

Students' Perception of Teacher's Code-Switching in Teaching English at Junior High School

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Abstract

This study aimed to investigate the level of students' perceptions of teacher's code-switching in teaching English at SMP UNKLAB. A descriptive quantitative design was employed, collecting data from 89 students through a questionnaire adapted from Aminah (2022). The findings revealed that the overall level of students' perception was positive ($M = 3.92$). Specifically, the results for each indicator were interpreted as positive: receiving of stimulus ($M = 3.92$), understanding ($M = 4.00$), and evaluation ($M = 3.86$). These results indicate that students find teacher's code-switching to be a helpful strategy that supports their comprehension and motivation in class. In conclusion, code-switching is perceived as a valuable instructional tool to bridge language barriers. Therefore, it is recommended that English teachers use code-switching strategically to clarify complex materials while maintaining sufficient English exposure for students.

Keywords

Code-switching, students' perception, English teaching, junior high school



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INTRODUCTION

In Indonesia, where English is taught as a foreign language, switching between English and Indonesian is common in classroom communication. Akfan (2025) stated that in multilingual societies like Indonesia, switching between Indonesian and English has become a common way of communication in areas such as education and daily life. This phenomenon is known as code-switching, which refers to the alternating use of two languages during interaction (Hakim et al., 2019). In classroom settings, code-switching often occurs naturally because teachers and students usually share the same first language. Previous studies have shown that code-switching helps students understand classroom instructions more effectively (Murtiningsih et al., 2022). In addition, teachers use code-switching for clarification, explanation, translation, and classroom management (Fachriyah, 2017). These findings indicate that code-switching plays an important role in supporting communication during English learning.

Code-switching is a common phenomenon in foreign language learning where more than one language is used during communication. Gumperz (1982) explained that code-switching refers to the alternation between two different languages or grammatical systems within the same conversation or utterance. Similarly, Hartmann et al. (2018) defined code-switching as the alternating use of two or more languages in a single conversation by speakers who are proficient in those languages. These

explanations indicate that code-switching is not simply random language mixing, but a natural linguistic practice that commonly occurs in bilingual and multilingual communication. In educational settings, this practice often appears during classroom interaction when teachers and students alternate between English and their first language to support communication and understanding (Novianti & Said, 2021). Gumperz (1982) further categorized code-switching into two main types: situational and metaphorical code-switching. Situational code-switching occurs when speakers change their language based on changes in social context or setting without changing the topic of discussion, whereas metaphorical code-switching occurs when changes in topic or social meaning trigger a language shift. Moreover, Gumperz (1982) identified six major functions of code-switching, including quotation marking, addressee specification, interjections, reiteration, message qualification, and personalization versus objectivization. In educational contexts, these functions enable teachers to explain difficult concepts, manage classroom interaction, and help students understand instructions more clearly (Almagableh & Yunus, 2022). Ramadan et al. (2019) also noted that code-switching helps shift topics, build emotional closeness, and reinforce information during learning.

Teacher's code-switching is therefore recognized as an instructional strategy in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms. Indanna et al. (2026) noted that teachers often alternate between English and students' first language to ensure that instructional messages are fully understood. Likewise, Yana and Nugraha (2019) explained that teachers use students' native language because some aspects of English are difficult to explain directly. Teachers commonly employ code-switching to explain vocabulary, clarify concepts, provide instructions, check students' understanding, and create a more comfortable classroom atmosphere (Alang & Idris, 2018; Patmasari & Kamaruddin, 2022). Sholikhah and Isnaini (2024) further emphasized that teacher's code-switching supports comprehension and promotes classroom interaction. These findings suggest that teacher's code-switching is not merely a spontaneous habit but a deliberate pedagogical strategy that facilitates learning.

Although code-switching is frequently practiced in English classrooms, students may still encounter difficulties when lessons are delivered entirely in English. Many learners possess limited vocabulary and often struggle with English sentence structures, making classroom instructions difficult to understand (Purnama, 2020). Amanda et al. (2025) found that students frequently remain silent when they fail to understand English instructions, thereby reducing classroom interaction. Similar situations were observed during classroom teaching at SMP UNKLAB, where eighth-grade students appeared confused when instructions were delivered exclusively in English but demonstrated better understanding when teachers alternated between English and Indonesian. Brief interviews with students also revealed positive opinions toward code-switching because it simplified difficult materials and enhanced comprehension. However, despite these observations, no previous study has specifically explored students' perceptions of teacher's code-switching at SMP UNKLAB.

Students' perceptions are essential because they reflect how learners interpret and evaluate classroom practices. Achdiyat (2020) explained that student perception is the process of responding to information about an object, while Maryati and Brataningrum (2021) stated that perception is closely related to the stimuli provided during learning activities. Likewise, Putri (2023) described student perception as the process of interpreting information received from an object. Students' perceptions are shaped by their experiences and observations throughout the learning process and may influence their attitudes and responses toward instructional practices (Sumarli et al., 2021). Yulizar et al. (2023) also emphasized that students' learning perception reflects their understanding of the information

received during classroom activities. In this study, students' perceptions are interpreted through Walgito's (2010) framework, which consists of three indicators: receiving of stimulus, understanding, and evaluation. Receiving of stimulus refers to the stage where students receive auditory input from the teacher, understanding represents the process of interpreting and organizing the received information, while evaluation concerns students' judgments regarding whether teacher's code-switching is beneficial and appropriate for their learning. Furthermore, perception may be classified as either positive or negative (Irwanto, 1994). Positive perception refers to favorable responses in which students regard teacher's code-switching as useful for understanding difficult concepts, increasing motivation, and facilitating learning (Amanda, 2022; Aprianto, 2017). Conversely, negative perception occurs when students perceive code-switching as less beneficial, such as limiting English exposure and reducing opportunities to practice the target language (Amanda, 2022; Amaliah, 2021).

Previous research has consistently reported positive perceptions of teacher's code-switching in EFL classrooms. Hakim et al. (2019), Alang and Idris (2018), and Talal (2022) found that students believed code-switching improved comprehension of difficult concepts, enhanced listening skills, increased confidence, and encouraged active classroom participation. Similarly, Fatsah and Purnama (2022) reported that students perceived code-switching as beneficial for improving vocabulary mastery, speaking and listening skills, and understanding classroom tasks. From the teachers' perspective, Benu (2018) found that code-switching was used to clarify meaning, check students' understanding, provide motivation, and strengthen teacher-student relationships. Likewise, Indanna et al. (2026) reported that teacher's code-switching enhanced students' comprehension, confidence, and classroom engagement. Nevertheless, contrasting findings were presented by Rukh (2014), who argued that students' perceptions may vary according to their academic background and English proficiency, with some learners preferring full English instruction to maximize language exposure. Moreover, most previous studies have focused on university and senior high school students, while studies involving junior high school learners, particularly in North Sulawesi, remain limited.

Considering these research gaps, further investigation is necessary to understand how junior high school students perceive teacher's code-switching in English classrooms. Responding to the recommendation of Benu (2018), who suggested that future studies should involve students to obtain a more comprehensive understanding of classroom code-switching, this study investigates students' perceptions of teacher's code-switching at SMP UNKLAB using Walgito's (2010) perception framework, namely receiving of stimulus, understanding, and evaluation. The findings are expected to provide practical insights for English teachers in selecting appropriate language strategies during instruction and to contribute to the growing body of research on classroom language practices in EFL contexts.

METHODS

In this study, the researcher employed a quantitative research design. According to Johnson and Christensen (2014), quantitative research involves collecting numerical data and analyzing it statistically to produce objective findings. More specifically, this study applied a descriptive design to examine students' perceptions of teacher's code-switching in teaching English. Samsu (2017) explained that descriptive research is used to describe existing conditions, attitudes, and responses related to a particular phenomenon. This design was considered appropriate because it allowed the researcher to describe students' perceptions based on measurable data. Descriptive statistics, specifically mean and standard deviation, were used to determine the overall level of students' perception and the level of each perception indicator, namely receiving of stimulus, understanding, and evaluation.

The population of this study consisted of 126 grade 8 students at SMP UNKLAB during the 2025/2026 academic year, distributed across four classes: 8A (31 students), 8B (33 students), 8C (32 students), and 8D (30 students). This study employed purposive sampling to select the participants. According to Ahmed (2024), this technique is commonly used when a study involves individuals with specific characteristics. Grade 8 students were chosen because they were regularly exposed to a balanced use of English and Indonesian during classroom instruction. They were also considered appropriate participants because they were in the middle stage of secondary school, meaning they were no longer in the early adjustment phase and not yet focused on final examinations. The main study targeted 95 students from classes 8B, 8C, and 8D. During the data collection process, all students completed the questionnaire; however, six responses were excluded because they showed the same answer pattern for every item, indicating that the respondents may not have answered carefully. Therefore, 89 questionnaires were considered valid for the final data analysis.

The main instrument of this study was a close-ended questionnaire adapted from Aminah (2022). The original questionnaire consisted of 20 items based on Walgito's (2010) perception theory. For the purpose of this study, the instrument was modified and expanded into 24 items, and after the pilot study and revision process, 22 items were retained for the final questionnaire. The questionnaire was divided into three indicators: receiving of stimulus, understanding, and evaluation to measure students' perceptions of teacher's code-switching in teaching English. It was administered through Google Forms using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Agree) to 5 (Strongly Disagree). According to Sugiyono (2013), a Likert scale is commonly used to measure individuals' attitudes, opinions, and perceptions toward a social phenomenon. Before the main data collection, the instrument was reviewed by three English lecturers to ensure clarity and validity. It was then pilot-tested with students from class 8-A, who were not included in the main sample, and revised based on the feedback and pilot test results to improve its overall quality.

Table 1. Indicators on Students' Perception Questionnaire of Teacher's Code-Switching in Teaching English

Indicators	Item Number
Receiving of Stimulus	6, 7, 8, 11, 14, 18, 19, 20
Understanding	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 13, 21
Evaluation	9, 10, 12, 15, 16, 17, 22

Adapted from Aminah (2022)

Table 2. Likert Scale Ranges in Questionnaire

Option	Range
Strongly Disagree	1
Disagree	2
Neutral	3
Agree	4
Strongly Agree	5

(Sugiyono, 2013)

Before distributing the questionnaire to the actual respondents, a pilot study was conducted to assess the clarity, validity, and reliability of the instrument. The pilot study was carried out during the second semester of the 2025/2026 academic year at SMP UNKLAB, involving 31 students from class 8A. However, one response was excluded because the respondent answered all items using the same pattern without considering each question carefully. Therefore, 30 responses were considered valid for analysis. The pilot study was conducted to identify unclear or ambiguous items and to ensure the suitability of the questionnaire for the main study. Based on the results and participants' feedback, several revisions were made to improve the clarity and quality of the instrument before it was administered in the main research.

The validity of the questionnaire was examined to ensure that it accurately measured what it was intended to measure. According to Heale and Twycross (2015), validity refers to how well an instrument measures its intended construct. In this study, the validity of the questionnaire was

assessed through content validity, face validity, and statistical validity. Content and face validity were established through expert judgment by three English lecturers, who evaluated whether the questionnaire items clearly represented students' perceptions based on Walgito's (2010) perception theory. Their feedback, together with the results of the pilot study, was used to revise unclear or unnecessary items.

Furthermore, statistical validity was analyzed using the Pearson Product-Moment correlation in the statistical tool, where each item's correlation with the total score was computed. Based on the pilot study results, two of the initial 24 items were found to be invalid because their correlation coefficients were lower than the critical *r*-table value. Consequently, items 10 and 14 were removed, leaving 22 valid items retained for the final version of the instrument. The reliability of the questionnaire was also tested to ensure the consistency and stability of the results. As stated by Chan and Idris (2017), reliability refers to the consistency of an instrument in producing stable results. In this study, reliability was measured using Cronbach's Alpha coefficient in the statistical tool. According to Pallant (2020), a coefficient value of 0.70 or higher indicates acceptable internal consistency. The statistical computation from the pilot study yielded a Cronbach's Alpha score of 0.911 for the 22 valid items. Since this score was significantly higher than 0.70, the instrument was considered reliable and appropriate for use in the main data collection. To interpret the questionnaire results, the mean scores from the Likert scale were grouped into several ranges. This classification helps to describe the level of students' perceptions of teacher's code-switching in a clear and systematic way. The criteria used in this study are shown in Table 3.3.

Table 3. Likert Scale Classification of Students' Perception

Mean	Interpretation
4.50 – 5.00	Strongly Positive
3.50 – 4.49	Positive
2.50 – 3.49	Neutral
1.50 – 2.49	Negative
1.00 – 1.49	Strongly Negative

(Corral et al., 2024)

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Level of Students' Perception

Descriptive statistics, specifically the mean score, were used to determine the overall level of students' perception of teacher's code-switching in teaching English.

Table 4. Descriptive Statistic of Students' Perception

	N	Min	Max	Mean
Students' Perception	89	3.00	5.00	3.92
Valid N (listwise)	89			

As shown in Table 4, the overall mean score of students' perception was 3.92, which is categorized as positive based on the interpretation scale. This indicates that grade 8 students at SMP UNKLAB generally viewed their teacher's code-switching positively and considered it helpful for understanding classroom instruction. This finding is consistent with Fatsah and Purnama (2022), who found that students had a positive perception of code-switching because it helped them understand lessons more clearly and supported vocabulary development. Similarly, the result suggests that teacher's code-switching helps students understand English materials more effectively. Descriptive statistics, specifically the mean score, were used to determine the level of students' receiving of stimulus toward teacher's code-switching in teaching English.

Table 5. Descriptive Statistic of Students' Receiving of Stimulus

	N	Min	Max	Mean
Students' Receiving of Stimulus	89	2.00	5.00	3.92

Valid N (listwise)	89
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As shown in Table 5, the mean score of students' receiving of stimulus was 3.92, which is categorized as positive based on the interpretation scale. This indicates that grade 8 students at SMP UNKLAB responded positively to the teacher's use of code-switching and found it helpful in maintaining attention, motivation, and classroom engagement. This finding is similar with Alang and Idris (2018), who found that students viewed code-switching positively because it created a relaxed learning environment and helped them process information more effectively. Similarly, the result suggests that code-switching provides clear instructional stimuli that support students' learning experiences.

Table 6. Mean Score of each Item from Receiving of Stimulus

Item	Mean	Interpretation
Item 6: Saya merasa lebih percaya diri untuk berbicara di kelas saat guru mengajar menggunakan bahasa Inggris dan bahasa Indonesia.	3.66	Positive
Item 7: Saya merasa lebih bersemangat untuk berpartisipasi di kelas saat guru mengajar menggunakan bahasa Inggris dan bahasa Indonesia secara bergantian.	3.74	Positive
Item 8: Cara mengajar guru yang menggunakan bahasa Inggris dan bahasa Indonesia secara bergantian membuat saya lebih termotivasi untuk belajar bahasa Inggris.	3.94	Positive
Item 11: Saya merasa puas dengan proses belajar saya saat guru menggunakan bahasa Inggris dan bahasa Indonesia secara bergantian.	3.92	Positive
Item 14: Saya bisa lebih fokus mendengarkan penjelasan saat guru menggunakan bahasa Inggris dan bahasa Indonesia secara bergantian.	3.91	Positive
Item 18: Penggunaan bahasa Inggris dan bahasa Indonesia secara bergantian oleh guru membantu saya mendapatkan nilai yang lebih baik.	4.02	Positive
Item 19: Suasana kelas jadi tidak membosankan saat guru mengajar menggunakan bahasa Inggris dan bahasa Indonesia secara bergantian.	3.82	Positive
Item 20: Saya lebih menikmati pelajaran saat guru mengajar menggunakan bahasa Inggris dan bahasa Indonesia secara bergantian.	4.04	Positive

The item analysis showed that all statements were categorized as positive. Item 20 obtained the highest mean score (4.04), indicating that students enjoyed lessons more when the teacher used both English and Indonesian. In contrast, Item 6 had the lowest mean score (3.66), suggesting that students' confidence in speaking was relatively lower compared to other aspects. Overall, these findings indicate that teacher's code-switching provides positive classroom stimuli that support students' engagement and learning motivation. Descriptive statistics, specifically the mean score, were used to determine the level of students' understanding of teacher's code-switching in teaching English.

Table 7. Descriptive Statistic of Students' Understanding

	N	Min	Max	Mean
Students' Understanding	89	3.00	5.00	4.00
Valid N (listwise)	89			

As shown in Table 7, the mean score of students' understanding was 4.00, which is categorized as positive based on the interpretation scale. This was the highest mean score among the three indicators, indicating that grade 8 students at SMP UNKLAB perceived teacher's code-switching as particularly helpful in supporting their understanding of classroom instruction. This finding is

similar with Hakim et al. (2019), who found that students perceived code-switching as helpful for understanding difficult concepts and materials. It is also supported by Benu (2018), who reported that teachers use code-switching as a conscious strategy to clarify meaning and check students' understanding. Similarly, the result suggests that code-switching serves as an effective instructional tool that bridges difficult English materials and students' comprehension.

Table 8. Mean Score of each Item from Understanding

Item	Mean	Interpretation
Item 1: Ketika guru mengajar menggunakan bahasa Inggris dan bahasa Indonesia secara bergantian, saya lebih mudah memahami penjelasan guru.	4.12	Positive
Item 2: Penggunaan bahasa Inggris dan bahasa Indonesia secara bergantian oleh guru membantu saya memahami kosakata baru yang tidak familiar.	3.98	Positive
Item 3: Penggunaan bahasa Inggris dan bahasa Indonesia secara bergantian oleh guru membantu saya memahami konsep baru yang sulit.	3.93	Positive
Item 4: Penggunaan bahasa Inggris dan bahasa Indonesia secara bergantian oleh guru membantu saya memahami ide-ide baru yang sulit.	3.88	Positive
Item 5: Ketika guru memberikan instruksi tugas menggunakan bahasa Inggris dan bahasa Indonesia secara bergantian, saya jadi lebih paham apa yang harus dikerjakan.	3.91	Positive
Item 13: Konsep yang sulit jadi lebih mudah saya pahami jika guru menjelaskannya menggunakan bahasa Inggris dan bahasa Indonesia secara bergantian.	3.97	Positive
Item 21: Penggunaan bahasa Inggris dan bahasa Indonesia secara bergantian oleh guru membantu saya memahami materi lebih cepat.	4.11	Positive

The item analysis showed that all statements were categorized as positive. Item 1 obtained the highest mean score (4.12), indicating that students found explanations easier to understand when the teacher used both English and Indonesian. In contrast, Item 4 had the lowest mean score (3.88), suggesting slightly lower agreement regarding the role of code-switching in understanding difficult new ideas. Overall, these findings indicate that teacher's code-switching supports students' comprehension and helps them process learning materials more effectively. Descriptive statistics, specifically the mean score, were used to determine the level of students' evaluation of teacher's code-switching in teaching English.

Table 9. Descriptive Statistic of Students' Evaluation

	N	Min	Max	Mean
Students' Evaluation	89	3.00	5.00	3.86
Valid N (listwise)	89			

As shown in Table 9, the mean score of students' evaluation was 3.86, which is categorized as positive based on the interpretation scale. This indicates that grade 8 students at SMP UNKLAB evaluated teacher's code-switching as a beneficial and effective strategy that supported their overall learning experience. This finding is consistent with Indanna et al. (2026), who found that students viewed code-switching positively because it facilitated comprehension and increased classroom participation. Similarly, the result suggests that students appreciated code-switching as it made the learning process easier and more comfortable while encouraging classroom engagement.

Table 10. Mean Score of each Item from Evaluation

Item	Mean	Interpretation
Item 9: Proses belajar saya terasa lebih mudah saat guru mengajar menggunakan bahasa Inggris dan bahasa Indonesia secara bergantian.	4.00	Positive

Item 10: Saya lebih suka belajar ketika guru mengajar menggunakan bahasa Inggris dan bahasa Indonesia secara bergantian.	3.99	Positive
Item 12: Saya merasa lebih nyaman mengikuti pelajaran saat guru mengajar menggunakan bahasa Inggris dan bahasa Indonesia secara bergantian.	3.83	Positive
Item 15: Kegiatan belajar terasa lebih mudah bagi saya saat guru mengajar menggunakan bahasa Inggris dan bahasa Indonesia secara bergantian.	3.98	Positive
Item 16: Saya merasa lebih semangat untuk bertanya dalam sesi tanya jawab saat guru menggunakan bahasa Inggris dan bahasa Indonesia secara bergantian.	3.66	Positive
Item 17: Saya merasa lebih semangat untuk menjawab dalam sesi tanya jawab saat guru menggunakan bahasa Inggris dan bahasa Indonesia secara bergantian.	3.67	Positive
Item 22: Jika guru sering berganti-ganti dari bahasa Inggris ke bahasa Indonesia, saya tidak merasa guru tersebut kurang mahir dalam berbahasa Inggris.	3.54	Positive

The item analysis showed that all statements were categorized as positive. Item 9 obtained the highest mean score (4.00), indicating that students found learning easier when the teacher used both English and Indonesian. In contrast, Item 22 had the lowest mean score (3.54), suggesting more moderate agreement regarding the idea that frequent code-switching does not reflect limited English proficiency. Overall, these findings indicate that students positively evaluated teacher's code-switching as a supportive classroom strategy that enhanced comfort and engagement.

CONCLUSION

The findings of this study indicate that grade 8 students at SMP UNKLAB generally hold a positive perception of their teacher's use of code-switching in teaching English. This suggests that the integration of English and Indonesian during classroom instruction is perceived as a beneficial strategy that supports students' learning and helps them follow lessons more effectively. Among the three measured indicators, understanding obtained the highest mean score, indicating that students found teacher's code-switching particularly helpful in facilitating their comprehension of difficult explanations and learning materials. The positive results in receiving of stimulus further suggest that this strategy helps maintain students' attention and motivation during the learning process. Likewise, the positive evaluation score indicates that students consider code-switching a comfortable and supportive classroom practice that encourages participation. Overall, these findings imply that teacher's code-switching can function as an effective instructional strategy in junior high school English classrooms. When applied appropriately, it may reduce language barriers, promote clearer understanding, and create a supportive learning environment that enables students to engage more actively in classroom interaction..

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this study, several recommendations are proposed. For English teachers, the positive perception shown by students suggests that code-switching can be maintained as a supportive instructional strategy, particularly when explaining difficult concepts or clarifying classroom instructions. The balanced use of English and Indonesian may help create a more comfortable and interactive learning environment while supporting students' understanding. For students, teacher's code-switching should be viewed as a learning support that can help them build confidence and participate more actively during classroom activities. Students are encouraged to use the clearer explanations provided through code-switching as an opportunity to strengthen their comprehension and gradually improve their English proficiency. For future researchers, further studies are recommended to explore students' perceptions using broader samples across different grade levels or schools. The use of mixed-method approaches, such as combining questionnaires with

interviews, may also provide deeper insights into students' experiences and preferences regarding teacher's code-switching in English classrooms.

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