# How Indonesian Students View Code-Mixing in Daily Conversations

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## Article Info

## Abstract

Multilingualism in Indonesia refers to local or regional languages as the first or mother tongue, *Bahasa* Indonesia as the second or official language, and foreign languages in which English is the most spoken foreign language in Indonesia. Such a condition may bring us to code-mixing. Code-mixing is using more than one language or language variety in conversation. To some linguists, code-mixing is perceived as a negative phenomenon for several reasons, such as reducing the sense of necessity to use the 'original' language of the speakers. However, this view might only be found among the older generation. How about the younger generation's perception of the code-mixing phenomenon? This study explores the students' perception of code-mixing in daily conversations. The study used a questionnaire-based research method and involved 83 respondents from majors such as English education, Islamic broadcasting communication, and management aged 18-23. The results show that 73.5% of the respondents consider code-mixing a normal phenomenon in daily conversations. Furthermore, 51.8% of the respondents perceive code-mixing as usual while engaging in conversation, 41% as a positive phenomenon due to bilingual capacity, and only 7.2% perceive code-mixing as a negative one regarding disrespectful reasons to *Bahasa* Indonesia.

## INTRODUCTION

Multilingualism is such a complicated phenomenon (Benzehaf, 2023). By a simple definition, multilingualism refers to mastering more than two languages (Schroedler, 2021). With this definition, Indonesians may be considered multilingual (Dermawan, 2023). The multilingualism situation in Indonesia revolves around three

major languages (Ibrahim, 2022). The first language or mother tongue refers to local or regional languages based on ethnicity. The second language is *Bahasa Indonesia* as the official/national language of Indonesia and the third language may refer to foreign languages such as English, Mandarin, Japanese, Arabic, etc. This linguistic situation may lead to what experts say code-switching and code-mixing.

Sociolinguistics mentions language or language variation as a code (Ahmad et al., 2023). This concept, of multilingualism, suggests that different language variations of the same language might be treated as different languages meaning that no person in the world is not bilingual or multilingual. Therefore, the word code in code-switching and code-mixing may refer to different languages and language variations.

Briefly, code-switching is a situation when one switches code from one language to another different language in an interaction (Mewengkang & Fansury, 2021). There are many factors affecting the occurrence of code-mixing such as participants, solidarity, and status (Abdulloh, 2021). Meanwhile, code-mixing refers to a phenomenon when one mixes more than one language or language variation in an interaction (Riadil & Dilts, 2022). The reasons behind this phenomenon may differ based on the situation and the participants involved.

The boundary between code-switching and code-mixing remains debatable even among linguists. For instance, Auer (2020) proposes that when the code is a full clause, it can be considered code-switching. However, when the code is only a word or phrase, it is code-switching. Meanwhile, Rosmiaty et al., (2020) suggests a different view. She mentions that a specific concept such as slang (from a different language), might be considered as code-switching (even though the slang is only one word).

As mentioned above, the phenomena of code-switching and code-mixing may be affected by several factors. The use of code-switching is often viewed as a positive phenomenon. (Azis et al., 2024; Haryati & Prayuana, 2020; Zainil & Arsyad, 2021) state that the main reason for code-switching is tolerance among the participants involved in conversations. On the other hand, the main reason for code-mixing occurrence may be prestige which is considered negative by many experts such as (Dewi, 2021). the use of code-mixing may indicate the lack of sense

for using the 'original' (mother tongue or lingua franca) language of the speakers (Siddiq et al., 2020).

Many previous studies have been conducted on the topic of the code-mixing phenomenon. The results of these studies have revealed many factors and reasons behind the use of code-mixing. Several factors and reasons justifying the use of code-mixing may include solidarity, social status, expressing group identity, empathy, limited vocabularies, and even vanity (Pratama, 2022). Despite the factors and reasons why code-mixing is used, some studies may reveal the impacts of code-mixing usage. Some are positive, but others mention negative effects. Studies conducted by Holmes (2001) and Simatupang & Sunari, (2021) state that the use of code-mixing may affect the national identity of the speakers in a way that they seem to lack an obligation to use their national language resulting in language interference. This might be the reason why some linguists or older generations like the present writers perceive negatively towards code-mixing phenomenon negatively. However, this perception towards the use of code-mixing in daily conversations may differ in younger generations. This study shows a glimpse of how Indonesian students view code-mixing in daily conversations.

**RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

This study is a descriptive-qualitative analysis with the questionnaire-based method. As suggested by Creswell (2014), a descriptive-qualitative study analyzes social phenomena in a group or more with a specific treatment. The present writers asked students from various majors at Universitas Wiralodra Indamayu and Universitas Ibn Khaldun Bogor. However, only 83 students were willing to participate. The study involved 83 students aged 18-23 from various majors such as English education, Islamic broadcasting communication, and management. The 83 participants were sent a link to a Google form (questionnaire) and asked to answer several questions on code-mixing based on their perceptions. The questionnaire contained some examples of code-mixing usage in daily conversations taken from the latest phenomena such as *Bahasa jaksel.* They were asked whether such a phenomenon was normal and beneficial or not. The result of the questionnaire was described qualitatively. The following Figure 1. shows the spread of involved participants based on the majors.
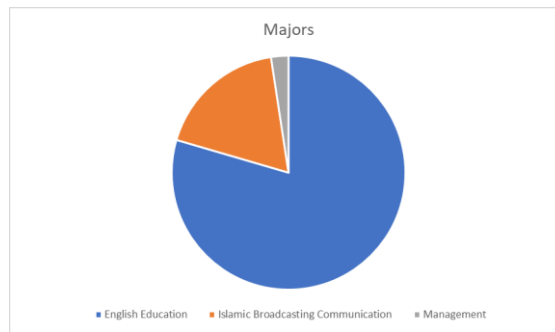
Figure 1. Participants' Majors

**RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

There were six questions in the questionnaire shared with the participants. Two questions were about basic information of the participants, namely age and major study, while the other four related to code-mixing. The first two questions on code-mixing were a confirmation of whether the participants were familiar with code-mixing. 54.2% of the participants were familiar with the term of code-mixing. They were also asked to identify the use of code-mixing from the examples given and 68.7% of them were correct in identifying code-mixing in daily conversations.

There were two main questions in the questionnaire that became the highlight of this study. The first question focused on the student's perception of the use of code-mixing in daily conversations. The students were asked about their perceptions should whether their conversational partners used code-mixing. The result is shown in Figure 2. below.



Figure 2. Students' Perception Towards Code-Mixing

Of a total of 83 students, 73% considered normal when their conversational partners used code-mixing. 18.1% felt less comfortable and only 8.4% who were indifferent to whether their partners used code-mixing. There was another indicator, namely uncomfortable, but none of the participants chose this one.

The following figure shows the attitude of the students towards the use of code-mixing in daily conversations. In the questionnaire, the students were asked their personal opinions on the matter of code-mixing related to the multilingualism situation in Indonesia.
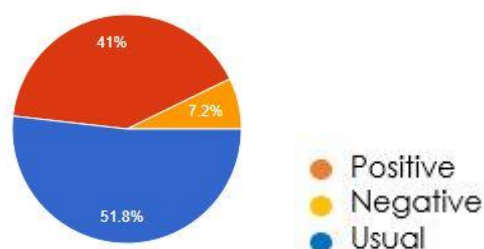


Figure 3. Students' Attitude Towards Code-Mixing

In Figure 3. above, 51.8% of the students confirmed their standings on the use of code-mixing stating that it was a usual phenomenon in daily conversations. These students perceived the use of code-mixing as a common matter during conversations. 41% of the students perceived code-mixing as a positive phenomenon. These students believed that the use of code-mixing in daily conversations might show their capabilities in mastering English as a foreign language. Of all the students involved in this study, there were only 7.2% considered code-mixing as a negative phenomenon. They perceived such a phenomenon as exaggerated. This perception is related to the student's attitude towards *Bahasa Indonesia*. *Bahasa Indonesia* is the identity of Indonesia. Therefore, it is necessary to use *Bahasa Indonesia* during every possible conversation.

**CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION**

In a multilingual society, a phenomenon such as code-mixing may be present. This phenomenon is treated differently based on many factors including age or generation. To older generations, the use of code-mixing is perceived negatively, but in younger generations, such a phenomenon is considered a common matter. Students of younger generations are more familiar with code-mixing and view it as a positive thing. To most of them, the use of code-mixing may indicate their capabilities in mastering English as a foreign language. Only a few of them considered code-mixing negatively.

This study involved students from three majors, namely English education, Islamic broadcasting communication, and management with English education students as the biggest participants. Therefore, the results of this study of code-mixing seemed to be in favor of English education. Thus, for future studies, participants or students from different majors such as Indonesian education or local language majors are recommended as the result may be different.

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