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Code-Switching in Students' Narrative Texts: Learner Practices and Teacher Perceptions

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ABSTRACT

Code-switching has become common in students' creative writing as Indonesian interacts intensively with regional and foreign languages, yet little is known about how teachers interpret it. This study examined the forms and functions of code-switching in students' narrative texts and Indonesian language teachers' perceptions of the phenomenon. A qualitative design grounded in transcendental phenomenology was employed. Data comprised 30 narrative texts, a questionnaire completed by three teachers, and an in-depth interview with one teacher, and the sources were triangulated. Four forms were identified: tag-switching, inter-sentential switching, intra-sentential switching, and lexical insertion, with Indonesian–English as the dominant pair. Indonesian consistently functioned as the matrix language, indicating that the switches were rule-governed. Situational switching followed changes of domain, whereas metaphorical switching, particularly English used for reflection at narrative climaxes, appeared in eleven texts. Students maintained readability through self-translation. All three teachers simultaneously regarded code-switching as linguistic richness and as an error to be corrected. Their perceptions converged with the texts on where switches occurred but diverged on why. The study recommends function-based assessment rubrics and metalinguistic awareness training for teachers.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Indonesian classrooms are linguistically plural spaces. A single student may speak Javanese, Sundanese, or Minangkabau at home, use Indonesian at school, and draw on English and Arabic through digital media, popular culture, and religious practice. These repertoires do not stay in oral interaction; they increasingly surface in students' written work, particularly in creative and narrative writing, where students are invited to tell personal stories in their own voice. The phenomenon of code-switching, the alternation between two or more languages or language varieties within a single communicative event (Poplack, 1980; Gardner-Chloros, 2009), has therefore become an everyday reality for teachers of *Bahasa Indonesia*, who are simultaneously responsible for fostering students' expressive competence and for cultivating standard Indonesian as the language of schooling, examinations, and formal communication.

Research on code-switching in Indonesia has grown considerably over the last decade. Studies have documented code-switching and code-mixing in social media status updates (Piantari, 2011), Instagram accounts (Yussak, 2015), WhatsApp interactions among bilingual university students (Adelia et al., 2026), TikTok content (Prameswari & Purwanto, 2025), podcasts (Rachman et al., 2024), novels and online fiction (Azzahra & Dewi, 2023; Zulfaida et al., 2024), and short films (Nisa & Septiyani, 2024). In educational

settings, research has focused mainly on teachers' code-switching during classroom instruction (Yuniati, 2018; Widiasri et al., 2026) and on multilingual programmes at the primary level (Hasan & Farida, 2025). Most of these studies are descriptive-structural: they classify the forms and functions of code-switching but rarely examine how the phenomenon is experienced and interpreted by the people involved.

Two gaps follow from this pattern. First, few studies have examined code-switching in students' *written narrative texts*, a genre that is personal, close to spoken language, and therefore especially open to the use of multiple codes. Second, students' code-switching practices and teachers' perceptions of those practices have generally been studied separately. Teachers' beliefs, however, shape how they teach, give feedback, and assess (Borg, 2003), and their views of what counts as "correct" language are embedded in broader language ideologies (Woolard & Schieffelin, 1994). Without examining how teachers' perceptions relate to what students actually write, it is difficult to judge whether classroom responses to code-switching are pedagogically well-founded.

This study addresses these gaps by combining a linguistic analysis of 30 student narrative texts with a phenomenological inquiry into teachers' perceptions. It is guided by two research questions: (1) What forms and functions of code-switching appear in students' narrative texts, and how do students negotiate between expressive freedom and the norms of standard Indonesian? (2) How do Indonesian language teachers perceive code-switching, and how do these perceptions relate to students' actual writing and to teachers' instructional and assessment practices? The novelty of the study lies in its triangulated design, which places teachers' stated attitudes, the reasoning behind those attitudes, and the linguistic reality of students' texts side by side, thereby revealing where teachers' perceptions converge with or diverge from students' practices.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Code-Switching: Forms and Functions

Code-switching refers to the alternation of languages or language varieties within a single communicative event, whether spoken or written (Gardner-Chloros, 2009; Yussak, 2015). In the Indonesian sociolinguistic tradition, a distinction is drawn between internal code-switching, which involves Indonesian and regional languages or varieties within one language, and external code-switching, which involves Indonesian and foreign languages (Yuniati, 2018). Code-switching is also commonly distinguished from code-mixing, in which elements of one language (words, phrases, or clauses) are inserted into the structure of another without a full change of linguistic system (Zulfaida et al., 2024). Because the boundary between the two is often blurred in practice, this study uses code-switching as an umbrella term and treats lexical insertion as one of its structural types.

Structurally, Poplack (1980) distinguished three types of code-switching: *tag-switching*, the insertion of tags, interjections, or short fixed expressions; *inter-sentential switching*, in which the switch occurs at a clause or sentence boundary; and *intra-sentential switching*, in which elements of two languages co-occur within a single clause. Functionally, Appel and Muysken (1987) proposed that code-switching may serve referential, directive, expressive, phatic, metalinguistic, and poetic functions. Blom and Gumperz (1972) further distinguished between *situational* switching, triggered by changes in setting, participants, or domain, and *metaphorical* switching, which occurs without a change in external situation and is motivated by affective or stylistic intent. Grosjean (1989) cautioned that bilinguals should not be viewed as two monolinguals in one person, but as speakers with a distinctive communicative competence of their own.

2.2. The Matrix Language Frame Model

The Matrix Language Frame (MLF) model (Myers-Scotton, 1993) offers a structural account of intra-sentential code-switching. It holds that the two languages in a mixed clause play asymmetrical roles: a *matrix language* supplies the grammatical frame, while an *embedded language* contributes inserted material. Three principles follow. The *morpheme order principle* states that word order follows the matrix language; the *system morpheme principle* states that grammatical morphemes such as affixes, particles, and tense markers come from the matrix language; and the *uniform structure principle* states that constituents remain consistent with the matrix language's structure. Embedded-language material may also appear as *EL islands*, that is, fixed phrases that retain their internal grammar. The later 4-M model (Myers-Scotton & Jake, 2000) refined this account by distinguishing content morphemes from three types of system morphemes and showed that content morphemes are by far the most easily borrowed.

2.3. Translanguaging and Code-Meshing in Writing

Unlike spontaneous oral switching, code-switching in writing involves reflective choice, since writers can revise and reconsider their language. García and Li Wei (2014) conceptualised *translanguaging* as the deployment of a single, integrated linguistic repertoire rather than the alternation between separate language systems. In the context of academic writing, Canagarajah (2011) proposed *code-meshing* as a rhetorical strategy through which multilingual writers blend codes purposefully, arguing that such practices should be recognised as legitimate resources rather than treated only as deviations. These perspectives suggest that

students' code-switching in narrative texts may reflect deliberate meaning-making rather than linguistic deficiency.

2.4. Teacher Cognition and Language Ideology

Teacher cognition refers to the unobservable dimension of teaching, namely what teachers think, know, and believe, and how these relate to classroom practice (Borg, 2003). Teacher cognition is dynamic, may contain internal contradictions, and does not always translate linearly into action. Language ideologies, defined as shared beliefs that link linguistic forms to social and moral evaluations (Woolard & Schieffelin, 1994), provide a lens for understanding why teachers may simultaneously value multilingualism and regard non-standard forms as errors. From a sociocultural perspective (Vygotsky, 1978), language is not a neutral tool but a medium that shapes and is shaped by social identity, which helps explain why students with strong regional-language backgrounds bring those languages into personal narratives.

2.5. Phenomenology as a Research Approach

Phenomenology, originating with Husserl, studies the structures of experience and consciousness from the first-person point of view. Its central principle, *intentionality*, holds that consciousness is always directed toward something, so the meaning of a phenomenon must be traced through the experience of those who live it. Moustakas (1994) operationalised transcendental phenomenology through a sequence of analytic steps: *epoche* (bracketing prior judgements), *horizonalization* (listing all significant statements as having equal value), clustering of meaning units into themes, *textural description* (what participants experienced), *structural description* (how and why the experience took shape), and synthesis of the *essence* of the phenomenon. Whereas hermeneutic phenomenology (van Manen, 1990) emphasises interpretation, the transcendental approach foregrounds description after bracketing. Taken together, the MLF model, the functional framework, and phenomenology allow code-switching to be examined both as a rule-governed linguistic phenomenon and as a meaningful lived experience.

3. RESEARCH METHOD

3.1. Research Design

This study employed a qualitative design within a transcendental phenomenological framework (Moustakas, 1994), combined with descriptive linguistic analysis of written texts. The phenomenological framework was chosen because the study sought not only to describe the forms of code-switching but also to understand how teachers make sense of the phenomenon and how this sense-making informs their practice.

3.2. Data Sources and Participants

Data were drawn from three sources. The first comprised 30 narrative texts written by students at SMK Swasta SPP SNAKMA Muhammadiyah Tanjung Anom, a private vocational secondary school in Deli Serdang Regency, North Sumatra, Indonesia. The texts covered a wide range of everyday themes, including intergenerational family relationships, transitions in education and work, digital and online learning, religious life, and cross-cultural experiences. They were selected purposively because each displayed code-switching and, collectively, they involved diverse language pairs, namely Indonesian–English as well as Indonesian with Javanese, Sundanese, Minangkabau, Arabic, and regional varieties of Indonesian such as Papuan Malay. The second source was a Likert-scale questionnaire completed by three teachers of Indonesian (hereafter Teacher 1, Teacher 2, and Teacher 3), which elicited their attitudes toward the causes, value, and pedagogical treatment of code-switching. The third source was an in-depth semi-structured interview with Teacher 1, an Indonesian language teacher with approximately fifteen years of teaching experience, including teaching at a vocational secondary school (SMK).

3.3. Data Analysis

The narrative texts were analysed in three stages. First, every instance of code-switching was identified and classified by structural type, following Poplack (1980), with lexical insertion treated as a separate category. Second, each instance was classified by language pair and by function, following Blom and Gumperz (1972) and Appel and Muysken (1987). Third, the grammatical behaviour of mixed clauses was examined using the principles of the MLF model (Myers-Scotton, 1993). The questionnaire responses were compared across items to identify points of agreement and divergence among the three teachers, from which initial perception profiles were formulated. The interview transcript was analysed following Moustakas' (1994) steps of epoche, horizonalization, clustering of meaning units, textural and structural description, and synthesis of essence.

The three data sources were then triangulated, as shown in Figure 1. Teachers' perception profiles derived from the questionnaire and interview were compared with the patterns found in the 30 texts in order to identify relations of *convergence* (perceptions consistent with textual reality), *divergence* (perceptions at odds with textual reality), and *ambiguity* (relations that could not be verified with the available data).

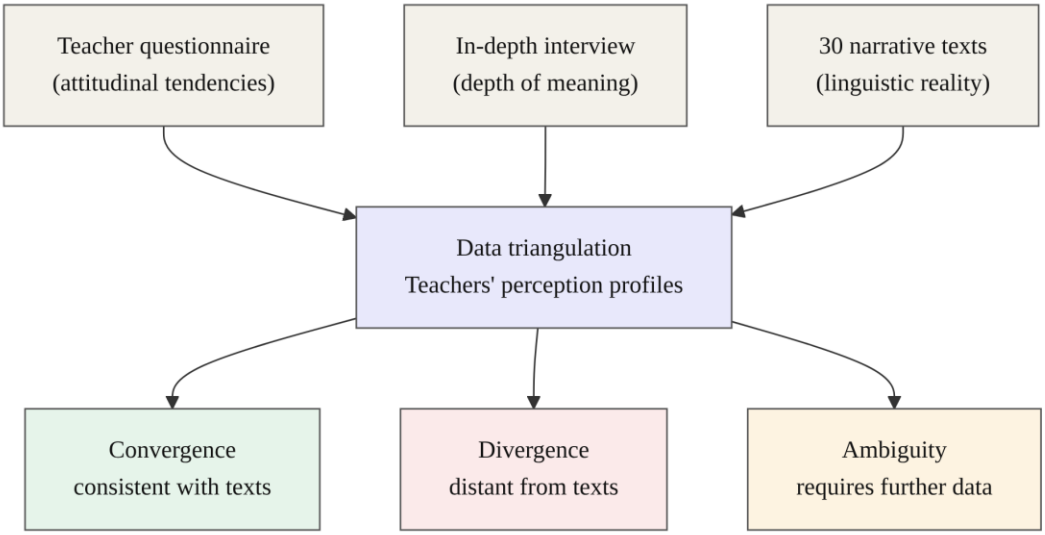


Figure 1. Data triangulation of teachers' perceptions of code-switching

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1. Forms of Code-Switching in Students' Narrative Texts

The analysis identified four dominant structural forms of code-switching. *Tag-switching* involved the insertion of interjections, particles, or short expressions from another language without altering the core clause, and functioned mainly as a marker of intimacy or emotional emphasis. Examples include *"You know, ada rasa yang tidak bisa dijelaskan..."* ['You know, there is a feeling that cannot be explained...'] (Text 1), the Javanese particles in *"Kok poto-poto thok, ndak dimakan. Sayang, to?"* ['Why just take photos and not eat it? What a waste, isn't it?'] (Text 2), and *"Life's funny that way, ya?"* (Text 20).

Inter-sentential switching placed a complete sentence in another language. Examples include the Javanese utterance *"Wis, wis, nek gula dikurangi iku pesenmu, dudu pesenku"* ['Enough, reducing the sugar was your order, not mine'] (Text 2), a fully English utterance by a meatball vendor giving directions (Text 10), the Minangkabau greeting *"Wah, anak Apak lah pulang! Lamo bana ndak balik ka kampuang, Da!"* ['My son is home! You haven't come back to the village for so long!'] (Text 21), and a stand-up meeting script, *"Yesterday I did X, today I'll do Y, blocked by Z"* (Text 22).

Intra-sentential switching was the most frequent form. It mixed elements of two languages within a single clause, as in *"Ibu, I've been fine, honestly, tapi ya emang agak padet jadwalnya"* ['Mum, I've been fine, honestly, but the schedule is a bit packed'] (Text 3), *"Kita perlu pivot atau tutup"* ['We need to pivot or close'] (Text 26), and the academic register of Text 13, *"...triangulation-nya kurang kuat"* ['...the triangulation is not strong enough']. Finally, *lexical insertion* introduced one- or two-word technical terms clustered by domain: digital learning (*connection, mute, unmute, submit, deadline*; Text 7), the workplace (*deck, meeting, onboarding, WFH*; Text 22), modern cooking (*scrambled eggs, medium heat, fold gently*; Text 16), and literary criticism (*narrative structure, non-linear timeline, postmemory*; Text 17). Table 1 summarises these forms.

Table 1. Forms of code-switching in students' narrative texts

Form	Main characteristic	Texts
Tag-switching	Insertion of particles, interjections, or short expressions	1, 2, 15, 20
Inter-sentential	A complete sentence in another language	2, 4, 10, 21, 22
Intra-sentential	Two languages mixed within one clause	3, 5, 13, 24, 26, 29
Lexical insertion	Domain-specific technical terms	7, 13, 16, 17, 22

In terms of language pairs, Indonesian–English switching was clearly dominant, appearing in 19 of the 30 texts and occurring mainly in academic, digital, professional, and reflective contexts. Switching into regional languages was associated with kinship and authority relations: Javanese appeared in conversations with parents, teachers, and grandparents (Texts 2, 3, 4, 14, 25); Sundanese was typically spoken by older characters (Texts 6, 8); and Minangkabau appeared in the context of returning to one's home village (Text 21). Arabic appeared in formulaic religious expressions (Texts 5, 18), while regional varieties of Indonesian marked local identity (Texts 8, 12).

These findings corroborate earlier studies showing the dominance of Indonesian–English mixing among young Indonesians in digital and popular contexts (Adelia et al., 2026; Azzahra & Dewi, 2023; Rachman et

al., 2024). They also lend strong support to the MLF model. Across the corpus, Indonesian consistently functioned as the matrix language. In Text 3, the clause *"tapi ya emang agak padet jadwalnya"* follows Indonesian word order entirely, and the English segment merely "rides along" without disturbing it, in line with the morpheme order principle. In Text 26, *pivot* functions as a content morpheme while all surrounding system morphemes remain Indonesian. The form *triangulation-nya* (Text 13), in which an English noun takes the Indonesian possessive clitic *-nya*, shows that even morphemes attached directly to borrowed words come from the matrix language, as predicted by the system morpheme principle. Phrases such as *mixed methods* and *medium heat* behaved as EL islands, retaining English adjective–noun order internally while functioning as single units within Indonesian clauses. Consistent with the 4-M model (Myers-Scotton & Jake, 2000), students inserted nouns, verbs, and idioms but almost never replaced Indonesian grammatical elements such as the particles *-lah* and *-kah* or the affixes *me-* and *di-*. Students' code-switching was therefore rule-governed rather than chaotic.

4.2. Functions of Code-Switching

Situational switching followed changes of domain. Academic English terms appeared automatically in formal educational settings (Texts 13, 17), corporate English appeared in the workplace (Text 22), regional languages appeared when characters spoke with parents or grandparents (Texts 2, 3, 6, 21, 25), and Arabic appeared in moments of worship (Text 18).

Metaphorical switching was the most salient and recurrent pattern. In eleven texts (Texts 1, 5, 6, 10, 11, 20, 23, 26, 27, 29, 30), English served as a "language of reflection" at the emotional climax or philosophical close of the narrative, in expressions such as *"Some things don't need translation"*, *"Home, I finally understood, is a language, not a place"*, and *"Language is not a privilege"*. Students thus appeared to position English as a code perceived as more "universal" or "profound" for conveying insight, while Indonesian and regional languages remained the languages of emotion and intimacy. A related pattern was the representation of an inner voice in English within Indonesian narration, as in *"What if I fail?"* (Text 5) and *"That was beautiful..."* (Text 11), where the switch marks a voice distinct from the main narrator. Text 27, however, moved in the opposite direction: its protagonist replaced an English article title, *"Finding Dignity in the Margins"*, with an Indonesian one, *"Pelajaran dari Bu Sarni"* ['A Lesson from Mrs. Sarni'], because the latter felt more meaningful. This shows that students' language choices are not one-directional and are shaped by language ideology (Woolard & Schieffelin, 1994).

Two further patterns emerged. A *generational and knowledge-source contrast* appeared in Text 16, where English cooking terms learned from online videos were set against the mother's traditional Indonesian kitchen vocabulary, and in Text 6, where three generations used three codes: Sundanese, Indonesian, and English. Text 25 also displayed an *intralingual speech-level shift* within Javanese, from *ngoko* (*"Le, Simbah arep ngendiko sithik"* ['Son, Grandpa wants to say something']) to *krama* (*"Nggih, Simbah. Kulo badhe dados tiyang sae"* ['Yes, Grandpa. I will be a good person']), followed by the grandfather's switch into English, *"Just be a good person"*. In a single scene, three layers of code index changing relations of power and respect. Table 2 summarises the functional patterns.

Table 2. Functional patterns of code-switching

Pattern	Main trigger	Texts
Situational	Change of domain (school, work, family, religion)	2, 3, 6, 13, 17, 18, 21, 22, 25
Metaphorical	Emotional load, stylistic effect, philosophical reflection	1, 5, 6, 10, 11, 20, 23, 26, 27, 29, 30
Generational/knowledge-source contrast	Traditional versus digital sources of knowledge	6, 16
Intralingual speech-level shift	Change in power relations or respect within a regional language	25

The prominence of metaphorical switching extends Blom and Gumperz's (1972) framework to written narrative and supports the view that multilingual writers draw on their full repertoire for expressive purposes (García & Li Wei, 2014). The concentration of switches in dialogue and emotionally charged passages also aligns with the narrative structure of orientation, complication, resolution, and coda (Labov & Waletzky, 1997): regional languages clustered in dialogue, whereas English clustered at points of evaluation and coda.

4.3. Negotiating Expressive Freedom and Standard Indonesian

The texts showed that students neither fully violated nor fully submitted to the norms of standard Indonesian; instead, they negotiated between the two through identifiable strategies. First, standard Indonesian functioned as the *framing language*: spelling, dialogue punctuation, capitalisation, and expository sentence structure followed standard conventions, while code-switching operated as embedded material. Negotiation therefore took place at the lexical-expressive level rather than the structural level.

Second, students used *self-translation as a compensatory strategy*. In Text 25, the Javanese proverb *"Urip iku urup, Le..."* was immediately followed by the writer's own Indonesian rendering, "Hidup itu menyala, Nak. Jangan hanya hidup, tapi berilah cahaya bagi orang lain" ['Life is a flame, son. Do not merely live, but give light to others'], and *"Kulo badhe dados tiyang sae"* was followed by "Saya akan menjadi orang baik" ['I will be a good person']. Students thus positioned themselves as translators for their readers, preserving the clarity valued by the standard norm without sacrificing local expression.

Third, several texts *verbalised the tension explicitly*. In Text 3, the narrator described his reply to his mother as "campur aduk" ['jumbled'] and noticed her expression "between pride and bewilderment". In Text 22, a nervous intern at a stand-up meeting "spoke fully in Indonesian" among colleagues who used mixed language, and everyone laughed, which reverses the usual hierarchy by making full Indonesian the awkward code in a modern workplace. In Text 13, the most formal setting, an undergraduate thesis defence, produced the densest use of English academic terms, which suggests that academic institutions themselves relax purist demands for the sake of terminological precision.

Finally, several texts resolved the tension by embracing linguistic *fluidity*. Text 3 closed with *"Home, I finally understood, is a language, not a place"*, and Text 29 described a child's mixing as *"bilingualism in its purest form"*, unforced and flowing like water. Text 27, by contrast, returned to Indonesian. These resolutions indicate that students treated their languages not as competing systems requiring a single choice but as one flexible repertoire drawn upon according to emotional and social needs, consistent with translanguaging (García & Li Wei, 2014) and code-meshing (Canagarajah, 2011). Table 3 maps the direction of negotiation across domains.

Table 3. Domains and directions of negotiation

Domain	Direction of negotiation	Texts
Formal-academic (thesis defence, online class, office)	Standard norm relaxed for terminological precision or professional identity	7, 13, 22
Intergenerational family	Personal expression negotiated through self-translation to remain comprehensible	3, 25
Inner reflection and narrative closure	Standard norm set aside for emotional honesty, without translation	1, 6, 10, 11, 23, 30
Public or institutional with local identity	Indonesian retained as subtle resistance to the dominance of foreign languages	27

4.4. Teachers' Perceptions of Code-Switching

The questionnaire revealed three main points of divergence among the teachers: their understanding of the causes of code-switching, their beliefs about its expressive value, and their practical tolerance of code-switching in classroom writing. On this basis, three initial profiles were formulated (Table 4).

Table 4. Teachers' perception profiles based on the questionnaire

Profile	Teacher	Main characteristics
Balanced descriptive-prescriptive	Teacher 1	Accepted code-switching as a natural phenomenon but still firmly judged it an error; the most "central" position
Pedagogically adaptive but ideologically conservative	Teacher 2	Most active in adapting teaching strategies, yet most convinced that code-switching lowers the quality of standard Indonesian
Prescriptive-purist	Teacher 3	Most sceptical of the expressive value of code-switching and least tolerant of it, even in early drafts

The most striking finding concerned internal ambivalence. As Table 5 shows, all three teachers agreed that code-switching reflects rich linguistic competence (item 6) while also agreeing, often strongly, that it is an error to be corrected (item 8) and that it reduces the quality of standard Indonesian (item 9).

Table 5. Ambivalence in teachers' questionnaire responses

Item	Statement	Teacher 1	Teacher 2	Teacher 3
6	Code-switching reflects rich linguistic competence	Agree	Agree	Agree
8	Code-switching is an error that must be corrected	Strongly agree	Strongly agree	Agree
9	Code-switching reduces the quality of standard Indonesian	Agree	Strongly agree	Strongly agree

This simultaneous endorsement of contradictory statements is not random inconsistency. It is textual evidence of a lived dilemma: teachers value code-switching as linguistic richness, yet their professional role

as guardians of the standard obliges them to correct it. The dilemma resides within individual teachers rather than merely between them, which illustrates the "double consciousness" that language ideology can produce (Woolard & Schieffelin, 1994) and the internal contradictions characteristic of teacher cognition (Borg, 2003).

The interview with Teacher 1 showed that this teacher's "central" questionnaire position was the outcome of a sophisticated resolution mechanism rather than passive moderation. Four themes emerged from the phenomenological analysis. The first was *domain compartmentalisation*: code-switching was accepted in personal expression (dialogue, early drafts, personal journals, social media) but rejected in formally assessed narration. The second was *function as the criterion*: what mattered was not the form of a switch but its position and function in the text, that is, whether it strengthened character or atmosphere or merely compensated for limited vocabulary. The third was *pedagogical autonomy amid a regulatory vacuum*: the teacher's "tolerance zone" policy had been built from fifteen years of personal experience rather than from official curriculum guidance. The fourth was *future orientation as a justification for prescriptivism*: the teacher's concern stemmed less from linguistic purism than from an anticipatory responsibility for students' readiness for academic and professional life. Teacher 1 also acknowledged that this functional criterion was "not entirely scientific", since it depended on the teacher's reading of students' intentions. Furthermore, while enjoying personal flexibility in handling code-switching, Teacher 1 firmly rejected its formal institutionalisation in the curriculum, fearing it would become a loophole legitimising mixed language in formal writing. This shows that the dilemma is managed rather than resolved: tolerance is accepted as personal and situational, but not as an institutional norm.

4.5. Triangulating Perceptions with Textual Reality

Comparing teachers' perceptions with the 30 texts revealed three types of relation. *Convergence* was evident in Teacher 1's tolerance zone. The teacher's intuition that code-switching naturally belongs in dialogue and emotional expression rather than core narration matched the textual pattern: in Texts 2, 3, 6, 21, and 25, switches into regional languages were concentrated in dialogue and emotional moments rather than scattered across the narrative. The assumption that students in technical programmes insert more English terms was consistent with the situational pattern of technical and digital vocabulary in Texts 7, 13, 17, and 22. The "consistency" criterion for distinguishing deliberate from non-deliberate switching was also borne out: in Text 13, academic terms appeared consistently and appropriately, whereas in Text 29 a child's mixing appeared spontaneously without a planned pattern. Although built without formal theory, the teacher's pedagogical intuition paralleled actual linguistic patterns.

Divergence appeared in three areas. Teacher 3 strongly rejected the notion that code-switching expresses what cannot be conveyed in Indonesian alone, yet the metaphorical pattern in eleven texts showed students deliberately switching to English at their narratives' emotional and reflective peaks. If this belief carries over into assessment, the most meaningful parts of students' writing risk being corrected as errors. Teacher 1 assumed that switching in core narration always signals a lack of vocabulary, yet Text 25 demonstrated self-translation, evidence of metalinguistic awareness higher than teachers tend to assume. Teacher 1 also believed that accommodating code-switching would lower language standards, yet Text 27 showed a writer who, fully aware of their choices, returned to Indonesian because it felt more powerful. *Ambiguity* concerned Teacher 2, whose questionnaire responses combined the most adaptive practice with the strongest ideological rejection of code-switching's expressive value; without interview data, this combination could not be verified against classroom practice. The same applied to Teacher 3. Table 6 synthesises these relations.

Table 6. Synthesis of teachers' perception profiles and their relation to students' texts

Profile	Teacher	Relation to students' texts
Prescriptive-reflective (domain compartmentalisation)	Teacher 1	Convergent on where switches occur (dialogue versus core narration); divergent on their causes (deficiency versus conscious strategy)
Pedagogically pragmatic but ideologically conservative	Teacher 2	Cannot be verified without in-depth interview data
Prescriptive-purist	Teacher 3	Sharply divergent from the metaphorical-expressive pattern that dominates the texts

An important implication follows: students, without explicit instruction, already practised a form of dilemma management. The domain compartmentalisation that Teacher 1 pursued deliberately occurred organically in students' writing; self-translation showed that students could maintain readability without being compelled to; and the return to Indonesian in Text 27 showed that accommodating creativity does not automatically threaten the standard. The teachers' pedagogical dilemma may therefore be greater than the students' linguistic one, which constitutes a *perception gap* between teachers and students.

4.6. Implications for Teaching and Assessment

Teachers' perceptions travelled along a chain from beliefs about the nature of code-switching to choice of teaching strategies, forms of feedback, assessment criteria, and ultimately students' motivation and literacy development. Teacher 1's ambivalence did not paralyse teaching but produced domain-based differentiation. The teacher used a "two versions" strategy for vocational students, a relaxed draft and a standard version for submission, which openly acknowledged mixed language as part of students' future workplaces. The teacher also used a "compare, don't blame" approach, asking students to confirm the meaning of regional words before jointly seeking Indonesian equivalents, so that correction became dialogue rather than judgement. However, discussion of code-switching in these classes remained spontaneous rather than planned in lesson designs, which limited its benefit to students who happened to be in the spotlight.

In assessment, Teacher 1 had developed an implicit rubric based on three criteria: function, consistency, and the proportion of the overall assessment allocated to code-switching. This is substantially more context-sensitive than a binary right-or-wrong approach, but because it is a personal innovation rather than an official guideline, it creates a risk of inconsistency between teachers, which threatens assessment fairness. The "confirmation test", which asks students to rewrite a mixed sentence in standard Indonesian, effectively separates competence from performance but is time-consuming for large classes. Moreover, although the teacher explicitly did not want code-switching to lower the grade of a well-conceived story, the strong agreement among all three teachers that code-switching is an error suggests that implicit beliefs may still bias assessment.

The affective consequences are also significant. Comments such as "good, the dialogue feels alive" for functional switches may strengthen students' confidence in their multilingual identities. Conversely, a prescriptive-purist approach applied without functional distinction risks producing *linguistic insecurity*, a reluctance to write authentic expressions for fear of correction, which may lead students to homogenise rather than develop their personal voices as writers. These findings point to three practical recommendations: institutionalising a function-based rubric (function, consistency, proportion) so that assessment is consistent across teachers; providing metalinguistic awareness training for teachers to revisit the assumption that switching in core narration always signals deficiency; and creating spaces for collective reflection in which teachers can discuss the ambivalence they experience, so that the dilemma becomes a shared, evidence-based topic of professional development rather than an individual burden.

5. CONCLUSION

This study examined code-switching in 30 students' narrative texts and teachers' perceptions of it. Regarding the first research question, code-switching appeared in four forms (tag-switching, inter-sentential switching, intra-sentential switching, and lexical insertion), with Indonesian–English as the dominant pair, followed by Javanese, Sundanese, Minangkabau, and Arabic. Structurally, the switches were rule-governed, with Indonesian as the matrix language. Functionally, they were both situational and metaphorical, and English frequently served as a language of reflection at narrative climaxes. Students negotiated expressive freedom and standard norms through self-translation and a framing of standard Indonesian, which shows that their code-switching is a consciously managed manifestation of multilingual competence rather than mere interference. Regarding the second research question, all three teachers simultaneously regarded code-switching as linguistic richness and as an error to be corrected, a dilemma lived within each individual. Triangulation showed that teachers' perceptions converged with students' texts on where switches occur but diverged on why they occur and on their expressive value. The resulting perception gap has consequences for feedback, assessment fairness, and students' writing confidence. The study is limited by its small number of teacher participants and by the availability of in-depth interview data for only one teacher. Future research should include interviews with teachers holding more purist positions, observe classroom feedback practices directly, and develop and validate a function-based rubric for assessing code-switching in students' writing.

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