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## INVESTIGATING UPTM TESL LECTURERS' VIEWS ON ESL STUDENTS' CODE SWITCHING IN PRESENTATIONS

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### ABSTRACT

This study explored the perceptions of TESL lecturers at University Poly-Tech Malaysia (UPTM) regarding the use of code switching (CS) by ESL students during presentations. Code switching is defined as the alternation between English and a student's native language. Although presentations are generally conducted in English to meet course objectives and improve language proficiency, many students relied on CS as a communication strategy. A qualitative research design was employed, and data were collected through interviews with five TESL lecturers who teach faculty courses to students from non-English majors. The study aimed to understand their views and experiences related to this practice. The findings revealed two types of perspectives, namely positive and negatively. On the positive side, participants acknowledged that code switching could assist students who struggle with vocabulary or grammar. It may also help reduce anxiety and boost students' confidence during presentations. However, some lecturers opposed the linguistic practice as they were concerned that excessive use of CS could hinder language development and compromise the goal of maintaining English as the medium of instruction (EMI). These findings aimed to assist educators in promoting effective language learning while sustaining English fluency in tertiary-level ESL settings. The study recommended adopting balanced teaching strategies that encourage English usage while offering appropriate linguistic support. In conclusion, while code switching may serve as a helpful tool to overcome language barriers, students are advised to practice it with caution.

Keywords: Code switching (CS), ESL students, TESL lecturers, Presentations, English as a Medium of Instruction (EMI)

### INTRODUCTION

Code switching (CS) is a widely known linguistic phenomenon that involves the usage of more than one language in a conversation, most commonly among bilingual and multilingual speakers. According to El Bolock et al. (2020), the act of code switching developed due to several factors, such as globalisation, immigration, colonisation, the advancement of education,

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and the demands of global business and communication. These factors may have contributed to the normalisation of CS in multilingual countries like Malaysia, where diversity in races, ethnicities and cultures shapes one's language acquisition and usage.

In Malaysia's tertiary education context, code switching frequently occurred among ESL (English as a Second Language) students, particularly those enrolled in non-English major programmes. For these students, CS serves as a useful linguistic strategy to aid understanding, ensure smoother communication, and elevate overall learning experience. Astani et al. (2020) further noted that CS is not limited to face-to-face interactions but could also occur through indirect modes of communication, such as on social media platforms. Consequently, students may adopt code switching more frequently in their daily lives, often unconsciously, especially in today's technology-driven environment.

Moreover, university students are generally expected to demonstrate linguistic skills as independent or proficient language users based on the six proficiency levels outlined by the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) (Uri, 2021). Given that English had long been part of the Malaysian education system, students were expected to meet presentation requirements in English. However, many non-English major students still struggled with vocabulary and grammar despite over a decade of exposure (Krostomitina & Kang, 2021; Ining, 2021). While CS occurred, students were expected to use their language skills effectively during presentations.

Evaluation through a presentation assessment is not taboo for university students. Presentations were commonly used to assess communication and language proficiency in university coursework (Subon & Tarmim, 2021). Majamin (2020) noted that such tasks promoted independent learning and academic engagement. However, frequent code switching negatively impacted grades and contradicted the purpose of English as the medium of instruction (Jabeen et al., 2023). To improve performance, students were encouraged to engage with more reading materials to strengthen topic comprehension.

These considerations highlighted the need to explore the effects of code switching on ESL students' academic performance, particularly in presentations. This study focused on its long-term implications for non-English majors, with emphasis on speech fluency, grading, and future readiness for English-medium professions. By examining the views of TESL lecturers at University Poly-Tech Malaysia (UPTM), the study aimed to enhance communication, language learning, and assessment practices.

## **Objectives of The Study**

In this study, ESL students were expected to respond in English, as it was the medium of instruction but many still switched languages. Therefore, the researcher proposed two objectives for the study:

- (i) The researcher aimed to examine TESL lecturers' perceptions of ESL students' code-switching during presentations.
- (ii) The researcher aimed to investigate the impact of code switching in the classroom on ESL students' presentation skills and academic performance.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Factors of Using Code Switching**

Code switching often occurs unintentionally, as bilingual speakers frequently mix vocabulary from both languages during speech construction. Zainil & Arsyad (2021) found that, when used intentionally, code switching served pedagogical purposes such as explaining objectives, grammar, key points, unfamiliar terms, and checking comprehension. The following section discusses key factors contributing to its use in spoken language.

### ***Students Are Under a Lot of Pressure***

In many situations, bilingual individuals engage in CS due to pressure. Belghith & Fethallah (2024) found that the reasoning behind students' silence in the classroom primarily included the fear of committing mistakes, their inability to comprehend what was being said by the teacher, and insufficient time to process the information. The stressful moment of being required to speak could trigger anxiety, which affected their ability to think clearly. By engaging in code switching, students felt less tense and were able to lessen communication difficulties. Language alternation could occur because people are more fluent and confident in the language they use most often. However, in L2 classrooms, students might feel burdened with the pressure to speak without making any grammatical or lexical errors. For instance, the worry of not finding the right synonyms from the target language could lead to a misunderstanding of the intended message (Hussein et al., 2020). Therefore, to avoid choosing the wrong words or sharing incorrect information, students preferred to switch to their native language.

### ***The Need to Clarify Information***

Code switching was found to be a practical teaching strategy as Mekheimr (2023) highlighted, it was highly useful to clarify meanings or explaining grammatical rules to low English proficiency students. It acted as a catalyst to speed up comprehension upon a taught subject. Secondly, it also supported classroom management, as teachers could use the native language to reinforce rules and maintain order. By exchanging codes, teachers could clarify the classroom rules and enforce discipline within the classroom boundary better. Other than that, teachers exchange languages to stress the importance of a lesson, ask for clarification and provide feedback. Fahira (2022) reported that code switching helped speakers to emphasize an important idea or topic. Murtiningsih et al. (2022) proved this when instructions given in L1 were able to ensure students accomplished tasks given. Analogies or explanations delivered in the students' native language were absorbed and understood faster compared to those given in the unfamiliar target language.

### ***Impacts of Code Switching in a Classroom Setting***

Ong & Said (2020) noted that bilingual children's language choices and proficiency were influenced by factors such as education, socioeconomic status, gender, age, and social standing. In Malaysia's multilingual context, many students acquired Malay, English, and their mother tongues simultaneously. At UPTM, code switching was common among bilingual students and frequently occurred in classrooms. While it was often used to enhance communication skills (Ulfah et al., 2021), its impact on ESL students varied and is discussed in the following sections.

#### ***Positive Impact***

Firstly, code switching was effective in reducing psychological stress among students. In a study conducted by Nawaz & Naseem (2023), it was discovered that CS helped students be more comfortable in the classroom and increased their motivation. Participants in the study demonstrated a positive perception towards CS, as it allowed them to enjoy the learning process in a comfortable environment and encouraged them to express thoughts more effectively. Additionally, code switching contributed to enhancing students' confidence in classroom settings. Waluyo & Rofiah (2021) noted that in an English classroom, confidence played an important role in reducing students' fear and anxiety of speaking in front of others. Students who felt confident in themselves and their surroundings were often better able to deliver their assigned topics.

Furthermore, CS was seen as a practical strategy for saving time. University students used this approach to ensure the smooth delivery of presentations within the given time constraints. Correspondingly, findings from Subon & Tarmim (2021) denoted code switching as time saver during a presentation. Students in the study alternated languages to avoid stuttering while presenting. As a result, audiences, which included TESL lecturers and ESL students, were more engaged and better able to grasp the presentation content.

Lastly, code switching is beneficial in assisting students to understand a learning material. Teachers agreed that using the native language improved the clarity of instructions (Hazaymeh, 2022). This practice facilitated classroom discussions related to tasks, quizzes, or assignments. Similarly, Kumar et al. (2021) found that code switching enabled teachers to explain complex concepts and difficult questions, which was specifically helpful for students with lower comprehension or limited English proficiency.

### ***Negative Impact***

In contrast, code switching also exemplified negative impacts. Firstly, it reduced the quality and quantity of second language acquisition. This impact was supported by the idea that uncontrollable CS could lead students to be heavily dependent on translations. As observed by Sulaiman et al. (2022), students often expected teachers to repeat words or classroom instructions in their native language after hearing them once in English. This proved that students tended to take a shortcut in understanding content by avoiding the use of the target language. These practices were concerning as English courses were not solely focused on learning the language's structure but also on its practical application and use. Moreover, Nawaz & Naseem (2023) contended that habitual switching had hindered and slowed down second language acquisition, as language was believed to be acquired through various senses, including hearing. Therefore, to support students in successfully acquiring the target language, they emphasized that classroom instructions and interactions should have been conducted using the target language.

Furthermore, frequent CS was found to significantly reduce ESL students' motivation to use the target language (Shahidan & Shahrom, 2023). Students gradually lost interest in the English language once CS became a common habit. For instance, they casually used their native language when interacting with lecturers or peers during discussions or consultations. This behaviour led ESL students to laziness in utilising the target language as they had to put minimal effort to improving their English communication skills (Tariela et al., 2022)

Lastly, long-term code switching caused confusion among learners. Language learners who code switched frequently found it difficult to identify and correct language errors, as CS had become a conversational habit. Shinga & Pillay (2021) reported that such learners often made mistakes unconsciously. This will not benefit ESL learners positively if it was done in an English environment. The reasoning behind it was supported by Subon & Tarmim (2021), who asserted that prolonged dependence on code switching might have shaped students to become unaware of, or to ignore, mistakes made within a simple clause. If code switching were prolonged, it would hinder students' English language development and mastery.

## **METHODOLOGY**

### **Research Design**

This study employed a qualitative design through interviews with TESL lecturers at UPTM, Kuala Lumpur. Participants chose between face-to-face and online sessions. Brown (2022) noted that interviews produced high-quality transcripts, enabling thorough data review. This method allowed the researcher to gain deeper insights into participants' experiences and views.

A convenience sampling method was used, involving five (5) lecturers from the Faculty of Education, Social Science, and Humanities (FESSH) who taught non-English major courses. According to Mweshi & Sakyi (2020), convenience sampling involves selecting accessible individuals with relevant knowledge. These lecturers provided valuable insights into the impact of CS on ESL students' presentation skills.

List 1: Non-English major programs at UPTM that take General English courses with TESL lecturers

1. Faculty of Business and Accountancy (FABA)
2. Faculty of Computing and Multimedia (FCOM)
3. Diploma in Corporate Communication (BK101)
4. Bachelor of Communication (Hons) in Corporate Communication (BK201)

Firstly, open-ended questions are used for the interview sessions because the researcher would like the participant to give unrestricted responses. The interviews are divided into two parts, with all 8 questions adapted from past studies (Mekheimr, 2023; Murtiningsih et al., 2022) appropriately according to the research title. In part A, the participants are asked four questions regarding TESL lecturers' perceptions of ESL students implementing code switching throughout a presentation. Questions are adapted from Mohamed Amin Mekheimr in 2023. Meanwhile, in part B, four questions asked are related to the impact of using code switching in a classroom on ESL students' presentation skills and academic performance. The questions are adapted from a study conducted by Murtiningsih, Munawaroh, and Hidayatulloh in 2022.

## Data Analysis

The data gained from the interviews were analysed using thematic analysis. This approach was chosen as it helped the researcher become familiar with the data in a comprehensive manner. Tomaszewski et al. (2020) supported this view by contending that qualitative researchers were required to seek an in-depth understanding of a research topic rather than focus on predicting outcomes. The series of interview sessions was then transcribed into written form by cross-checking with the recorded videos. One of the main reasons for this process was to produce an accurate verbatim transcript that could provide valid insights (Christou, 2022).

Moreover, the data obtained were further analysed through coding. The coding process was conducted to assist the researcher in identifying similarities among the participants' responses (Murtiningsih et al., 2022). Therefore, the researcher needed to thoroughly understand each interview response in order to identify and categorise appropriate themes. For example, specific beliefs regarding the benefits of code switching for ESL students were examined. Potential biases, such as personal relationships between lecturers and students or the nature of the subject taught, were eliminated to ensure the researcher maintained an objective perspective.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings and discussion began with the first research question, which was: What are the TESL lecturers' perceptions of ESL students' code switching during an oral presentation? To address this question, the participants' views regarding the students' usage of CS during presentations were drawn out. Subsequently, the chapter continued with the second research question: How does code switching in the classroom affect ESL students' presentation skills and academic performance? All of the themes that emerged were highlighted using bold text and were summarised accordingly.

### Findings and Discussion on Research Question 1

#### *What Is Your Perception of ESL Students That Do Switching During a Presentation?*

Table 1: Negative perceptions of TESL lecturers

Type of Perception	Theme	Participants' Answer
Negative	Strictly discourage the occurrences of CS in presentations.	Participant 1: "In terms of presentation boundaries, CS is not an acceptable act because I believe in the rubric provided, there are marks allocated specifically for language. So, by right, when it comes to ESL students doing CS during a presentation is not acceptable for me."

CS has been rejected because formal presentations are not impromptu.	Participant 5: "It is bearable but I viewed it as a negative thing. This is because ESL students are obliged to adhere to presentations too."
	Participant 1: "When it comes to an oral presentation, students must be well prepared. They have to build their self confidence and their self-esteem."
	Participant 3: "They were given time to actually prepare for the presentation beforehand. For non-English major students, I understand that they are having difficulties with the language, but like I said, they have time to practice and they should be able to prepare what words that are supposed to come out with."

Firstly, some participants strictly discouraged the occurrence of code switching in presentations. Responses given proved that CS was not acceptable during formal presentations as students were expected to demonstrate their English-speaking abilities during the assessment. A study suggested that an ample amount of rehearsals, the use of cue cards, and re-reading presentation materials could have helped reduce the tendency to code switch (Mardiningrum & Ramadhani, 2022).

Moreover, the use of code switching was rejected due to formal presentations not being considered impromptu. The participants' responses above stressed that ample time had been given to let students practise and refine their speeches in English before the actual graded presentations. As supported by Nawas & Naseem (2023), CS was claimed to be an ineffective language strategy in an ESL classroom because it reduced students' amount and rate of vocabulary absorption. Thus, students were encouraged to work on building their self-confidence while attending class and to set aside the intention of trying to impress the audience.

On the contrary, the act of code switching was considered acceptable when it was used to facilitate comprehension throughout an English class. CS served as a cognitive strategy in the classroom. Responses obtained mirrored findings from Murtiningsih et al. (2022), in which the incorporation of the native language was found to be useful in helping students accomplish the tasks assigned. It played an important role in assisting non-English major students who struggled with English proficiency to understand complex content. This perspective aligned with a previous study which suggested that CS enhanced comprehension by bridging language gaps (Sulaiman et al., 2022).

**Table 2**  
*Positive perceptions of TESL lecturers*

Type of Perception	Theme	Participants' Answer
Positive	Using CS to facilitate comprehension.	Participant 2: "Regarding ESL students, since we are not talking about English majors, I will be slightly lenient. If it's not a graded presentation, then I still have a positive view on CS's effort there."
		Participant 3: "For me personally, I am okay with it, as long as they know basic pronunciation, structure, and grammar."

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Using CS during class activities.	Participant 2: "When we do group presentations, the rest of the group members help each other. So, there were not so many CS incidents during the presentation."
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Next, the usage of code switching was emphasised during class activities such as sharing sessions, group discussions, and group presentations. In casual settings, comprehension was considered more important than fluency. Answers above agreed with Hussein et al. (2020), where students used CS to sustain the communication process without interruption. Students were evidently seen to enjoy the learning process more, as code switching allowed them to understand the language input in a less stressful environment (Taufiq, Putri & Asmawati, 2022). CS served as a beneficial tool to motivate students to complete their tasks while being able to interact freely (Sarwar & Ghani, 2024; Hazaymeh, 2022). The informality of the setting allowed these non-English major students to articulate their topic more effectively.

### ***Do You Perceive Students That Use Code Switching as Having Lower English Proficiency?***

**Table 3**  
*Negative perceptions of TESL lecturers*

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Type of Perception	Theme	Participants' Answer
Negative	CS is an indicator of lower English proficiency.	Participant 1: "For a presentation in an ESL class, CS is not supposed to be an issue. So, in this case, students who do CS, I would say they might have the problem itself when it comes to English proficiency."  Participant 3: "If the presenter itself is having difficulties with the English language, they will do CS more frequently. I believe that it is due to having low English proficiency."  Participant 5: "Yeah, I think so."

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The first theme addressed was CS served as an indicator of lower proficiency in the English language. In the context of this research, the native language (L1) primarily used was Malay. The majority of the participants agreed with the ideology that students who frequently alternated between English and their L1 tended to have lower English proficiency. This perspective was rooted in the belief that highly proficient speakers, particularly university students, should have been able to sustain their speech entirely in English without relying on their native language. Answer given mirrored findings from past studies, where students used CS to conceal their lack of articulation in their speeches (Subon & Tarmim, 2021; Murtiningsih et al., 2022). In this sense, CS was viewed as a symptom of linguistic weakness, where students switched languages due to their inability to express themselves entirely in English.

The second theme identified was that CS served as a partial indicator of one's English language proficiency. Participants highlighted that fluency in speaking did not always reflect overall English proficiency, as students might still have performed well in other areas such as writing, listening, and reading comprehension. Chand (2021) agreed that various aspects could have influenced the development of language proficiency, including the quality of teaching aids and syllabuses, the role of teachers,

the teaching approach, and the facilities of the educational institution. Students who experienced severe anxiety or low self-esteem might have struggled with fluency, despite demonstrating strong English skills.

**Table 4**  
*Positive perceptions of TESL lecturers*

Type of Perception	Theme	Participants' Answer
Positive	CS is a partial indicator of English language proficiency.	<p>Participant 1: "Somehow, when we talk about proficiency, our self-esteem and confidence come along. If you are not confident enough with that language, you know that language, but you are not confident enough, it will affect your proficiency."</p> <p>Participant 2: "It is unfair to simply say those who cannot speak English have lower English proficiency, but that would be the first indicator."</p> <p>Participant 4: "I encourage them to use English little by little fully. Meaning to say that if they have more than one presentation, in the first presentation, they will use CS, then in the next presentation, I want them to improve their language skills."</p>

The remaining participants pointed out that code switching (CS) should not have been viewed purely as a deficiency but rather as an indication of other underlying factors, such as anxiety, confidence issues, or lack of preparation. This response aligned with past studies, which found that students might have used CS as a coping mechanism to overcome anxiety and build confidence in speaking English (Kostromitina & Kang, 2021; Ahmad & Ismail, 2022). Although students demonstrated strong English skills in other areas, severe anxiety or low self-esteem could have led them to struggle with speech fluency.

The discussion revealed that most participants viewed frequent CS as a sign of low English proficiency. However, some argued that CS alone did not reflect overall language ability, as skills like writing and comprehension also mattered. While CS aided initial communication, its gradual reduction was recommended to improve long-term proficiency and speaking confidence.

## Findings and Discussion on Research Question 2

### *How Does Code Switching Affect the Flow of ESL Students' Presentations? Did the Presentation Go Smoothly or create more Pauses in Talking?*

The majority of participants mentioned that CS created pauses and interruptions. They emphasised that CS disrupted the flow of the presentation, especially when students experienced mental blocks while searching for the appropriate English terms. According to Kosmala & Crible (2022), fillers and pauses mirrored the difficulty speakers faced in planning their speeches. The responses given aligned with a previous study, which stated that filler words such as "um" and "ah" were sounds people used to indicate they were taking time to think (Seals & Coppock, 2022). The use of these filler words unconsciously lengthened the presentation and instilled anxiety among students. In some cases, students sought help from their peers during the presentation, which further interrupted the flow of speech delivery.

**Table 5***Negative impact on ESL students' presentations*

Type of Impacts	Theme	Participants' Answer
Negative	CS created pauses and interruptions.	Participant 2: "When they couldn't find the words, it actually disrupts the presentation because they go like 'Ahh, what's the word?'"
		Participant 4: "Code switching created more pauses in the presentation. For those who are not prepared, they will have more pauses as they try to find suitable words."
		Participant 5: "There will be more interruptions because CS is not as easy as it seems. The students usually take some time to find the words in their mother tongue as well."
	Students read directly from the slides.	Participant 2: "There was one case that I remember, they simply just read the presentation slides, rather than really doing the presentation."

Additionally, when students relied too heavily on CS, they tended to read directly from slides instead of presenting fluently, which reduced audience engagement and professionalism. Kosmala & Crible (2022) found that presentations created professional pressure and stressed the importance of performance. Agustina et al. (2021) identified motivation, interest, intelligence and learning strategies as key factors in language learning. Excessive CS may have reduced ESL students' interest in using English, making them more self-conscious. As a result, many chose the safer option of reading directly from slides.

**Table 6***Positive impact on ESL students' presentations*

Type of Impact	Theme	Participants' Answer
Positive	CS smoothed speech delivery.	Participant 3: "If they intentionally change the language, it will go smoothly."

CS was viewed as a strategy to maintain the smoothness of delivery. The participant acknowledged that CS had served as a compensatory strategy, allowing students to maintain the flow of their presentation when they encountered difficulties in recalling English words. Subon & Tarmim (2021) also noted that CS played a role in avoiding stuttering during presentations. When students switched to their native language (Malay), they were able to quickly convey their thoughts and avoid awkward silences. In this case, CS left a positive impact on the presenters.

**Does Code Switching Affect The Marking and Grading of Non-English Major Students?**

**Table 7**  
*Influence of CS on students' evaluation*

Type of Influence	Theme	Participants' Answer
Negative	CS affected language proficiency and fluency marks.	<p>Participant 1: "CS affects the marks because when it comes to an oral presentation, most of the marks are allocated to language proficiency and pronunciation."</p> <p>Participant 2: "CS affects the correct pronunciation, sentence structures, and fluency, which are part of the grading criteria."</p> <p>Participant 3: "CS is more on fluency. So, the students are not fluent. Meaning to say that their English proficiency is quite lacking."</p>
	Several participants strictly adhered to the rubric.	<p>Participant 1: "If they are not able to follow the rubric, that is where their marks will be deducted."</p> <p>Participant 2: "For graded presentations, I'm strict. But for non-graded ones, I'm okay with CS."</p> <p>Participant 4: "I accept minimum switches in a presentation, only 1 or 2. Not more than that as it will affect their marks."</p>

One of the themes identified was that CS directly affected language proficiency and fluency marks. The majority of participants agreed that CS influenced the evaluation process. Noorbar & Mamaghani (2023) likewise argued that CS affected students' speech fluency and ability to communicate in the target language, as the English classroom was often the only space for ESL learners to refine grammar, pronunciation, and articulation.

Furthermore, several participants strictly adhered to the evaluation rubric. These participants emphasized that the use of English was compulsory, as outlined in the rubric. Therefore, failure to comply with the language requirements directly affected grading. This assertion was supported by Agustina et al. (2021), who noted that student achievement was a critical component of evaluation systems used by many educational institutions. Khan, Ali, and Hussain (2024) also supported this perspective, highlighting that rubrics were beneficial for educational instructors as they provided standardised and transparent guidelines for assessment.

**Table 8**  
*Influence of CS on students' evaluation*

Type of Influence	Theme	Participants' Answer
Positive	Mark deductions based on individual perceptions.	Participant 3: "Different lecturers perceive CS differently whether they want to give or reduce marks."
		Participant 5: "English may not be their major, but the usage of English is needed here. I would deduct some marks there."

On the other hand, the final theme focused on how mark deductions were based on the lecturers' individual perceptions. These differing views were supported by Waluyo & Rofiah (2021), who stated that correctional feedback often concentrated more on the performance of speech delivery rather than on specific linguistic errors. The responses aligned with a study conducted by Subon & Tarmim (2021), which emphasised that the presence of code switching suggested a need for rubric modifications to reflect real-life communication practices better, despite English being mandated as the medium of instruction. TESL lecturers who viewed code switching positively were found to be more lenient in grading, prioritising content comprehension over strict adherence to language use, and vice versa.

## CONCLUSION

The present study explored the perspectives of TESL lecturers at University Poly-Tech Malaysia (UPTM) on ESL students' code switching (CS) during presentations. After a thorough analysis, the findings revealed that lecturers held differing views on this practice.

Secondly, in terms of language proficiency, the majority of participants perceived frequent code switching as an indicator of lower English proficiency, suggesting that students experienced difficulty in sustaining speech entirely in English. However, some participants argued that CS alone did not determine overall proficiency, noting that other language skills, such as writing and comprehension, should also be taken into account.

Furthermore, the study found that CS exhibited both positive and negative effects on presentation delivery. It enabled some students to speak more smoothly and boosted their confidence. Nevertheless, CS also led to interruptions for others, including prolonged hesitations. This was likely due to the high expectations among participants that presentations should be conducted entirely in English.

Moreover, CS could reduce marks for fluency and proficiency, depending on how strictly lecturers adhered to grading rubrics. As professionals in the field, the lecturers were expected to comply with institutional policies. However, final judgments remained at their discretion. Overall, the findings suggested that while CS supported communication, its use should be controlled to promote better English language use. Future research could investigate students' perspectives and explore how the minimal use of CS influences long-term language development.

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## CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could be perceived to influence the work reported in this paper.

## AUTHOR CONTRIBUTION STATEMENT

Author A contributed to the conceptualization and design of the study, data collection, data analysis, and drafting of the manuscript. Author B contributed to the supervision of the study, methodological guidance, interpretation of results, and critical revision of the manuscript. Both authors reviewed and approved the final version of the manuscript.

## ETHICS STATEMENT

This study was conducted in accordance with the ethical standards of the relevant institution. All participants were informed about the purpose of the study and provided written informed consent prior to participation. Participants' privacy and confidentiality were maintained throughout the research, and all data collected were used solely for academic purposes.

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