

## Students' Multiple Language Use in an EFL Class: A Case at an English Education Department

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**Abstract.** This study investigates the languages, the status of languages, and the languages used for communication by EFL students. The participants of this study were fifty students in the fourth semester in the English Education Department of Universitas Muria Kudus (EED UMK). The data were collected using a questionnaire and analyzed qualitatively. The findings show that the students use nine languages, i.e., Javanese, Sundanese, Indonesian, English, Arabic, Chinese, French, Japanese, and Korean. Javanese, Sundanese, and Indonesian belong to their mother tongue, while Indonesian is their national language. Meanwhile, English, Arabic, Chinese, French, Japanese, and Korean are their foreign languages. English has been learned by the research participants since elementary school. At present, English is their major in the department. The students realize that their English intensity must be increased since English has become their major as EFL students. The students' bilingualism belongs to an elite bilingual since the students learn and acquire the second language(s) through formal education or conscious learning. In the context of Javanese and Indonesian, simultaneous bilingualism is relevant. Related to English and Javanese or Indonesian, successive bilingualism is more relevant.

*Keywords:* Language Use; Multilingualism; EFL Students

### Introduction

This study is an investigation of languages used by students as a multilingual phenomenon in an education domain, that is, the English Teacher Education Department (EED) of Universitas Muria Kudus (UMK), a private university located around fifty kilometres east of Semarang, the capital of Central Java Province, Indonesia. Research on multilingualism, which examines the languages used by the English teacher education department students at UMK, has yet to be available. It is useful because most research subjects come from similar or close geographical areas. Accordingly, their language backgrounds will affect their language choice and attitude toward the languages they use. It is also important since the result of the investigation will be useful in better understanding the student's language background. It is intended to reveal the languages they use, ways of language mastery (acquisition, learning), language status (native, national, foreign), and intensity of their language use.

Bilingualism and multilingualism allow people to access two or more languages. The participants of this study are to exercise choice in using languages for different purposes in different contexts. Their language choice may be constrained by several factors, which include language policy, language proficiency, ethnicity, gender, profession, sociocultural background, and in particular, the domain in which language is used. Defined in terms of institutional context or socio-ecological coexistence, domain, in its simplest terms, refers to the context of language use, such as family, friendship, or education. Speech communities are characterized by both diglossia and bilingualism (Fishman, 1967). It may be diglossia and bilingualism, bilingualism without diglossia, diglossia without bilingualism, or neither diglossia nor bilingualism. They attempt to designate the major clusters of interaction situations in multilingual settings. Domains enable us to understand that language choice and topic are related to widespread sociocultural norms and expectations" ..

A speech community may be diglossic, bilingual, or multilingual, where languages have functional and contextual allocations. For instance, Indonesian's classical or standard or high variety (H) is used for literacy, formal, public, and official uses. In contrast, the vernacular, local or low variety (L), is used for informal purposes. Multilingual societies inevitably face conflict over language choice. As students of an English education department, the establishment of English-Indonesian bilinguals could generate qualified English teachers and competitive Indonesian citizens who are superior in terms of handling global communication practices, holding sufficient intercultural awareness, and having global perspectives serving as the properties of being successful for engaging in the social planes of the global context (Margana, 2015).

Many references argue that most Indonesians are multilingual rather than bilinguals (Wahyudi et al., 2018). Therefore, the establishment of being English-Indonesian bilinguals is of great importance for Indonesian people to cope with global communication distractions due to insufficient English language proficiency, which directly or indirectly retards the attainment of the development of the issues of information and technology, economy, culture, and the like. About the establishment of English Indonesian bilinguals, this paper attempts to explore a theoretical framework for the establishment of bilingualism in Indonesia, followed by two types of modes (nature-oriented and nurture-oriented models) that have been conducted in Indonesia.

The purposes of this study is to describes students' multiple languages use, which covers their status and languages used by the fourth-semester students of the English Teacher Education Department of UMK for communication.

## First Language, Second, Foreign, and National Language

"Mother tongue" or "native language" can refer to a learner's first language. In such a case, the learner would speak his or her mother tongue as a first language. In a world where global migration and, as a direct result, mixed marriages are on the rise, more and more children are forced to acquire more than one language at home. It suggests that the idea of the first language has shifted beyond the idea of the mother tongue. Children with parents who speak two languages can choose to make one of those languages their first language, or they can choose to make both their first language (Punchihetti, 2013). In schools, kids pick up a second language. The degree to which a certain country has close historical, geographic, and socioeconomic ties to the non-native language's country of origin determines whether that language is classified as a second language in that nation. When a learner's second language is determined by the nation where he resides, he can frequently utilize that language there. The concept of a "foreign language" typically has no connection to a person's immediate social or personal milieu. Thus, aside from situations where children and adults must learn foreign languages for academic or professional reasons, the choice of a target foreign language is mostly a personal one made by the student. Bahasa Indonesia has become the official language of Indonesia, and English is regarded as a foreign language rather than a second language.

In the first 50 years of Indonesia's independence, Bahasa Indonesia, one of several hundred indigenous languages, rose to prominence as the country's official language. (Lamb & Coleman, 2008). Lauder (2008) argued that the use of English in Indonesia has evolved concerning increasing expertise in post-colonial education and, more recently, the need to develop the nation for English to be a prominent global language (Irham, 2022; Irham et al., 2021). Meanwhile, Zein (2018) claims Indonesia is the second most linguistically diverse nation globally. Investigating multilingualism (Hamied, 2012) in an EFL classroom setting should be interesting. Indonesia's national language policy issue is heightened by hundreds of local languages and the formal role of Indonesian as the state language. Teachers and students translate languages using English, Indonesian and local languages, and even foreign languages other than English. They approved adopting translation as a pedagogy because of its positive impact on EFL teaching and learning (Lo Bianco, 2010).

## Bilingualism and Multilingualism

Bilingualism and multilingualism have de facto existences and important places in the psychological, political, and social discussions that determine and define social and ethnic groups, communities, and regions (Bhatia & Ritchie, 2013). In general, they are motivated by several well-understood reasons; in the main, however, they are also quite unremarkable phenomena, motivated by necessity up to, but rarely beyond,

appropriately useful levels of competence. They imply increased and decreased opportunities for interpersonal and intercultural exchange: multilingual capacities at an individual level can broaden possibilities, but a world of many languages also exists in which communicative problems exist. In such a world, lingua franca and translation are required.

Edward (2013) further explains important differences between individual and collective or social bilingualism, regardless of whether or not the latter is officially endorsed. In many settings, ancient and modern, the latter is an enduring quantity. On the other hand, individual bilingualism may be less permanent, often reflecting a generational way-station between two monolingualism. For example, the classic pattern for immigrants to the United States has been bilingualism (mother tongue and English) by the second generation and English monolingualism by the third. More enduring collective bilingualism rests upon continuing necessities that become absent among most immigrant populations. Where these involve different functions and domains of use for each language, the situation is often referred to as diglossia. Of course, even stability is relative.

According to Margana (2009), citing Bloomfield, bilingualism is the capacity of a speaker to utilize two languages equally well and to demonstrate native-like command of two languages. Bilingual is the practice of speaking two or more languages continuously. The act of switching between two languages is known as bilingualism. Regarding bilingualism, diglossia refers to the situation in which two speakers of the same language coexist and play distinct roles in the same society.

Types A, B, and C of bilingualism exist, according to Margana (2009). A person who acquires two languages in the same situation and simultaneously activates them is said to be Type A (compound bilingual), resulting in a fused representation of the languages in his brain. One concept unit and two sound image units—one for each language—define this type. Such multilingual speakers can communicate using sound pictures (words) from both languages while conceptualizing a single embedded set of meanings from the two languages.

A person who acquires two languages in different surroundings is said to be Type B (coordinate bilingual), and as a result, each word in the two languages has a distinct meaning for him or her. In other words, a multilingual person creates and maintains the two languages' unique conceptual frameworks. Each language has unique signs (pictures of sounds and units of meaning). Bilinguals of Type B have two sets of conceptual units and two sets of words or sound pictures (one for each language) that correspond to those concepts.

Type C (subordinate bilingualism) is concerned with using their first language's proficiency to determine the meanings of the target language's vocabulary elements. It has an analogous unit of an expression in the target language. It is distinguished by the first language's idea unit, which corresponds to the sound image in the first language. In contrast to the compound bilingual, the subordinate bilingual only has one set of meaningful concept units and two sets of sound pictures.

Ervin and Osgood in Romaine (1995) propose two types of bilingualism, compound and coordinate bilingualism, as the sub-coordinate and coordinate bilingualism can be blended into one (coordinate bilingualism). The theory ca lexical item of the target language is typically associated with meaning in her/his first language, resulting in the link between the first language and the target language. In support of this, Hamers and Blanc (2001) also categorize bilingualism into compound and coordinate bilingualism. This distinction is based on how language and thought are organized in the brain of bilinguals (Goh & Silver, 2007).

Lambert and Cummis in Mouw and Xie (2011) divide bilingualism into two types, namely additive and subtractive. This division is based on the context of how the two languages are acquired. Additive bilingualism refers to learning the target language within the social context that accommodates second language learners to maintain the first language. It means both languages are activated in the process of the establishment of bilingualism. Subtractive bilingualism is learning the target language by substituting the first language. In this context, the target language is exclusively used in any communication practice to form advanced bilinguals.

The categorization of bilingualism is also proposed by McLaughlin (1984), also quoted in Lidicoat (1992) in Margana (2009), who states that bilingualism can be divided into two types, namely simultaneous and successive bilingualism.

Simultaneous bilingualism is defined as a person who learns two or more languages in a simultaneous time under three years old in which she/he simultaneously has two languages. Therefore, both languages serve as her/his first languages, although she/he performs better in one language compared to the other language. Meanwhile, successive bilingualism refers to a person who acquires a second language after three years old as she/he learns the second language after she/he has already acquired an established first language. Margana (2009) identifies bilingualism into two types, namely elite and folk bilinguals. An elite bilingual is a person who learns and acquires a second language through formal education or conscious learning. For example, students of elementary school, secondary school, and tertiary school levels who learn English as one of the compulsory subjects are called elite bilinguals. This type of bilingualism is associated with cultural enrichment, learning mark, and intelligence representation.

A folk bilingual is a person who learns and acquires a second language through direct contact with native speakers. In other words, they learn the other language subconsciously. For example, a graduate of an elementary school level who never learned and acquired English before often contacts tourists from English-speaking countries and uses simple English as a means of communication with them can be called a folk bilingual. In some communities, folk bilingualism is associated with linguistic minority groups who are forced to learn a dominant language; otherwise, they could not survive because of insufficient language proficiency in the dominant language.

The classification framework starts with the adaption of a geographic concept first put forth by White (1991) in Edward, as cited by Bhatia and Ritchie (2013), to provide physical context. It highlights three key differences. The first is among minority languages that are unique to one state (for example, Breton in France), non-unique but still dominant in all contexts (for example, Basque in Spain and France), and minority varieties that are majority elsewhere (for example, French in Canada and French in France); thus, we have unique, non-unique, and local-only languages.

A study by Mei et al. (2016) investigated language preference trends and showed how language preference in education differs among sub-domains. Language ability, ethnicity, gender, and field of study also impact choice and utilization. In formal and informal education, all respondents generally opted to select and use the English language. In addition, every respondent said they chose and used multiple languages. Additionally, it was discovered that their ethnicity and field of study influence the respondents' choice of language and usage in the educational realm.

Code mixing occurs when a speaker uses a language predominantly to support a speech inserted with other language elements (Chaer & Agustina, 2010; Bolton & Botha, 2019), which are usually related to the characteristics of the speaker, such as social background, education level, and religious taste. The term bilingualism in Indonesian (Chaer and Agustina, 2010: 85) relates to using two languages or two language codes.

## Methodology

This research descriptively explores the languages used by the fourth-semester students at EED of the university as a multilingual phenomenon. It also presents how the students master the languages, the status of languages for communication, and how those languages are used. The subjects of this study consist of fifty students of the EED of UMK. Most come from Kudus Regency and the neighbouring regencies like Pati, Jepara, and Demak, where Javanese dominate. They were to become English teachers.

This investigation uses an open-ended questionnaire for the languages used by them. The subjects have a couple of questions to answer, and they have to present their responses in the form of written responses. When necessary, a direct clarification of the



subjects is done. The questionnaire consists of three main questions: 1) What languages do you master for communication? How do you master those languages? Acquisition or learning? 2) What status of language do you use for communication (native, national, foreign, or second language)? 3) How do you use those languages for communication? A descriptive analysis is administered by identifying and classifying languages used by the students' expressed in their responses especially associated with their language use for communication reflecting bilingualism. The students' responses are collected, identified, classified, and tabulated following the aspects researched.

## Results and Discussion

### 3.1 Languages Used by the Students

Based on the responses of the students, there are nine languages that they use. All nine languages are used by the students, i.e., Javanese, Sundanese, Indonesian, English, Arabic, Chinese, French, Japanese, and Korean. Fifty students use Javanese, Indonesian, and English. Forty-five students use Arabic. Two students use Chinese. Meanwhile, Sundanese is used by only one student, and Korean by five students. Seven students use French. Seven students also use Japanese.

### 3.2 The Status of Languages Used by the Students

There are three kinds of language status, i.e., (1) the mother tongue, (2) the national language, and (3) foreign language. No second language status in students' language use is identified. The first is mother tongue status (Javanese). Indonesian is widely used since it has a strong role as the national language used for daily communications, especially on campus and at the workplace. The students view English, Arabic, Chinese, French, Japanese, and Korean as foreign languages. Indonesian is also formally recognized as the country's official language, as stated in Article 35 of the Constitution of Indonesia. The Indonesian language has a rich history and has been used as the lingua franca in Indonesia for hundreds of years. The language is popularly used in print and electronic media in the country and is also incorporated into the country's education curriculum. As the official language, Indonesian is used in all formal communication and in drafting legal documents.

In this study, most people already knew this language through teaching at school. Furthermore, only a few people know Indonesian from birth. People know the Indonesian language depending on their parents or the circumstances around the person. If the person is familiar with the person communicating in Indonesian, then from birth, he will be accustomed to communicating in that language. In school teaching, people learn the language when receiving Indonesian language subjects. From the results of the study, it was found that most people can master Indonesian from their surroundings and from teaching in school. From the results of the study, it was found that most people could

master the Indonesian language because the language had become the national language of Indonesia, and they often listened to people communicate using the language as well as from teaching in school.

### 3.3 The Languages for Communication Used by the Students

The students use Indonesian for formal communication since it is the National Language. They also admit to using the Indonesian Language to respect their country. The Indonesian language is a national language in the country the students also have a different way of knowing about the Indonesian language. Because most of them are originally from Java, their mother tongue is Javanese, and they know a lot of Indonesian languages after they enter elementary school or kinder gardens.

Javanese is spoken by those who consider themselves ethnically Javanese or from the eastern and central parts of Java, one of Indonesia's many islands. Javanese has its writing system but is also written using Latin and Arabic scripts. Three different dialects of Javanese correspond to the region of Java they are spoken. The community must live in several regions that have certain communication languages to communicate with each other. For example, people who live in Java, especially in Central Java, surely from birth will have mastered the language because of the conditions and habits often seen and heard from birth. Not necessarily all people master the Javanese language in full, it must require more learning. The Students are taught about Javanese script, songs, and how to communicate in the polite language with other people. From the results of the study, it was found that most Javanese mastered the Javanese language from the moment they were born, and some of them from teaching in school.

The students get their Javanese in a natural way (acquisition). Moreover, the Javanese language naturally flows in the environment of their life. Nevertheless, not all students are originally from Java, One student is Sundanese, and she knows Javanese from the environment and is learning formally in the school. It is used in daily life or natural communication because it is the mother tongue. The students do not need to learn, although Javanese may also be a subject in some schools. As a mother tongue, Javanese is often used to communicate with their parents, friends, neighbors, and family. All participants master Javanese. Because most students are originally from Java, most use the Javanese language. Apart from Javanese, they also master Indonesian naturally. We have known Indonesian since childhood, like Javanese. However, Indonesian use is different way since it is the national language. As Javanese people, we use Javanese more often than Indonesian. Indonesian is often used in campus or school environments or when speaking to older people, and Indonesian is more formal than Javanese.

The students use English with the biggest intensity in use after they use their mother tongue and national language. With English, the language of the student's major,



unfortunately, English has a low use, and mostly, it is only used when learning on campus. However, it is the main language in English Teacher Education Department. The students use English when speaking with classmates to improve their skills. As EED students, they try to have practices to improve and develop their English skills. Besides those three languages, several students have also mastered several languages, such as mastery in French, Korean, and also Arabic. The languages were obtained when they were in high school. The language is only used when learning, not to communicate every day. They use English to improve their public speaking or soft skill. They use writing and reading to develop their critical knowledge. The students realize that they must change their use of English from low intensity to higher one.

English is a language that is often used abroad, and some make English the main language of communication. In Indonesia, some people can speak English. It is considered smart, but not everyone can speak English from birth; it takes time to master it well. We must go through the teaching or school stage to communicate in English. The study found that most people speak English through teaching in advance, such as knowing him in school, through songs and films.

Arabic is a foreign language for Indonesian, but most of the students are Muslims, so they know about the Arabic language from learning. Two students interestingly know it from learning since their childhood. They have listened to *murrotal*, *adzan*, and other religious practices, so when they learn about the Arabic Language. They apply Arabic when they read Qur'an or pray when they do Salah. Then for listening, usually when they listen to *shalawat* in Arabic. They use the Arabic language when they pray. Some students have learned Arabic since junior high school. They still remember some lessons and use Arabic to speak some words.

Nevertheless, some students feel that their Arabic language decreased because they do not have a partner to speak or learn about the Arabic language. As Muslims, they know Arabic because the language is found in the book of the Koran. Most of them know the language from the Koran, but not everyone can understand Arabic. People know Arabic from Islamic schools or Arabic readings. The study results found that they were familiar with Arabic from the surroundings. Only certain people can speak Arabic, for example, religious teachers, clerics, or Arabic teachers.

Most students do not like anything about Korean. Some students can speak Korean, and they also can write Hangeul. The reason for learning Korean is important to point out. Beautiful and handsome Korean actresses and actors are why seven students use the Korean language. They know the Korean Language from learning. They do not learn formally, but they learn it from movies and songs. So they can understand and speak Korean fluently for some words. It indicates that pop culture contributes to students' interest in learning Korean. The use of Korean also is traced from the presence

of a Korean Volunteer under KOICA (Korea International Cooperation Agency) who lived at the university for two years and gave Korean language training to students, also contributing to the student's interest in the Korean language.

In addition to these languages, some languages are rarely used in Indonesia, but many people have mastered them. Like the Japanese, people will be confused when they hear it without knowing its meaning. Most people know this language from Japanese, self-taught courses, and anime films. French is only taught a little in schools, and not everyone can fully understand it. This language is used only for school teaching, not for communicating outside. Korean is widely known through drama films, songs, and listening to people speaking Korean. Some held a special course to learn the Korean language. The study results found that people rarely use the language to communicate but only for their own sake rather than for communication.

In some senior high schools around the university, French, Japanese, and Chinese are elective subjects. The presence of *Warung Perancis* in the University has motivated more students to learn French. Arabic is of high-intensity use since many of the participants come from Islamic Senior high schools, and the use is dominantly motivated by the religious practices of Islam. Surprisingly Turkish is not used by any student. There was a Turkish language class at the university, and a number of students were interested in taking part in that program. Unfortunately, the program is no longer available. The following table presents bilingualism among students of the EED of EFL setting.

The findings show that the students belong to Type A (compound bilingualism), defined as a person who learns two languages in the same context and activates them concurrently, leading to a fused representation of the languages in his brain. This type is featured by one unit of concept with two units of sound images (one for each language). Such bilingual speakers conceptualize one embedded set of meanings from the two languages but can express themselves with the sound images (words) from both languages. Some students in the class use Japanese, and they use it as a foreign language. Both of them feel so comfortable with this language because of its uniqueness of this language.

The findings are in line with Margana (2009), who claimed that using two or more languages in a series of communicative events (spoken and written form) may or may not be equal because a bilingual may perform better in one language than another. The students' bilingualism belongs to an elite bilingual since the students learn and acquire the second language(s) through formal education or conscious learning. In the context of Javanese and Bahasa Indonesia, Simultaneous Bilingualism is relevant because students learn two or more languages in simultaneous time under three years old in which she/he has two languages simultaneously. However, when it comes to English and Javanese or Bahasa Indonesia, successive bilingualism is more relevant since they acquire

the second language after three years old as she/he learn the second language after she/he has already acquired an established first language (Javanese or Bahasa Indonesia or both).

**Table 1 Summary of Languages Used by Participants of the Research**

Languages Used and Number of Users	Status: Mother Tongue/ First language 1. National 2. Second 3. Foreign	How to get the language: 1. Acquisition 2. Learning	Communication Settings	The Intensity of Use: 1. Very high 2. High 3. Fair 4. Low 5. Very low
1. Javanese (50)	1	1 & 2	Daily communication, mostly speaking	1
2. Sundanese (1)	1	1	Daily communication, mostly speaking	5
3. Indonesian (50)	1 and 2	1 & 2	Daily Communication, Studying	1
4. English (50)	3	2	Daily Communication Studying Working	3
5. Arabic (45)	3	2	Praying, special area/ Islamic schools	3
6. Japanese (7)	3	2	Limited circumstances, friendship	5
7. Chinese (2)	3	2	Limited circumstances, friendship	5
8. Korean (5)	3	1 and 2	Listening and Singing songs/films, Watching films/videos	4
9. French (7)	3	2	Limited circumstances, friendship	5

This situation may also motivate the use of code-switching among the students, which accommodates the location and characters of their interaction. Wahyudi (2018), however, labeled this situation as multiple language use. It is also relevant to Bolton & Botha (2019), who found how Singaporean students can shift between various languages inside and outside their classrooms. It may also have relevance for a range of other multilingual contexts, particularly concerning language use in higher education.

**Conclusion**

This study concludes that the students use nine languages, i.e., Javanese, Sundanese, Indonesian, English, Arabic, Chinese, French, Japanese, and Korean.

Javanese, Sundanese, and Indonesian belong to their mother tongue, while Indonesian is their national language. Meanwhile, English, Arabic, Chinese, French, Japanese, and Korean are their foreign languages. English has been learned by the research participants since elementary school. At present, English is their major in the department. The students realize that their English intensity must be increased since English has become their major as EFL students. The students' bilingualism belongs to an elite bilingual since the students learn and acquire the second language(s) through formal education or conscious learning. In the context of Javanese and Indonesian, simultaneous bilingualism is relevant. Related to English and Javanese or Indonesian, successive bilingualism is more relevant. The languages have developed bilingualism among students at the EED.

Regarding language status, this study reveals three language statuses, i.e., the mother tongue, the national language, and the foreign language. No second language status in students' language use is identified. The first is mother tongue status (Javanese et al.). Concerning the English language, the research participants know it from formal learning in kinder gardens, elementary schools, junior and senior high schools, and universities. Most of the students have got English learning since elementary school. At present, English is their major in EED. Many also learn English through English literacy practice, such as listening to English songs, films, books, literary works, and the internet. The students realize that their English intensity must be increased since English has become their major as EED students.

The major languages actively used by students of the EED for communication are Indonesian, Javanese, and English. The students use Indonesian for formal communication since it is the national language. Javanese is spoken since most of them are ethnically Javanese. Meanwhile, English are used since they are officially students of the English education department. English has become the target language of their study and is the major medium of instruction on campus. Indonesian is a language that is often used to communicate because it is a national language. The students also often use Javanese to communicate because, from birth, they already know the language and come from the surrounding culture. English is known through prior teaching, and the language has yet to be mastered from birth.

This study suggests further research on the students' language to focus on more detailed aspects of bilingualism and multilingualism with more students/participants, especially on how EFL students can benefit from being bilingual to improve their English skills. As the bilingualism phenomena at EED, teacher educators should consider the languages that the student have used in their teaching and learning process. Their bilingualism is expected to be fine in mastering English skills as their core subjects as prospective English teachers. Finally, bilingual students of the EED should be motivated

to maintain and enrich their bilingualism to make stronger international friends for their English development. The EED students' bilingualism should be a bridging potential to develop their international networking for better cross-cultural understanding, international business, and global friendship.

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