle to express complex thoughts in English. Overall, the study concludes that code mixing functions not merely as a linguistic shortcut, but as a communicative strategy for this group of EFL learners.

Keywords: code mixing; EFL learners; speaking practice

I. INTRODUCTION

In learning English, speaking is considered productive skills that presents significant challenges for students, particularly in expressing ideas fluently and accurately. Indonesia's multilingual context, where students are often fluent in both their local language and Bahasa Indonesia, sets the stage for the emergence of code mixing in EFL settings. Most of them mastered more than one language, namely their first language (L1) and second language (L2) (Nur Aziza 2020) Code mixing, a common linguistic phenomenon in bilingual communities, frequently appears in classroom conversations, especially when students switch between their first language (L1) and the target language (L2).

The phenomenon of code mixing is particularly relevant in the Indonesian EFL context, where many learners experience difficulty articulating their thoughts fully in English due to limited vocabulary and confidence. As a result, they naturally incorporate elements of Bahasa Indonesia or their local dialects into English speech. When a speaker chose code-mixing in a conversation, it did not mean that the user conveyed unclear

communication, but it was one way to clarify the message to be conveyed (Fahruddiningrum, 2019). This practice is not merely accidental or evidence of language incompetence; instead, it reflects strategic communication and adaptive behavior in language learning. It allows learners to maintain the flow of conversation while navigating linguistic limitations.

In academic settings, particularly in speaking practice activities, the use of code mixing can serve as a bridge that enables students to engage more actively in discussions and presentations. Recognizing this, the present research seeks to examine the specific patterns, contexts, and reasons for code mixing in EFL speaking activities. Understanding these dynamics will provide valuable insights for educators to optimize language instruction and better support bilingual or multilingual learners.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Code mixing is the use of two or more languages within a single utterance or conversation. It often occurs in multilingual societies where speakers alternate between languages depending on context, audience, and purpose. According to (Suwito 1985) code mixing can be categorized into six types: word insertion, phrase insertion, hybrid, word repetition, idiom, and clause insertion. These classifications help in identifying the structural patterns of how multiple languages are integrated into speech.

Sociolinguistic research has shown that code mixing is not a random phenomenon but is influenced by various factors such as identity, social setting, and language proficiency. In the educational context, code mixing has been found to aid comprehension and participation. It enables learners to navigate complex cognitive processes by using familiar linguistic resources. For example, (Lin 2019) emphasized that code mixing provides scaffolding that helps students build their second language skills.

Zhou (2020) also noted that code mixing can reduce learner anxiety, especially in speaking tasks. When students are permitted to switch between languages, they are more likely to take risks, experiment with vocabulary, and maintain communication even when they lack the exact English words. This aligns with (Cummins 2000) interdependence hypothesis, which suggests that proficiency in the first language can support the development of the second language.

Despite its benefits, some educators remain skeptical of code mixing, fearing it may hinder immersion in the target language. However, (Creese, 2015) argue for a more nuanced understanding what they call "translanguaging" where multiple languages are used in dynamic and purposeful ways to enhance learning. From this perspective, code mixing is not a deficiency but a powerful pedagogical tool.

In summary, existing literature affirms the role of code mixing as both a linguistic and educational strategy. It facilitates communication, supports cognitive development, and contributes to learner engagement in multilingual classrooms. This study builds on

these insights by examining the specific ways in which EFL students use code mixing during speaking practice and the implications for teaching and learning.

III. METHOD

This study employs a qualitative descriptive approach to analyze the use of code mixing in a third-semester responsive speaking class at Universitas Muhammadiyah jember consisting of 17 students. Observation was taken on 8 January 2025. Data collection methods included classroom observations through audio recordings and semi-structured interviews. The observation focused on identifying instances and types of code mixing, while interviews explored the reasons and contexts for its usage.

The data were analyzed through reduction, classification, and interpretation based on Suwito's typology. The interviews were transcribed and examined to determine when and why code mixing occurred, including emotional and situational triggers.

IV. FINDINGS

This analysis is based on observations that have been made through audio recordings during group discussions in a responsive speaking class. That aims to highlight what types of code-mixing are used by students when practicing speaking.

Table 1 Code Mixing Types Analyzed

No.	Types of Code Mixing	Total Usage	Example
1	Word Insertion	4	"Different in apa ya" "Kan in our environment"
2	Phrase Insertion	4	- "Like that lah" " *Disuruh setiap nomer* or only one point"
3	Hybrid	10	"Im agree use smartphone saat pembelajaran" "I think it's not kayak disrespect teacher"
4	Clause	8	"Kenapa kamu gak melakukan tugas itu, why you don't coming in the class" "Maybe gak selalu harus pakai ketikan, not always used typing"

The findings revealed four main types of code mixing used by students: word insertion, phrase insertion, hybrid forms, and clause insertion. Hybrid forms were the most common. Analyzed code mixing in Interview outcome is shown in table 2 and 3 below.

Table 2. Situational Context Using Code Mixing

No	When Using Code Mixing	Total Usage
1	Casual conversations with friends	17
2	During presentations	16
3	Group discussions	15
4	Answering questions directly from the lecturer	14
5	Situations with time-limited tasks	13
6	Informal classroom settings	12
7	Situations where students feel nervous	11
8	Learning situations, especially for beginners	10

Table 3. Situational Context Using Code Mixing

No	Reason for Using Code Mixing	Total Usage
1	helps in speaking English more easily, especially when forgetting words	17
2	words that are not understood, thus avoiding confusion	16
3	students have limited vocabulary	17
4	using a mix of languages, preventing misunderstandings	17
5	It boosts confidence when speaking, reducing the fear of making mistakes	16
6	Code mixing facilitates the pronunciation of English words	15
7	It is important for helping students learn English effectively	17
8	It is beneficial in learning situations, especially for those who are new to English	17

Based on the findings presented in the tables, students used code mixing most often during casual conversations, presentations, and group discussions. Interviews indicated that students mix languages to overcome vocabulary gaps, reduce nervousness, and improve communication.

V. DISCUSSION

The data confirmed that is in line with the theory expressed by (Musyken 2000) who states that code mixing can occur at various linguistic levels, from words to sentences. This shows

that students do not only use code mixing as a tool to overcome vocabulary limitations, but also as a way to express their ideas and feelings more effectively.

The connection between code mixing and increased confidence is a critical aspect of language learning. As discussed by (Horwitz 2021) creating a low-anxiety environment is essential for effective speaking practice. The reasons outlined reflect the multifaceted benefits of code mixing as a linguistic strategy that not only aids in communication but also supports learners' emotional and cognitive needs, as emphasized in the literature

However, despite the many benefits of using code mixing, it is important to remember that excessive use can lead to confusion and interfere with effective English language learning. As stated by (Bhatia 2010),uncontrolled use of code mixing can cause students to lose focus on the target language and hinder the development of their language skills.

VI.   CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

The findings reveal that code mixing is a prevalent strategy among students, particularly in casual conversations, presentations, and group discussions. This aligns with the literature, indicating that code mixing not only facilitates communication but also alleviates anxiety and enhances confidence among learners. The analysis supports the hypothesis that students use code mixing to overcome vocabulary limitations and improve their overall speaking abilities.

The study's limitations include a small sample size and focus on one language skill. Future research should explore the impact of code mixing across different institutions and language skills such as writing and listening.

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