

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of the Study

English language usage as an international language has increased quickly because of the integration of digital technology in today's globalized world. This can be especially observed during the process of English as a foreign language (EFL) (Estaji & Savarabadi, 2020). Digital technologies like TikTok are transforming the process of how English is learned by university students (Xiuwen & Razali, 2021). Traditionally, language acquisition was done in the classroom and through textbooks. However, digital technology has opened possibilities for language acquisition to happen in a variety of places (Karhapää et al., 2026).

TikTok is becoming a platform that serves many functions other than providing entertainment. Many students use TikTok to learn the English language in an unstructured way. (Fatimah et al., 2024). Learners acquire new vocabulary, phrases, and pronunciations through videos without being bound by any formal education setting. Code-switching is a salient feature found in many videos on the English language learning process.

Code-switching is a linguistic phenomenon that has been observed in many English-learning content on TikTok. It is defined as a linguistic process where two or more languages are used interchangeably in a discourse or interaction (Poplack, 1980). Code-switching is frequently practiced in educational settings to facilitate communication and comprehension between interlocutors when one person uses a foreign language while the other uses their native tongue (Macaro, 2005). In this research, code-switching is defined as the alternation between English and Indonesian in English-learning content on TikTok.

Previous research shows that code-switching enhances comprehension and supports language acquisition by improving content accessibility. As a result, code-switching is frequently implemented in bilingual learning environments, including those that incorporate social media platforms. (Kaushanskaya & Neveu, 2023).

However, it should be noted that code-switching does not take place solely in social media but is present even in informal learning environments such as classes. Moreover, this process is neither novel nor unique to the informal

environment. Past research suggests that many students have favorable attitudes toward code-switching (Luporini et al., 2024; Jia, 2024). The process of code-switching is never viewed by students negatively as it enhances their ability to use English, particularly when developing language skills (Ketut et al., 2025). Accessibility of instructional materials results in higher engagement of students. Using languages in a strategic manner contributes to lesson comprehension. (Margareta, 2025).

In the case of university students, code-switching within conversations is a prevalent way of communicating (Fitriana, 2024). Students who experience problems recalling certain English vocabulary will usually fall back on their mother tongue. It does not imply that they are reluctant to speak in English; rather, it is an attempt to keep the conversation going. Through code-switching, they will be able to overcome problems with vocabulary without disrupting the flow of the conversation.

This is a common practice. Several studies have established the high prevalence of code-switching among university students when communicating in an academic and non-academic setting. This has shown that code-switching is a regular part of communication among many learners. (Aizhawa et al., 2026).

Code-switching on social media sites such as TikTok fulfills several purposes. It acts as a means of communication, helps create an online identity, captures the attention of the audience, and strengthens the meaning of the message. (Horizon, 2025). Further research indicates that code-switching within TikTok content leads to higher audience engagement, builds credibility, and enhances message understanding. (Roslini et al., 2025). All of the above clearly illustrate the significance of code-switching for digital language learning.

With all these changes, learning is no longer limited to the classroom. (Arif Nugroho, 2021). Learning has become a very active process, especially through the use of the Internet by students. There is also an interesting question that arises from these changes. Is code-switching in TikTok videos beneficial to students' learning experience, or does it cause them to use their native language more often?

It is important to examine how EFL students perceive and react to this phenomenon. Students may view it as beneficial or as an unconscious habit. These

perspectives are important because learners' attitudes toward particular methods or strategies can significantly affect their motivation, engagement, and English language learning outcomes.

Previous research has examined code-switching across diverse digital contexts, including social media communication and TikTok content. Some studies have focused on patterns of bilingual language use on digital platforms (Wulandari et al., 2025) while others have explored the impact of mixed-language content on vocabulary development (Nurdiana et al., 2026) or examined code-switching practices among specific content creators (Rosita et al., 2025). However, most existing studies have emphasized language use and linguistic features rather than learners' attitudes. Therefore, the present study investigates the attitudes of EFL university students toward code-switching in English learning content on TikTok.

In addition, previous research on code-switching has primarily focused on classroom learning, especially within formal educational settings or direct, face-to-face interactions (Arumaisya, 2025; Fauzi, 2023; Manik et al., 2025). These studies have also examined perceptions of code-switching among diverse learner groups. In contrast, the present study investigates English as a Foreign Language (EFL) university students, whose experiences and perspectives may differ from those in other educational contexts. While earlier research has addressed code-switching in classroom environments, this study specifically explores students' attitudes toward code-switching in English language learning content on TikTok.

An increasing number of English language learners using TikTok as a platform has extended the reach of the available educational material to students outside the conventional classroom environment. Code-switching is frequently used in digital communication and on social networking sites to ensure meaning is easier to understand and to make messages more accessible to bilingual learners (Rosita et al., 2025). Research has indicated that learners are usually positive about code-switching as it promotes comprehension and learning (Luporini et al., 2024). Nevertheless, students' attitudes towards code-switching vary across learning contexts (Alsuhayl & Arabia, 2026).

The significance of this study lies in its examination of how EFL students view code-switching in English-language content posted on TikTok. The study's

main objective is to see how this takes place and how the students will comprehend it. The results of this study will be instrumental in developing methods for teaching English that are pertinent to modern English-language teaching. The warning methods have to change accordingly and must be responsive to the real needs of today's students.

B. Research Questions

1. How do EFL students perceive the use of code-switching in English learning content on TikTok in supporting English language learning?
2. What is the level of students' first language dependency when engaging with code-switching content on TikTok?

C. Objectives of the Study

1. This research study aims to investigate how English language learners view code-switching in English-learning materials on TikTok in relation to their English-language learning experience. In other words, this research study attempts to understand whether EFL learners see code-switching as an aid to comprehension and/or engagement.
2. To find out the level of students' dependence on their first language in using the learning material in English presented in TikTok videos using code-switching. In other words, to see whether this is a form of situational aid or dependency.

D. Significance of the Study

The current study has two important implications from both theoretical and practical perspectives. In terms of theory, this research is anticipated to add to the existing body of knowledge about digital language learning, especially in relation to the use of code-switching in English learning material posted on social media platforms like TikTok. As far as practice is concerned, this research will be of great benefit to EFL learners, English language teachers, and digital content developers in understanding the role of code-switching in learners' learning processes.

First, this research will add to the existing literature in the area of digital language learning by investigating the attitude of EFL students towards the use of code-switching in the context of learning English through content posted on TikTok. With the increased importance of social media platforms as informal means of language learning, it is important to gain insight into the attitudes of the learners

with regard to their effectiveness. By analyzing EFL learners' attitudes towards code-switching in English learning via digital media, this research will shed light on how code-switching can be used as a tool in language pedagogy.

Second, through the current study, the researcher is able to obtain significant insights into students' views regarding the matter. As such, the study helps gain more information on how EFL students view code-switching and its usefulness. The insights gained will also help content designers in creating material that is consistent with the requirements of modern-day students. This means that teaching methods need not be confined to conventional methods but should be adapted to the new-age digital learning environment. The ultimate objective of the study is to develop a more relevant approach to English language learning strategies.