



CODE SWITCHING IN TEACHING ELEMENTARY ENGLISH

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Abstract:

Language is one essential factor that affects the effectiveness of communication. When it becomes a barrier to communication, it causes misunderstandings and misinterpretations, especially for students. This study assessed code-switching in grade six English in a public elementary school to help the group of students as a foundation to propose an instructional plan. The study made use of descriptive and quasi-experimental methods. Random sampling was employed, observing the specific guidelines in the data gathering procedure. Results revealed that after utilizing the code-switching method, elementary students improved their performance, determined through the gained scores in English and the essential communication skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Wherein students had improved from satisfactory to outstanding performance in listening, from did not meet the expectation to fairly satisfactory performance in speaking, from satisfactory to very satisfactory performance in reading, and while their performance remained as did not meet expectation in writing. This showed that code-switching was indeed very effective. However, there are still identified weaknesses, specifically in writing skills, by which students' performance did not meet expectations even after the code-switching method had been utilized.

Keywords: academic performance, codeswitching, elementary students, teaching English

1. Introduction

Communication is a two-way process conveying information from one person to another. This may sound easy, but the process becomes intricate when one considers how one may communicate the subject. Language is a necessity in any form of communication. Communication is very challenging in states where people don't understand each other's language. Language is one essential factor that affects communication effectiveness, and

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when it becomes a barrier to communication, it causes misunderstandings and misinterpretations.

In the classroom, where English is taught and used as the universal and second language, it is undeniable that learners experience difficulties receiving, and decoding knowledge and concepts transpired by the English-speaking teacher. With this, the teacher sometimes or even often resorts to switching to the mother tongue, especially when explaining complex concepts, expounding ideas, giving examples, and the like. This resource is called code switching. In linguistics, code switching occurs when a speaker alternates between two or more languages, or language varieties, in the context of a single conversation. Multilingual-speakers of more than one language – sometimes use elements of multiple languages when conversing with each other. Thus, code switching is using more than one linguistic variety in a manner consistent with the syntax and phonology of each variety.

Code switching is distinct from other language contact phenomena, such as borrowing, pidgins and creoles, loan translation (calques), and language transfer (language interference). In the 1940s and 1950s, many scholars considered code switching to be a substandard use of language. Since the 1908s, however, most scholars have considered it a normal, natural product of bilingual and multilingual language use. Nunan and Carter (2001) briefly define the term as the phenomenon of switching from one language to another in the same discourse.

In English language teaching classrooms, code switching comes into use either in the teachers' or students' discourse. Although many educators do not favor it, one should have at least an understanding of the functions of switching between the native language and the second language and its underlying reasons. This understanding will give language teachers a heightened awareness of its use in classroom discourse. It will lead to better instruction by eliminating or dominating its use during the second language instruction.

English as the second language status in the Philippines has been correlated with the comprehensive utilization of English in social and educational settings. Teaching English has been honorably emphasized by the government through schools. In classroom practice, teachers have been instructed to teach high-quality English in English classes. All language classroom input must be in the target language; an effective model of language use can ensure that the intended learning is successful (Chi, 2000; Cook, 2001). Classroom instructions, therefore, are the most valuable experience for learners because of the limited exposure to sufficient comprehensible input from the natural environment they might get.

There have been a lot of claims that code switching in English instruction is not ideal. However, only several studies have been conducted providing the reality of its effects, especially for young learners of English. That is why this study was to assess code switching in teaching elementary English. Specifically, it determined the profile of the teachers and students, the distribution of the pre-test and post-test scores in English, and the basic communication skills in terms of listening, speaking, reading, and writing. It

also determined the effect of code switching on the skills and the significant difference between the students' scores gained from the pre-test and post-test.

2. Literature Review

This study is anchored on the various literature and studies that are found to be relevant. Code switching as a field of study has rich and varied literature encompassing research based on various theoretical models and research methodologies. The dominant perspectives in the study of code switching have been sociolinguistic or grammatical. The sociolinguistic approach has examined languages in contact in bilingual or migrant communities and concerns itself with the social and political motivations for its use. Research has been conducted on code switching as a conversational strategy (MacSwan, 2000; Milroy & Wei, 1995; Moyer, 1998; Poplack, 1980; Yamamoto, 2001; Zentella, 1990).

Code-alteration is a hyponym to replace CS, but it is marginally used. The term alteration is used in literature to refer to instances of one language being replaced by the other halfway through the sentence, and it is mostly, but not always, associated with long stretches of CS. The term insertion, in contrast, mostly correlates with occurrences of single lexical items from one language into a structure from the other language (Auer, 1988). In this case, the terms represent two distinct but generally accepted processes at work in CS utterances (Muyksen, 2000).

The grammatical approach to the study of code switching is psycholinguistic, which entails experimental studies to support models of bilingual language processing. These models try to explain how bilinguals differ from monolinguals in the way their languages are internalized. Issues such as message construction, lexical access, and the integration of lexical and syntactic representation in bilingual language production and comprehension have been addressed (Bialystok, 2001; Dussias, 2001; Muyksen, 2000; Myers Scotton & Jake, 2001).

In addition, the grammatical and syntactic investigation of codeswitching is driven by the notion that there are structural constraints on its production and systematic favoritism for switching to involve certain forms. The experimental methodologies used include elicitation, comprehension, and grammatical judgment tasks. The study of MacSwan (2000) explained code switching in terms of the Chomskian underlying frameworks for generative grammar. This approach can be seen as a "Micro" perspective, as it concerns itself purely with the syntactic formulation of codeswitched bilingual production and the way their languages are internalized. In addition, Woolard (2004) defined code switching as the "*investigation of the individuals*" use of two or more language varieties in the same speech event or exchange.

Sometimes, speakers use different languages to imply a certain social status or distinguish themselves from other social classes. Other reasons that have been found to motivate CS are to sound elitist or classy. Auer (2002) claimed that code switching carries a hidden prestige made explicit by attitudes. In addition, Al-Khatib (2003) found that speakers may use code switching "*to show power over the less powerful*". Thus, switching codes can be connected to reflect one's, social class. A speaker who can code switch

implies that he is a well-educated person who is competent in two languages or even more.

Holmes (2000) emphasized the issue of code switching according to the topic. Speakers may tend to use more than one language within the same utterance according to the topic. In many situations, a bilingual may tend to talk about a once certain topic in one language rather than another. Another good example can be one from Lebanese society. Discussing emotional and sexual topics in the Lebanese community is 'easier' when it is discussed in a language that is different from the native Arabic language of the society. *"Taboo words and topics are often codeswitched so as to avoid being expressed in the speaker's native language"* (Leung, 2006). Speakers in Lebanese society tend to discuss sexual topics and emotional topics in English or French since it will make them more comfortable to discuss those issues which have always been labeled as 'taboos' in a language different than their community's. In a study by Abalhassan and Alshalawi (2000), they collected data from twelve bilingual Arabic-speaking students to answer, 'why did you code switch to the English language?'. Although the answers were different in the result, one of the twelve students replied, *"I can't say taboo words in Arabic"*.

More recently, attention has been drawn to code switching as discourse related in that its use contributes to the interactional meaning of the utterance and organizes conversation. Many of the functional studies were conducted in bilingual content in classrooms in the U.S. and only a few in second and foreign-language classrooms. Eldin (2014) claimed that a speaker might shift from one code to another, intentionally or unintentionally.

This shift may be from one language to another, from one dialect to another, or from one style to another for many different reasons. A bilingual teacher in class may switch his or her language to elaborate on a certain point he or she is explaining. Sociolinguists refer to this shift as code switching. Swann and Sinka (2007) explained that the definitions of code switching vary. Indeed, the definition of code switching varies from one linguist to another; thus, several definitions that were set by various sociolinguists are used.

Riehl (2005) claims that code switching is only facilitated at this point: it needs not to occur necessarily. For this reason, Clyne et al. (2003) pointed out that trigger words facilitate transversion (= switch) but do not necessarily promote it.

The more attention the speaker pays to the utterance, the less evidence will be found for psycholinguistically conditioned code switching. The monitor is used less in bilingual speech situations or in situations that impose a heavy mental load on the speaker. If code switching is very common in certain speech communities, language-specific information may become lost.

In Pakistan, Shafi et al. (2020) have discussed teachers' usage of codes-switching in language learning classrooms and found it an advantageous device for language teaching. It demonstrated how code-switching occurs everywhere. Teachers prefer code-switching as an efficient teaching method, particularly in language classrooms. The findings demonstrate that the data consistently supports the teachers' favorable

sentiments toward code-switching. Most of the teachers agreed that knowing L1 makes learning L2 easier.

All the teachers believed that maximizing the use of the target language was important and constituted best practice in language teaching and learning in both multilingual and shared-L1 teaching contexts. They believed that exposing students to English and giving them opportunities to use it were essential components of their position and that when students learned through the target language, better learning outcomes resulted. Despite these opinions, most teachers expressed some flexibility in their attitudes and methods towards the use of the L1 in their instruction and occasionally utilized or permitted the L1 to be used, especially in circumstances where the L1s were shared (Gallagher, 2020).

According to the study by Osborne (2020), the ways in which intersecting and shifting frames may invoke locally legible schemes of valuation as a means by which the contours of everyday linguistic practices take on meaning and are maintained by the phatic function embedded in everyday codeswitching practices. There is a need to recognize that people use language to communicate. In the Philippines, where the bilingual education policy is in effect, teachers are strongly encouraged by school administrators to discourage their students from always switching languages. This guideline inside the classroom needs to be reevaluated, however, considering the causes and circumstances under which a bilingual learner employs a language or switches codes. Additionally, a more tolerant attitude toward C-S must be adopted. Teachers who become agitated when their pupils switch codes should take solace in the fact that their students, especially the novices, are truly expressing themselves using two different grammar systems. As a result, they should not be viewed as lacking in one or both languages (Flores, 2021).

On the study by Olivera (2021), it showed that based on the learners' own experiences and responses, which served as the data used in this study, the use of code-switching has a positive effect on increasing and boosting their confidence and engagement during English classes; consequently, the teacher also plays a great part in boosting the learners' motivation to participate and engage themselves in discussions. The usage of code-switching will make it feasible for teachers to do their best to optimize their students' emotional components during the teaching-learning process and lower their affective filters, which will result in strong motivation and low anxiety.

Huerta-Macías and Quintero (1992) focused on different aspects of code switching as it occurred among bilinguals in an intergenerational classroom context. Code switching was found to enhance communication, in both oral and written form, within the group as the class participants strived to relate their thoughts to others who had varying proficiencies in Spanish and English. It was also viewed in this study as part of the holistic approach to the acquisition of literacy in that it allowed each participant to use each of his or her languages in a natural, meaningful way as the various classroom activities were being implemented.

The understanding of the nature of code switching had already come a long way from the days when it was referred to as a speech mixture. However, the researcher also

wanted to assess code-switching in grade six English in a public elementary school to help the group of students as a foundation to propose an instructional plan.

3. Material and Methods

This study used descriptive and quasi-experimental methods, which aimed to describe and evaluate the use of code-switching as an intervention in teaching English, employing techniques of both quantitative and qualitative methods. According to Mayoux (2006), the primary concern of the quantitative method is with rigorous, objective measurement to determine the truth or falsehood of pre-determined hypotheses. In this research, the quantitative method is used to identify pre-post test scores of the chosen respondents in terms of listening, speaking, reading, and writing and investigate the significant difference between the scores of the two groups.

This study used a survey questionnaire and standardized questions utilizing a story and poem from “The Tales of Tiptoes Lightly” and other works of Reg Down; test items were formulated by the researcher along the basic communications skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Items were adapted from the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) Junior Test. These test questions determined the communication skills of elementary students.

Generally, the respondents of this study were classified into two groups. The first group comprised four (4) Grade Six English teachers. By and large, this allowed them to assess and evaluate their knowledge of teaching English as a subject and, most importantly, the roles it plays in communication. Another group of respondents comprises the Grade Six students who come from five (5) of the fourteen sections of Talisay City Central Elementary School. Its population as of the school year 2016-2017 is 747 students. Only 40% of the students with an average grade of 75-79 (Fairly Satisfactory), 80-84 (Satisfactory), 85-89 (Very Satisfactory), and 90-100 (Outstanding) will be considered to participate through random sampling.

The researcher asked the permission of the schools’ division superintendent through written communication before the former administered the test questions among the grade six students and teachers in a public elementary school in Talisay City, Cebu, Philippines. With an approved request letter, test questions were distributed to the respondents. The researcher retrieved the accomplished test questions from the respondents. Data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics to achieve correct and reliable results.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Teachers’ Strategies in Teaching English

As transparently revealed in Table 2, Lecture, Discussion, Demonstration, Inductive, Deductive, Reporting, or Discussion strategies were always used by respondents with the same mean of 2.75 with a 0.25 standard deviation. On the other hand, Activity has a mean of 3 with 0 standard deviations. And the grand average is 2.71, verbally described

as always. Therefore, it is then manifested that the teacher-respondents always use the strategies above in their standard delivery of lessons.

The result is parallel to the study of Abdulbaki et al. (2018), who found that most respondents indicated that they had learned a lot from the lecture material. Some respondents referred to a lack of motivation to participate during the lecture. This should explain that apart from lectures, other strategies, as stated, are also employed by the teachers. Additionally, Gainau et al. (2022) claim that it is essential to understand and master the discussion method as a teacher before using it. For this reason, a teacher must have skills in this discussion method. Aside from these methods, the activity-based method is also well-supported by the study of Ul-Haq et al. (2017). They recommended that the activity-based learning method be used in class to develop and enhance the speaking skills of students. Teachers should also be provided training to implement the activity-based method in language lessons.

Table 2: Distribution of Respondents as to Teachers' Strategies in Teaching English

Teaching Strategies	Mean	SD	Verbal Description
Lecture	2.75	0.25	Always
Discussion	2.75	0.25	Always
Activity	3.00	0	Always
Demonstration	2.75	0.25	Always
Inductive	2.75	0.25	Always
Deductive	2.75	0.25	Always
Reporting/Discussion	2.25	0.25	Always
General Average	2.71	0.21	Always

Legend: 1.00 – 1.67 (Seldom); 1.67 – 2.34 (Often); 2.34 – 3.00 (Always)

4.2 Students' Exposure to Different Forms of Multimedia

Using advanced computing and telecommunications technology, learning can also be qualitatively different. The process of learning in the classroom can become significantly richer as students have access to new and various types of information, can manipulate it on the computer through graphic displays or controlled experiments in ways never before possible, and can communicate their results and conclusions in a variety of media to their teacher, students in the next classroom, or students around the world (DepEd, 2012). Table 8 shows the respondents' exposure to different forms of multimedia.

There are ten various forms listed in the table. Among the ten forms of multimedia, photocopying got the highest number of respondents, with 90 comprising 96.77 percent. Text and picture printing had 81 respondents representing 87.10 percent. Fifty-six respondents claimed that film show was used by their teacher, which made up 60.21 percent of the totality. Video clip viewing got 33 respondents, represented by 35.48 percent. The use of overhead projectors was responded to by 26 respondents, contributing 27.96 percent. The use of radio also had its share of 22 respondents, composed of 23.66 percent of the entirety. Music playing got 50.54 percent shared by 47 respondents. The use of computers was agreed upon by 85 students, contributing 91.40 percent. Using storage devices got 17 respondents, with 18.28 percent. These 52 students

responded using mobile phones/cellphones, which signified that 55.91 percent of the whole and play station portable was proclaimed by the 12 students, who shared 12.90 percent. It was evident that students were mostly exposed to photocopying compared to other forms of multimedia. A computer is another alternative for notetaking, researching, and other related purposes. Text and picture printing as well is common among students. Educators should know the importance and beneficence of technology and use it in everyday classrooms (Erbas et al., 2021). Teachers should employ technology to accomplish their educational objectives, improve their instruction, and provide students with more learning opportunities. Octaberlina and Anggarini (2022) found that Picture Cards can increase and enrich their vocabulary and knowledge. The implication of Pictures Cards can motivate students to understand the text. Therefore, they can appreciate many texts in vocabulary tests. The literature review on the use of technology in English language learning indicates that the effective use of new technologies improves learners' language learning skills (Ahmadi & Reza, 2018). These instances imply that students are not deprived of being exposed to technologies considered essential in developing ways and means of classroom instruction. Furthermore, better learning is most likely easier achieved.

Table 8: Students' Exposure to Different Forms of Multimedia

Different Forms of Multimedia	F	%
Photocopying	90	96.77
Text and picture printing	81	87.10
Film showing	56	60.21
Video clips viewing	33	35.48
Use of overhead projector	26	27.96
Use of radio	22	23.66
Music playing	47	50.54
Use of computer	85	91.40
Use of storage devices	17	18.28
Use of mobile phone/cellphone	52	55.91
Play station portable	12	12.90

4.3 Level of Performance in the Pre-Test Scores in Communication Skills

As reflected in Table 4, students manifested at least Satisfactory (S) performances in both listening and reading skills, while their scores in speaking and writing Did Not Meet Expectation. The data prove that the sole use of the English language in testing the students' listening skills affects their performance. Students experienced difficulties in comprehension, especially with the parts of the selections and test items that contained unfamiliar and technical words and figurative language.

Moreover, in terms of the speaking skills test, the data transparently express the challenges met by the students upon taking the test. Possible challenges could be in the delivery, such as mispronunciation, substitution, repetition, and the like; content or organization, like lack of unity, coherence, and emphasis; and enthusiasm or audience awareness, like absence or privation of engagement among the audience. According to Maxammatkulova (2021), before giving students speaking tasks, they must work out all

new words, repeat their pronunciation, write a transcription, give examples of using these words, etc.

Furthermore, data demonstrate that students showed difficulties in reading skills tests. They might have read or articulated the words found in the selections and the test items, but it is apparent that they were unable to comprehend what each selection tries to convey. Comprehensibility of the selections and clarity of the message that each wants to carry can be considered among the factors that affect their performance. Ardhian et al. (2020) found no interaction effect between reading and critical thinking techniques on students' reading comprehension skills. This could also be among the factors that contribute to students' reading performance.

In the same manner, with the number of students who failed to meet the expectation as clearly displayed by the data, it is no doubt that students experienced challenges in composing their answers in the writing skills test. Probable factors that affected their performance were lack of focus and details, vague organization, and indistinct voice of their answers or compositions. This is well-supported by the study of Saavedra (2020), who revealed five factors language teachers considered to have influenced the poor English and Filipino writing skills of elementary pupils. Based on their experiences and observations while teaching writing to the pupils, the following was recorded: 1) lack of vocabulary in the target language; 2) difficulty in conveying and organizing ideas; 3) pupils' perception that writing is a hard task; 4) lack of motivation and interest in writing, and 5) the difficulty in spelling, grammar and sentence construction are the reasons why many elementary pupils have poor writing skills in English and Filipino.

Table 4: Level of Performance in the Pre-Test Scores in Communication Skills

Communication Skills	Item No.	Mean	Sd	Verbal Description
Listening	1	1.81	0.08	Very Satisfactory
	2	1.26	0.10	Satisfactory
	3	0.76	0.08	Fairly Satisfactory
Speaking	1	0.16	0.96	Did Not Meet Expectation
	2	12.31	0.79	Did Not Meet Expectation
	3	4.11	0.92	Did Not Meet Expectation
Reading	1	1.48	0.11	Satisfactory
	2	1.41	0.10	Satisfactory
	3	1.16	0.09	Fairly Satisfactory
Writing	1	8.85	0.57	Did Not Meet Expectation
	2	5.86	0.40	Did Not Meet Expectation
	3	6.14	0.40	Did Not Meet Expectation

Legend: 0.00-0.60 (Did Not Meet Expectation); 0.60-1.20 (Fairly Satisfactory); 1.20-1.80 (Satisfactory); 1.80-2.25 (Very Satisfactory); 2.25-3.00 (Outstanding)

4.4 Level of Performance in the Post-Test Scores in Communication Skills

Data reveal that after the test had been code-switched, there was progress in the scores or performance of the students in the post-test. To attest, this is the Outstanding and Very Satisfactory performance of students manifested through the post-test scores in listening

skills. This can be strengthened by the study of Sakaria and Priyana (2018) which reveals that teachers normally use students' native language as a teaching strategy mainly for instructions to help students' comprehension of material that would have been too cognitively difficult to understand without instruction in another language.

Additionally, their performance in the pre-test scores in speaking skills which failed to meet the expectation of fairly satisfactory performance in the post-test, more particularly in Item 1, is another proof of progress. The learning and teaching process draws on social communication, and code-switching is a natural part of that communication (Adriosh & Razi, 2019). Another piece of evidence supporting the claim is the students' very satisfactory performance in the post-test in reading skills.

On the other hand, post-test scores in writing still failed to meet expectations, but statistically, there was an evident increase in the mean scores of the three items when weighed against the pre-test scores. Generally, data prove that by using code-switching, there is an improvement in the student's scores or performance on the test in communication skills. Nurhamida et al. (2018) emphasized that the prevalence of code-switching in ESL classrooms has been essential for both teachers and students.

Table 5: Level of Performance in the Post-Test Scores in Communication Skills

Communication Skills	Item No.	Mean	Sd	Verbal Description
Listening	1	2.48	0.07	Outstanding
	2	1.96	0.09	Very Satisfactory
	3	1.56	0.09	Very Satisfactory
Speaking	1	27.26	0.78	Fairly Satisfactory
	2	16.08	1.05	Did Not Meet Expectation
	3	20.31	1.05	Did Not Meet Expectation
Reading	1	2.12	0.08	Very Satisfactory
	2	2.18	0.09	Very Satisfactory
	3	1.10	0.09	Fairly Satisfactory
Writing	1	12.38	0.65	Did Not Meet Expectation
	2	6.76	0.56	Did Not Meet Expectation
	3	7.01	0.51	Did Not Meet Expectation

Legend: 0.00-0.60 (Did Not Meet Expectation); 0.60-1.20 (Fairly Satisfactory); 1.20-1.80 (Satisfactory); 1.80-2.25 (Very Satisfactory); 2.25-3.00 (Outstanding)

4.5 Effect of code switching along the basic communication skills and Significant difference between the students' scores gained from the pre-test and post-test

Based on the Paired Sample T-Test, there is a significant difference between the student's pre-test and post-test scores based on the $\alpha = .05$ level. At the said level of confidence, there is more than enough evidence to conclude that the code-switching method was very effective.

This proves Myers-Scotton's Markedness Model, which posits that speakers employ code choices rationally as a way of establishing their social position according to the Negotiation Principle: "Choose the form of your conversational contribution such that it indexes the set of rights and obligations which you wish to be in force between the speaker and addressee for the current exchange." To substantiate further, teachers code-switch

purposively for cultural reasons, politeness, and, most significantly, for explaining complex concepts to increase their students' understanding of what is being learned (Sakaria & Priyana, 2018).

Furthermore, students prefer that teachers use code-switching for comprehension, comfort, clarity of expression, and ease (Bravo-Sotelo & Metila, 2021; Garcines & Alvarez, 2017). In other words, when teachers employ the code-switching method in the teaching of certain subjects that make use of English as a medium of instruction, there is a greater probability of improvement of their comprehension and, thus, developing and improving their listening, reading, speaking, and writing skills in the utilization of English language.

Table 6: Effect of Code Switching and Significant Difference
 Between the Students' Scores Gained from the Pre-Test and Post-Test

Communication Skills	\bar{x}	sd	df	t-comp.	Sig.	Verbal Description
Pre-Post Tests	29.753	29.172	92	9.836	0.001	Significant

$p > 0.05$

5. Recommendations

Based on the arrived findings and conclusion, it is recommended that the Instructional Plan in English be utilized to set off students' learning in English along with the basic communication skills as to listening, speaking, reading, and writing.

6. Conclusion

Employment of code switching method in the teaching or subjects that make use of English language as the medium of instruction is helpful in increasing the comprehensibility of the various concepts to be introduced, essential skills to be performed, and target disciplines to be mastered. There are instances in every delivery of instruction where learners experienced difficulty in understanding facts, concepts, directions, and the like due to strange or unfamiliar English words. This may hinder them to grasp the meaning of the full context and creates a barrier to the full perspective of learning. Thus, in agreement with the findings of this study, it was proven that code switching was indeed very effective.

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Conflict of Interest Statement

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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