

Code Switching and Students' Performance in English

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Abstract:

This study determined the influence of code switching to the academic performance of students in English. A total of 40 incoming Grade 10 students participated in this study. The study made use of the qualitative and quantitative research design. Qualitative design was used to determine the students' attitudes towards code switching and the English language. Quantitative design was used to correlate the frequency of code switching and the students' final grade in English. A questionnaire was used to gather the needed data for this study. The attitudes of the respondents towards code switching and towards the English language and the frequency on the use of code switching were analyzed through weighted mean and the students' academic achievement in English through frequency count and percentage. Chi Square was used to determine the relationship between the frequency on the use of code switching and the students' achievement in English. The results showed that the students' attitudes towards code switching and the English language are agreeable. The study also found out that the respondents use code switching frequently during an English class. It also showed that there is a significant relationship between the respondents' frequency on the use of code switching and their English achievement.

Key Words: *academic performance, code switching, influence, communicative competence, linguistic competence*

INTRODUCTION

Learning the English language is an indispensable component of the educational landscape. The Philippines, being a culturally and linguistically diverse country, deems the acquisition of second language challenging. With the structure of language complexities in a linguistically rich country, English language learning faces a multitude of difficulties as well.

More often than not, the learners' disparity in languages forces them to code-switch or code-mix in an English class. As the diversity of languages causes the acquisition of more than one language and the mixing of codes in usage, second language acquisition must involve the

active, integrated role of the local languages (Canagarajah, 1999) [1]. Code-switching is defined as “the mixing by bilinguals or multi-linguals of two or more languages in discourse, often with no change of interlocutor or topic” (Poplack, 2001, p. 2062) [2].

Huerta-Macias, et.al (1992) in a study titled Code-Switching, Bilingualism, Biliteracy: A Case Study, found out that code-switching, in both oral and written form, allowed for effective communication between the parents, the children and the instructor in a way that was natural and comfortable for all involved. Metila (2009) stated that the code--switching functions spanned pedagogical, communicative, social, and psychological aspects.

Notwithstanding earlier researches showing code switching to be a tool to achieve personal motivations and communicative efficiency which is defined as “the fastest, easiest, most effective way of saying something” (Bautista, 1999)[3], and a struggle against hegemonizing forces, this mode of communication is perceived quite unacceptable in the Philippine educational context. It is seen as a “less than ideal language behavior” indicative of deteriorating language skills and low levels of bilingual language proficiencies (Bernardo, 2005)[4]. Interestingly, Jacoby’s Psycholinguistics theory (Jacoby, 1983)[5]: *The Linguistic Priming Theory* states that code switching should not be encouraged in second language classroom because: (a) code switching either by the instructor or by the learners can heighten the use of non- target forms producing deviant linguistic patterns and (b) learners are sensitive to variations in these patterns.

The combination of English and dialect is a common linguistic phenomenon among Filipino learners. The above sample classroom scenario of code switching also validate the result of the students’ language preference as surveyed by Matila (2009)[6]. The following are predominant reasons for code switching: (1) Easier self-expression; (2) loss of words (e.g. translation problems, not knowing the right words; (3) influences of people around; (4) Natural already (habit); (5) Exposure to two languages; (6) Fluency in speaking both languages; and (7) to make the speakers feel more comfortable (Matila, 2009) [7].

Bugayong (2011) [8]quoted:

“A heightened awareness of Taglish can be helpful in gaining proficiency in English in that more attention will be paid to language interference. Even though the acknowledgement of Taglish might be taboo for teaching Tagalog, it would also seem an invaluable asset for learners in that Taglish, after all, represents authentic Filipino speech.

Simon’s (2001)[9] study mentioned that code switching is a common linguistic practice for teachers and students. He invited teachers and students to reconsider the role that code switching plays in the classroom interaction and to “break with the methodologically imposed code constraints in order to use code switching strategically to achieve their pedagogical aims.”

According to Sert (2005) [10], opponents of using code switching in classrooms believe that some learners may be neglected if all students don't share the same native language. The competence of the teacher in the native language is also taken into consideration. Supporters of using code switching in classrooms believe that when used efficiently, it provides continuity in speech. This helps students to adjust with others within communicative circle as part of social interaction

Some Filipinos are trilingual, speaking an indigenous language plus Filipino, and English. Most Filipinos, however, continue to primarily speak their indigenous language, rather than the national language. When a native speaker combines any of his dialect and English language in single utterances in the same setting, code switching occurs as a common natural linguistic phenomenon.

Generally, code switching in informal contexts is not a crucial issue, but researchers continue to prove and analyze whether it is really allowed to code switch in the classroom especially in English classes. Some researches proved that bilingualism along instruction may hasten the understanding of a concept. Abad (2005)[11] noted that code switching managed to lower the affective filter, and this consequently established rapport and created an atmosphere of informality, thus, allowing any learner to actively participate in the classroom discussion. Inhibitions would be lessened and learning comes in.

Abad (2005)[12] claimed that, Taglish, a code switching variety that refers to the combination of Tagalog and English, is used by a whole generation of youngsters. Some of whom were from elite private school. The term Taglish is a misnomer because in truth, it refers to the combination Filipino and English and not Tagalog and English from which the term was derived. It is technically correct to say that Taglish borrows from both English and Filipino.

The role of code switching, along with other symptoms of contact, in language change is still a matter of discussion. Nevertheless, the relationship between contact and language change is now generally acknowledged. On the other hand, some researchers still downplay the role of code switching in change, and contrast it with borrowing, which is seen as a form of "convergence."

Linguists and educators are being challenged on the view that code switching lowers communication standards and they highlighted its potential impact on any teaching – learning process. Code switching along instruction is a widely observed phenomenon especially seen in multilingual and multicultural communities.

In particular, it is often argued that each language serves a different function: English has an instrumental role as the language of learning in the important domains, while Filipino has a symbolic role as unifying language and the language of nationhood (Sibayan, 1994) [13].

Martin (2006) [14] mentioned that language preferences of teachers and students are often identified as the reasons behind the continuing deterioration of English language proficiency among Filipino students. It is therefore important to note some strategies in Intercultural Communicative Competence as professed by Maguddayao (2016) [15] to be able to bridge the gap between teaching of teachers and learning of students across diverse cultures without prejudice to their cultural identity as influenced to their learning experience.

Probyn (2010) [16] noticed that most notable strategy that teachers used was code switching to achieve a number of communicative ends not discounting the significance of communicative competence in the pedagogy since this encompasses tenets such as Linguistic, Sociolinguistic, Discourse and Strategic components to developed their facility in English as mentioned by Maguddayao (2018) [15]. Furthermore, code switching helps to facilitate the flow of classroom instruction since the teachers do not have to spend so much time trying to explain to the learners or searching for the simplest words to help clearing the students' understanding.

The researchers, in their stint as an English language teachers in a public school secondary, tertiary and graduate school, have been exposed to multifarious challenges in teaching students various lessons and making them master different competencies as prescribed in the curriculum. One of these challenges is the use of code switching when students are asked to give their insights about certain concepts being presented. Also, it is no denying that teachers are forced or resort to switching to Filipino language during an English class especially in a second language learning environment to make the students understand concepts better.

It was in this precept that the researchers wanted to ascertain the frequency of code switching in spoken discourse and the attitudes of students towards the code switching and the English Language. In doing so, the relationship between code switching and students' performance in English and between students' attitude towards Filipino and their academic performance in Filipino were found out. Hence, valuable results of the study may help in the development and improvement of all concerns relevant to English language instruction.

OBJECTIVES

Generally, this study aimed to determine the influence of code switching on students' performance in English.

Specifically, it answered the following questions:

1. What is the respondents' attitude towards code switching and towards the English?
2. What is the frequency of the respondents' use of code switching?
3. What is the English achievement of the respondents?
4. Is there a significant relationship between the respondents' frequency on the use of code switching and their level of English achievement?

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This chapter presents the research design, locale of the study, research instrument, and data collection procedures.

Research Design

The study made use of the qualitative and quantitative research design. Qualitative design was used to determine the students' attitudes towards code switching and the English language. Quantitative design was used to correlate the frequency of code switching and the students' final grade in English.

Respondents of the Study

The respondents of the study were incoming grade 10 students of the Junior High School. A total of 40 respondents participated in this study. Total enumeration was used to determine the number of respondents.

Research Instrument

This study made use of one method of data collection- questionnaire- to enable the researcher to come up with the intended information in this study. The questionnaire consists of a statements (attitudes) and 4-point Likert scale.

The researcher used Permanent Form of the students to ascertain their achievement in English, school year 2017-2018.

Data Gathering Procedure

After the approval of the research design, research instrument, and statistical tool to be used, the researchers underwent the following processes:

1. Sought permission from the Schools Division Superintendent to conduct of the study;
2. Informed and asked permission from the school head to do the study in the school;

3. Sought also permission from the parents of the respondents, the student and teacher respondents.

4. The researcher then administered the questionnaire to the student-respondents.

6. The researcher then collated the data needed, treated them and finally analyzed them.

Analysis of Data

The data obtained from the questionnaires were analyzed and interpreted through the following statistical tools:

Weighted Mean. This was used to analyze the attitude of the participants towards code switching and towards the English language. To interpret the means, the scale below was used:

Score Range	Descriptive Interpretation	
	Frequency of Code Switching	Attitudes Towards Code Switching and English
3.26 – 4.00	Never	Strongly Agree
2.51– 3.25	Sometimes	Agree
1.76 – 2.50	Frequently	Disagree
1.00 – 1.75	Very Frequently	Strongly Disagree

Their final grade in English was interpreted using the interval and descriptions below:

Interval	Descriptive Interpretation
90-100	Outstanding
85-89	Very Satisfactory
80-84	Satisfactory
75-79	Fairly
74-below	Did Not Meet Expectations

Chi Square. This was used to correlate the frequency on the students' use of code switching and their achievement in English, school year 2017-2018.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter presents the discussion of results and findings about the students' attitudes towards code switching and the English language, and the relationship between their grades and their frequency on the use of code switching. The discussion is arranged based on the given research questions.

Students' Attitudes towards Code Switching

Table 1 shows that weighted mean and the descriptive interpretation of students' attitudes towards code switching. It reveals that students **agree** to all the attitude indicators: [5] Mixing Tagalog and English can be a means of expressing oneself easier and more accurate; [6] Using both Tagalog and English during class discussion makes the learning of English lessons easier and faster; [4] During classroom discussion, mixing vernacular language and English language is a good practice among students.

The table also reveals that they **agree** to the following attitude indicators: [3] As a routine, I mix English and my vernacular language in my English subject because my teacher allows me; [7] During group activities, I use the combination of my dialect and English because my teacher allows it; [2] and In my English subject, I speak my own dialect and switch to English from time to time.

It also shows that the students find the following attitude indicators **agreeable**: I converse with my friends using Tagalog and English during our casual conversation; Combining my dialect and English language is just natural because it is a linguistic trend being practiced by everyone; In using technological gadgets in the school, I prefer using English and Tagalog.

It could be derived from the responses of the students that they practice code switching during the casual conversations, as they consider it a normal occurrence within the context of language use in everyday life.

It could be inferred from the students' responses that they find code switching beneficial to them as it could help them understand lessons better, and eventually learn more. It could be gleaned from the table that teachers also recognize the importance of bilingual education and bilingualism, especially code switching, to help the students understand the lessons better and to let them express themselves better during class interactions.

This is supported by the findings of Abad (2010) that code switching aids students in understanding difficult concepts when these are illustrated with students' experiences in a

familiar mode. And because code switching is a comfortable mode, it eases the difficulty of some students in comprehending lessons conducted in either straight English or straight Filipino. Abad (2010) also found out in her study that when the teachers allow students to codeswitch, the class becomes relaxed and the students are encouraged to actively participate in discussions because grammar concerns are minimal.

Also, the findings reinforce Bernardo's (2005) claim, as cited by Abad (2010), that "code switching may result in a more definite rendering of a complex idea that would otherwise be imprecise or vague when expressed in just one language" (p. 159).

Svendsen (2014) in her research "The influences of Code-switching in the Second Language Classroom in connection to language development" suggests that teachers' and pupils' usage of code-switching can be a beneficial language strategy.

Table 1:

Students Attitudes towards Code Switching

Attitudes towards Code Switching	Weighted Mean	Descriptive Interpretation
1. I converse with my friends using Tagalog and English during our casual conversation.	2.75	Agree
2. In my English subject, I speak my own dialect and switch to English from time to time.	2.63	Agree
3. As a routine, I mix English and my vernacular language in my English subject because my teacher allows me.	2.73	Agree
4. During classroom discussion, mixing vernacular language and English language is a good practice among students.	2.63	Agree
5. Mixing Tagalog and English can be a means of expressing oneself easier and more accurate.	2.70	Agree
6. Using both Tagalog and English during class discussion makes the learning of English lessons easier and faster.	2.75	Agree
7. During group activities, I use the combination of my dialect and English because my teacher allows it.	2.51	Agree
8. Combining my dialect and English language is just natural because it is a linguistic trend being practiced by everyone.	2.73	Agree
9. In using technological gadgets in the school, I prefer using English and Tagalog.	2.78	Agree
AVERAGE	2.69	Agree

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Attitudes of Students towards the English language

Table 2 shows the weighted mean and the descriptive interpretation of the students' attitudes towards the English language. Based on the table, the students strongly agree to the statement "English language, being the second language, must be given high importance." with a mean of 3.42 while they agree to the following attitude indicators: "English is vital to everyone; To speak English requires much self-confidence"; "A high school student must be good in English" ; and "During group activities, I use the English because my teacher says it" with means ranging from 2.60- 2.83.

It can also be gleaned from the table that the students disagree to 5 of the attitude indicators, which are " I am a fluent speaker of English."; "I consider a student a boastful one if he purely speaks English." ; "In school, I always speak English."; "English is a difficult subject."; "The idea of English speaking environments terrifies me." with means ranging from 2.35-2.50.

It could be inferred that students find the English language essential in their education despite not having the required competency to use the language as justified by their attitudes.

This is in consonance with the findings of Eshghinejad (2016) that showed a positive attitude toward English language learning in three aspects of behavioral, cognitive, and emotional. The result also showed that respondents recognize the importance of learning English in the area of communicating effectively.

In the same vein, Ahmed's (2015) qualitative analysis among 238 undergraduate EFL students at a public university in Malaysia showed that the attitude towards English language learning and using the language in various domains of usage is extremely positive.

Moreover, it confirms the findings of Valerio(2015) that Majority of students have projected affirmative attitudes toward English language as their second language.

Table 2:

Weighted mean and Descriptive Interpretation of the Students' Attitudes towards the English Language

Attitudes towards the English Language	Weighted Mean	Descriptive Interpretation
1. English is vital to everyone.	2.60	Agree

2. To speak English requires much self-confidence.	2.83	Agree
3. I am a fluent speaker of English.	2.45	Disagree
4. I consider a student a boastful one if he purely speaks English.	2.50	Disagree
5. In school, I always speak English.	2.35	Disagree
6. A high school student must be good in English.	2.83	Agree
7. During group activities, I use the English because my teacher says it.	2.73	Agree
8. English language, being the second language, must be given high importance.	3.43	Strongly Agree
9. English is a difficult subject.	2.45	Disagree
10. The idea of English speaking environments terrifies me.	2.48	Disagree
AVERAGE	2.66	Agree

Frequency on the Students' Use of Code Switching

Table 3 shows the frequency, percentage, and weighted mean on the use of code switching among the students. The table reveals that students use code switching frequently with a mean of 2.43.

It implies that students use code switching frequently as the need arises.

Table 3:

Frequency on the Students' Use of Code Switching

Use of Code Switching	Frequency	Percentage
1- Very Frequently	4	10%
2- Frequently	15	38%
3- Sometimes	21	53%
4- Never	0	0%
Total	40	100%

Weighted Mean	2.425	Frequently
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Academic Achievement of Students

Table 4 shows the frequency and percentage of students' academic achievements. The table reveals that 14 or 35% of the students have grades under the outstanding category; 11 or 27.5% have fairly satisfactory grades; 8 or 20% have satisfactory grades, while 7 or 17.5% have very satisfactory grades.

Table 4:

Academic Achievement of Students

Grade Interval	Frequency	Percentage
Outstanding(90-100)	14	35%
Very Satisfactory(85-89)	7	17.5%
Satisfactory(80-84)	8	20%
Fairly Satisfactory(75-79)	11	27.5%
Total	40	100%

Significant Relationship between the Students' Frequency on the Use of Code-switching and their Level of English Achievement

The table below shows the significant relationship between the Students' Frequency on the Use of Code Switching and their level of English Achievement. The table reveals that there is a significant relationship between the use of code switching and the students' level of English achievement as shown by the Chi Square Critical Value, which is 12.59 and the Chi Square Computed Value is 14.61. Since the computed value is greater than the critical value, the null hypothesis is rejected.

This affirms the findings of Valerio (2015) in her study "Filipino – English Code Switching Attitudes and Practices and Their Relationship to English Academic Performance among Freshman Students of Quirino State University" that there is significant relationship between the respondents' English academic grades and their attitudes and frequency toward code switching;

Table 5:**Significant Relationship between the Respondents' Frequency on the Use of Code-switching and their Level of English Achievement**

Degrees of freedom	6
Chi square Critical Value	12.59
Chi square Computed Value	14.61

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

This study determined the influence of code switching on students' performance in English. It also found out the students attitudes towards code switching and towards the English language. The results of the study may become as basis for improving students' performance in English through the principles of bilingualism and bilingual education. Based on the findings of the study, the following conclusions are drawn:

The student respondents have an agreeable attitude towards code switching and towards the English language; The students frequently use code switching as a means to express themselves better; There is a significant relationship between the students' frequency on the use of code switching and their academic achievement in English.

In the light of the findings and conclusions, the following are recommended:

1. Teachers should consider the use of code switching, as means of helping students understand the lesson better, and eventually learn more.
2. The students should not hesitate to code-switch as the need arises, for them to freely express their ideas and for them to participate actively during class discussions to improve their academic performance.
3. Future researchers should consider exploring other areas such as the teachers' attitudes towards code switching and the reasons of students for code switching and do "triangulation" in gathering the needed data.

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APPENDIX**PART I. ATTITUDES OF STUDENT-PARTICIPANTS TOWARDS THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND THEIR ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT IN ENGLISH**

Directions: Please indicate (through a check mark) to what extent you are predisposed towards the listed attitudes towards the study of literature. Refer to the scale below for your rating:

1 – Strongly Agree

2 – Disagree

3 – Agree

4 – Strongly Agree

STATEMENTS	1	2	3	4
1. English is vital to everyone.				
2. To speak English requires much self-confidence.				
3. I am a fluent speaker of English.				
4. I consider a student a boastful one if he purely speaks English.				
5. In school, I always speak English.				
6. A college student must be good in English.				
7. As Filipinos, speaking English manifest less patriotism to our country.				
8. English language, being the second language, must be given less importance.				
9. English is a difficult subject.				
10. The idea of English speaking environments terrifies me.				

Academic Achievement in English(Final Grade) : _

PART II. ATTITUDES OF STUDENT-PARTICIPANT TOWARDS CODE-SWITCHING

Directions: Please indicate (through a check mark) to which extent you are predisposed towards the listed attitudes towards you study of literature. Refer to the scale below for your rating:

1 – Strongly Agree

2 – Disagree

3 – Agree

STATEMENTS	1	2	3	4
1. I converse with my friends using Tagalog and English during our casual conversation.				
2. In my English subject, I speak my own dialect and switch to English from time to time.				
3. As a routine, I mix English and my vernacular language in my English subject because my professor allows me.				
4. During classroom discussion, mixing vernacular language and English language is a good practice among students.				
5. Mixing Tagalog and English can be a means of expressing oneself easier and more accurate.				
6. Using both Tagalog and English during class discussion makes the learning of English lessons easier and faster.				
7. During group activities, I use the combination of my dialect and English because it is allowed by my teacher.				
8. Combining my dialect and English language is just natural because it is a linguistic trend being practiced by everyone.				
9. In using technological gadgets in the school, I prefer using English and Tagalog.				

4 – Strongly Agree

PART III. FREQUENCY ON THE USE OF CODE-SWITCHING

Directions: Please indicate (through a check mark) to what extent do you code-switch during English class. Refer to the scale below for your rating:

1 – Very frequently

2 – Frequently

3 – Sometimes

4 – Never

1. How often do you code-switch during an English class?

Very frequently

Frequently

Sometimes

Never