

DISCOURSE MATRIX IN FILIPINO-ENGLISH CODE-SWITCHING: STUDENTS' ATTITUDES AND FEELINGS

By

RONA DELA ROSA

Instructor, Department of English, Polytechnic College of the City of Meycauyan, Bulacan, Philippines.

ABSTRACT

Undeniably, one language may be considered more valuable than other languages. Hence, most bilingual communities suffer from language imbalances. The present study attempts to identify the factors of code-switching during classroom presentations. Its functions were identified through analysing conversational contexts in which it occurs. Through descriptive method, a total of 258 students participated in the study. Findings revealed that the core factor on why students resort to code-switching during classroom presentations is due to a limited English vocabulary. Other factors were explored in the study. These results will provide information and understanding of students' learning motivation by looking into factors that contribute to code-switching during classroom presentations.

Keywords: Code-switching, Classroom Presentation, Bilingualism.

INTRODUCTION

Code-switching is defined as a universal language-contact phenomenon that reflects the grammar of both languages working simultaneously and a speech style unique to bilinguals, in which fluent speakers switch languages between or within sentences.

Riegelhaupt (2000) stated that code-switching is a phenomenon that sparked many questions. Like, should code-switching be permitted in the classroom? What types of code-switching should be used? Does code-switching indicate a weakness in the language being acquired? or is it another resource to be developed and used to the student's advantage?

In widely observed collegiate classrooms, this phenomenon usually occurs, there is no particular language that can be heard, and students are conversing using their first language and will combine it with their second language. Majority of them switch their languages with ease at different points in their daily conversation or in writing. They employ code-switching by inserting English words, phrases or sentences into their communications. Even though they may unintentionally perform code switching, there is always a reason why this occurs. The university students already know how to utilise the function of their second language, and also their first language that

resulted to the alternation of the two, when they are interacting with other students.

One study (Elias & Gallagher, 2014) developed a view of language as a form of material engagement, one that foregrounds its embodied and ecological character. Achieving such a view, however, requires disabusing ourselves of certain received and deeply entrenched notions. It presented a thought experiment meant to illuminate the materiality of language, as a technological activity on par with the construction and manipulation of artefacts. The study explored its implications, justifying the comparison with actual languages while emphasising revealing differences. Ultimately, it exposed the embodied and enactive nature of language, offering a view of language as continuous with our engagement with the environment, as opposed to a picture of language as an essentially symbolic system or code.

Meanwhile one study (Ryder & Leinonen, 2014) focussed on young children's incorrect answers to pragmatically demanding questions. Children with Specific Language Impairment (SLI), including a subgroup with Pragmatic Language Difficulties (PLD) and typically developing children, answered questions targeting implicatures, based on a storybook and short verbal scenarios. Ninety-seven children participated in this study: 30 children with SLI

of whom 12 had PLD, 32 typically developing children aged 5–6 years and 35 aged 7–11 years. The incorrect answers produced by the children with SLI were similar in their use of context to those of the 5–6 year old, suggesting developmental delay. The children with PLD produced significantly more irrelevant answers than both the language impaired children without PLD and the typically developing groups and had most difficulty when the context was presented solely verbally.

According to Bautista (2004), the alternation of Filipino and English in informal discourse is a feature of the linguistic repertoire of the educated, middle- and upper-class Filipinos. Furthermore, Sibayan (1999) mentioned that English is a leading language used globally and will remain as one of our official languages. What is the standing and the role of English in Philippine education? Studies prove that more Filipinos today prefer code-switching and code-mixing rather than using English or Filipino all throughout. We can observe that television programmes are mostly in “Taglish”. Sibayan also pointed out that there would come a time when “Taglish” will be the language of the elite because the elite of the future is the person who mastered two languages. He also added that, “a Filipino who uses nothing but English is rare.” The setting is not only true in the media but in the schools as well.

Rejo and his colleagues (2016) argues that if it is agreed that teachers must teach the student, the process of changing their behaviours and attitudes toward reading and eventually that teaching will create condition for such change to take place. Then, there is a need to re-examine the materials that teachers use as well as methods they employ in teaching reading; for the students' success or failure in learning to read, to a large extent depend on the teachers, their methods and materials. An effective teacher creates an environment that challenges the potential of each student and gives opportunities for optimum learning through a variety of materials suited to the needs, interests and ability of students. The classroom thus becomes an ideal setting for the development of reading skills.

Labitigan (2013) also added that in the Philippines, English is now widely spoken, particularly by higher socioeconomic

groups, and maintains a central role in government, business, technology, and mass media. English is also used widespread as lingua franca among the international Filipino community. In addition, he also stated that Tagalog-English code-switching (TECS), or “Taglish”, is a variety of bilingual speech. Although it can be considered a prestige language variety, TECS has an increasingly substantial presence in all socioeconomic classes in the Philippines, particularly in urban centres. TECS is also widely spoken by bilingual communities throughout the world.

Sert (2006) mentioned that in university classrooms, code-switching comes into use in both the teachers' and the students' discourse. ESL teachers, linguistics and researchers believe that code-switching is not necessarily a blockage or deficiency in learning a language. Bilingual speakers alternate the codes for various reasons during conversations. Code-switching is studied to learn why people who are competent in two languages alternate words or phrases in a particular situation.

This study proposed to identify and evaluate the factors that affect code-switching in the classroom among university students. Primary data has been collected, analysed and compared with related research for the purpose of reaching comparative conclusions about these factors. The research was conducted at Mariano Quinto Allarilla Polytechnic College and explored the factors that determine code-switching among university students in their English classes.

1. Materials and Methods

The current experiment examined the effect of context language (base language), semantic constraints and language use on the expectancy of a language switch during listening comprehension. The habit and frequency of switching between a pair of languages rather than another may affect lexical expectancy and switching licensing.

Using a cross-modal naming paradigm, this study investigated the effect of sentence constraint and language use on the expectancy of a language switch during listening comprehension. A total of 258 Filipino bilinguals, who habitually code-switch between Filipino and English, took part in the study. Participants' speech onset times were recorded.

Essentially, the study employed descriptive research. This involves the collection of data that will provide an account or description of individuals, groups or situations. It is the most appropriate method to use, since the very purpose of this study is to identify the present fact concerning the factors of code-switching during classroom presentations.

This study used purposive-stratified sampling. Purposive sampling starts with a purpose in mind and the sample is thus selected to include people of interest and exclude those who do not suit the purpose. There were a total of 258 respondents in this study.

Data was collected through the use of survey and classroom observations. Participants were not informed that their code-switching behaviour was the subject of observation by the researcher in the class. The observation was carried out in a regular classroom meeting with the researcher.

The observations were conducted for 45 minutes. It was also noticed that students also talked to each other in Filipino during class to share thoughts of their family or friends although such issues were not related to their ongoing lesson. Their private and personal communication seemed consisting of a word or few sentences spoken when the teacher's attention was elsewhere.

2. Results

Table 1 shows that out of 258 participants, 122 responded that they code-switch because of lack of English vocabulary, while 95 answered that they lack self-confidence in speaking English, 26 answered that they are uncomfortable with grammar usage and 15 of them answered that they code-switch to give emphasis or clarification on what they were talking about.

To illustrate the results, the study use chi-square test for independence. The chi-square test is a statistical test used to examine differences with categorical variables. There are a number of features of the social world we categorise through categorical variables: religion, political preference, etc. The test is applied when you have categorical variables from a single population. It is used to determine whether there is a significant association between two variables.

Table 2 shows the results of chi-square between year levels and reasons for code-switching, wherein the null hypothesis and alternative hypothesis of the study are:

H_0 : Year and reasons are independent.

H_a : Year and reasons are dependent.

3. Discussion

During the observation of these classes, the researcher has a chance to record the classroom interactions and the particular situations where code-switching occurred. It was noticed that when students come across an unfamiliar word in the lecture or while reading, they are likely to look it up and let their friends know the meaning in Filipino.

Even when responding to questions from the teacher, some students suddenly replied in Filipino since this is the language that they are comfortable with. They would sometimes ask the teacher for the meaning of unfamiliar words, or attempt to seek for possible equivalents in English.

The discussions of the different topics in the lessons were developed in the speaking activity so that the students would have more venues to express their views, opinions and arguments. The occurrences of language exchange came from those observed instances whenever students are participating in classroom presentations like delivering their assigned topics, recitations and group activities. When they come across a new word in the lesson, they would jot it

Reasons	2 nd Year	3 rd Year	4 th Year	Total
Lack of English vocabulary	63	29	30	122
Uncomfortable with grammar usage	18	17	11	46
For emphasis or clarity	8	3	4	15
Lack of self-confidence in speaking	13	33	29	75
Total	102	82	74	258

Table 1. Reasons given by Students for Code-switching

Reasons	2 nd Year	3 rd Year	4 th Year
Lack of English vocabulary	4.520	2.470	0.711
Uncomfortable with grammar usage	.002	0.387	0.364
For emphasis or clarity	0.723	0.657	0.021
Lack of self-confidence in speaking	9.35	3.52	2.61
Total	14.59	7.03	3.70

Table 2. Chi-square Result between Year Levels and Reasons for Code-switching

down quickly and pass it to each other, sharing the meaning with their friends. Many of them whisper to convey to their friends the possible meaning.

Factors influencing code-switching included the students' degree of English language proficiency, their self-confidence in speaking English and their accents, also the pressure and demand of the classroom situation since they are all enrolled in an English programme.

In sociolinguistic analysis, students showed various responses regarding the factors of code-switching. Many of them agreed with the options presented in the survey. However, some students responded to the factors of code-switching in different perspectives. Both views of code-switching factors were considered in this study. Factors affecting code-switching suggested include: (1) no similar words in English; (2) does not know the English word; (3) to fill the gap in speaking; (4) easier to speak in Filipino language; (5) to avoid misunderstanding; (6) to convey familiarity; (7) so others would not understand, i.e. privacy; and, (8) to add emphasis (Bista, 2010).

Conclusions

The findings from this study revealed that the principal factor why students code-switch during classroom presentations is the lack of English vocabulary. Other noted factors were: to ease communication; to avoid misunderstanding; to share information; and, to put emphasis. The class observations, personal teaching experience and the interview with the students have directed to the conclusion that code-switching is a natural phenomenon among bilingual students. Students agreed, they switch the codes for several reasons. In some cases, code exchange may bring an unharmonious relationship between speakers and language community, because in their respective culture, the words may not carry the same value, status and functions. In some cultural settings, local languages may be considered inferior when they are used in familiar and informal communication.

Other times, learners try to get best possible answer in English class to show they know it. While doing so, they code-switch with their friends so that they would be right in giving answers to the teacher. However, as noted by Durano (2009), there are more private school students who

have a neutral attitude towards code-switching, compared to public high school students. In addition, the result shows that code-switching amongst the 280 high school students is a marked socio-linguistic activity. Furthermore, the result shows that Fil-English is both subtractive and additive bilingualism from the students' viewpoint. Finally, findings show that the participants' attitudes towards English and Fil-English illustrate diglossia in their speech community.

The language of the classroom is socially relevant. Thus, it must be an involvement of the trained teachers who understand and appreciate the use of code-switching in the classroom and its applicability to the society.

One form of intervention that might be used is e-learning. The e-learning tool provides an independent learning tool which addresses student concerns relating to the process and content of structuring a dissertation and the function of language. Initial responses have been positive from both staff and students in respect to providing a source of student support and feedback (Sloan, Porter, Robins, & McCourt, 2014). The research shows how the Dissertation Game Model (DGM), evolved into an e-learning resource supporting student understanding of the content, structure, planning, and writing of a dissertation. The e-learning tool focuses on helping international students understand what the generic contents of each chapter of a dissertation should contain and supports them in engaging in research as a transferable skill. Using findings from 250 postgraduate students, 40 supervisors and two module tutors, the research identified the content and language issues faced by students and recognised the need to design an enabler supporting the latter as independent learners and the academic staff delivering support.

In the Philippines, the implementation of the monolingual approach of teaching English-through-English-only faces many challenges such as inadequate classroom resources, students' low levels of English competence, motivation and autonomy, teachers' limited English abilities, and inappropriate teaching methods. Many Filipino teachers of English support code-switching in the classroom and they teach English through the bilingual approach. English-Filipino code-switching is reported not to

be a restriction on the acquisition of English; rather, it can facilitate the teaching and learning of general English in the Philippines. This practice of code-switching is not just due to a lack of sufficient proficiency to maintain a conversation in English; rather, it serves a number of pedagogic functions such as explaining new words and grammatical rules, giving feedback, checking comprehension, making comparison between English and Filipino, establishing good rapport between teachers and students, creating a friendly classroom atmosphere, and supporting group dynamics.

Limitations and Future Directions

Language teachers should be mindful that codes occur from bilingual interaction and are very useful for conveying the message of the lesson if correctly used in the discourse. They should also give priority to understand the language, dialects, and registers of their students.

This study also purports that code-switching is an appreciated strategy to express their understanding of the subject matter. In this particular research, in which students from a bilingual classroom are represented, show the benefits of code-switching taking place within the bilingual settings. In schools, where the primary objective is to give students the best education possible, students should be allowed to use strategies that will help them learn best. Possibly, schools will be able to use this study as one proof to the benefits of having a code-switching programme within their schools.

Furthermore, code-switching can also be a useful strategy in classroom interaction if the aim is to make meaning clear and transfer the knowledge to students in an efficient way. Code-switching during classroom presentation is one of the approaches to be used in order to understand the learning of the language.

Evaluating the language teaching methodologies, material used and restrictions in high school and (English Language Institutes) ELI as an English as Foreign Language (EFL) context will reveal all the types of approaches and methods and also materials currently in use in such education places, also the restrictions that there are in these education places and they make obstacle for the teachers and the route that teachers have taken in

becoming teachers. The results of the study can be used by the EFL institutes and the public schools of Iran and general to improve their activities. The findings suggest that teachers' beliefs about culture can be seen as a continuous process that allows teachers reflect on their beliefs and practices (Asgari, 2015).

Despite the prevalence of this phenomenon, there has been limited work focusing on this language pair in the code-switching literature. The code-switching literature has been dominated by language pairs that are typologically similar. Further study on typologically dissimilar pairs such as Tagalog and English will be extremely valuable in understanding the mechanisms underlying code-switching (Labitigan, 2013).

Although teaching has been characterised as a profound emotional activity, little is known about the link between emotional quotient of educators and their work attitude behaviour. Also, it is often said that passion and emotion fuel an educator's teaching experience, but there is a scarcity of knowledge as to what extent emotion could serve as a predictor of teaching attitude (Relajo, Pilao, & dela Rosa, 2015).

In the Philippines, a national policy on the use of classroom languages in foreign language education has arguably not been fully developed yet. Consequently, both English and Filipino can be used in English classes in the Philippines, and codeswitching between the two languages is popular in these classes. However, there are several Filipino English language teachers, who strongly advocate the monolingual approach – Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) and have negative attitudes towards the use of the mother tongue in English language classrooms in the Philippines. The lack of a documented policy on the medium of instruction in foreign language education in the Philippines implies that there are also no formal guidelines or training materials for Filipino teachers on the use of classroom languages. The debate between Filipino supporters of the monolingual approach and those of the bilingual approach requires an official policy which explicitly designates the classroom language use in foreign language education in the Philippines.

Furthermore, using code-switching as a tool to illustrate how

language experience modulates comprehension, the visual world paradigm was employed to examine the extent to which gender-marked Filipino determiners facilitate upcoming target nouns in a group of Filipino-English bilingual code-switchers. The results of this study reflect the asymmetric production of code-switched speech. The extension of the asymmetric effect into Filipino underscores the permeability between language modes in bilingual code-switchers.

In conclusion, it is recommended that the code-switching in language classroom is not always an obstruction or insufficiency in learning a language, but it may be reflected as a useful strategy in classroom interaction, if the aim is to make meaning clear and to transfer the knowledge to students in an efficient manner. It is also worth exploring other aspects of well-being such as adversity quotient and spiritual quotient since it has been revealed in previous studies that they are part of a pivotal role in promoting a healthy outlook in conversation (Relajo, 2012).

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Rona dela Rosa teaches Language and Literature at the Polytechnic College of the City of Meycauyan in Bulacan, Philippines. She is currently pursuing her PhD in English Language Studies at Bulacan State University. She finished both her undergraduate and master's degree from City of Malabon University. She also writes articles for *Psychreg*, an online resource in psychology and allied fields.

