

The Multiple Facets of Code-Switching

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Article History: Received on 2 December 2022, Revised on 30 January 2023

Published on 2 February 2023

Abstract: Code-switching (CS) of language teachers is common; however, educators have different views on its purpose and effect on students' learning. With this, there should be a re-examination of the use of code-switching by language teachers in English language classes. This research aimed to uncover the multiple facets of CS specifically the common types of CS used by teachers, why they code-switch, and the insights they can share with their peers. The researcher made use of the qualitative method, specifically phenomenology. In addition, analyzing the transcription of the video lessons of each participant was also conducted to provide a descriptive data on the types of CS used. The study's results discovered that teachers commonly use intra-sentential and rarely use tag-like CS; they also use inter-sentential occasionally. Moreover, it uncovered those teachers code-switched for easy access of learning, self-convenience, and time constraints. It also draws insights from the teachers, which reveals that CS can make them efficient and innovative while strengthening students' understanding. This qualitative analysis of the multiple facets of code-switching would allow teachers to make informed decisions about whether or not to incorporate code-switching into their language teaching pedagogy.

Keywords: Code-Switching, Language Teaching, Language Teachers, Phenomenology, Philippines

A. Introduction

Code-switching of second language teachers is common. In this time of the pandemic, the conduct of blended learning is indeed challenging not just for the students but also for teachers. The utilization of lively classes is faced with several challenges, and students' engagement is difficult to achieve. Hence, teachers need to widen their strategies just to aid students' understanding of the language. Goodman and Serikbolsyn have pointed out (2021) that teachers even opt to practice the bilingual approach and do code-switching since they found it helpful in creating a more meaningful learning experience. However, teachers may have diverse reasons for resorting to such an approach.

Additionally, Chimbutane (2013) remarked that code-switching is visible in classroom conversations between teachers and students. English as a Second Language (ESL) educators, linguistics, and researchers claim that code-switching is not totally a blockage or deficiency in learning a specific language. Bilingual speakers alternate the codes for different causes during discussions. The study of code-switching seeks to understand why people who are fluent in two languages switch words or phrases in a given situation.

Moreover, Code-switching is an occurrence that takes place in bilingual societies where people can communicate in two or more languages. Bilinguals can code-switch and utilize their languages as resources to achieve improved communication methods to convey meaning because they can speak many languages. The teachers who employed the monolingual technique stated that they never speak their native language with their students and that this, on the other hand, the teachers who used the bilingual approach said that it is essential and necessary to use their mother tongue in different situations, for example, to ensure that the students have understood (Baquerfo, 2018).

The widespread usage of code-switching in school, which improves learning outcomes, has been verified by Filipino scholars. According to Borlongan (2009), most English language teachers often code-switch, defying the “English only” rule in English-only courses. Additionally, Asuncion (2010) discovered that using the mother tongue was the most popular technique and stated that code-switching should not be stigmatized because it somehow aids learners in becoming communicatively effective bilingual members of society. Therefore, the need to present the types of code-switching used and the reasons and insights of teachers on code-switching affirms the need to conduct this study. There should be a re-examination of the use of code-switching by language teachers in English language classes. Besides, a qualitative analysis of the multiple facets of code-switching would also allow teachers to make informed decisions about whether or not to incorporate code-switching into their language teaching pedagogy.

B. Methods

This qualitative study utilized a qualitative approach using the phenomenological technique. The participants of this study were composed of eight participants for the focus group discussion (FGD) and seven participants for the in-depth interview (IDI) who are English teachers of a secondary public school in the Division of Davao City. The researcher chose them to be the research participants because she knows that they are more exposed to the target language because of the nature of their subject matter. The researcher believes that it is more meaningful for them to take part in this present study.

The research instruments that the researcher utilized in this study are an online class recording and an interview guide which consists of three major questions. Primarily, the video recordings of the online classes of the participants were used to answer the first research question. The researcher watched and listened to each video and transcribed its content. In the interview guide, every major question consists of some sub-questions that would lead the participants to answer the research questions that this study dwells into. Before utilizing the interview guide for the research participants, it was submitted to the experts in the field for evaluation and validation. Moreover, the researcher observed and listened to how the teachers disclosed their personal experiences, understanding, and involvement in this linguistic phenomenon, especially with English language learning. Through this method, the data gathered from the respondents painted a straightforward scenario, consequently providing the readers with a distinct comprehension of the respondents' first-hand experiences.

After all the necessary data had been gathered, it was transcribed and analyzed with the help of an expert in qualitative data analysis. We adopted the three steps of Gempes (2008); data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification. The first step was data reduction; we summarized the meaning of the data and organized and classified them to come up with emerging themes. The second step was data display, which emphasized the presentation of the transcribed data into table forms. In the third step, we drew conclusions and verifications; data categorization was done using core ideas from the table to transform those ideas into major themes. After obtaining all responses from the participants, we counted all the responses with the same meaning and merged them into one core idea. We repeated the process of the third step until some major themes emerged appropriately. Moreover, we provided a conclusion and employed two de briefers to validate the analyzed data. The right way to analyze data in a qualitative study was to do it simultaneously with data collection.

Lastly, ethical consideration is an important and crucial factor in every research. Then, it is a must for every researcher to consider the confidentiality of the participants in the process of the study. In the conduct of this study, the researchers uphold ethical considerations such as confidentiality, respect to participants' opinions, and integrity by ensuring that the participants' information is withheld. We also see to it that the information they will be confessing will only be utilized in this study.

C. Results and Discussion

Types of Code-Switching Used by Teachers

As mentioned previously, the following three types of code-switching were to be investigated in this study; inter-sentential, intra-sentential, and tag-switching. Among these three types of code-switching, intra-sentential code-switching was applied most

by the participants in their English classrooms, and tag code-switching was used the least. It is manifested in the data that all teachers committed intra-sentential code-switching; 11 teachers used inter-sentential, and only five teachers used tag-switching.

Most intra-sentential code-switching occurrences are evident in informal and humorous interactions, emphasizing important ideas and giving instructions and expressions. These are observed in the CS utterances of the teachers. Teacher M had a casual interaction when she told her students that they must be on a two-week vacation because there is still a pandemic and asked them who else stayed at home, and the students answered humorously. Teacher D emphasized an important idea and discussed that the time marker in the sentence is last night, meaning it already happened, and since it already happened, the verb should be in the past tense form. Teacher A gave directions and instructed her students to write the scores on the top of their notebook, she repeated that it should be at the top and they must encircle it. Lastly, teacher L used an expression with CS when she asked if the students understood the lesson.

According to Myers-Scotton (1997), intra-sentential CS incorporates using a single morpheme, phrase or clause and words, phrases, and paragraphs from another language within the same sentence. This can be an action phrase within the same place, a related action or a pre-conditional phrase, which are exclusive features. It is observable that intra-sentential code-switching of the English teachers takes place in the middle of a sentence without pause. Without pausing, this implies that the participant who uses this type of code switch can switch between languages.

On the other hand, inter-sentential code-switching occurs when a speaker switches to another language after completing a sentence in one language (Myers-Scotton, 1997). In the gathered data, it is noticeable that inter-sentential CS was used mostly for discussing parts of the lessons that students are having difficulty with and translating statements for students to easily understand it. These are observed on the teachers' utterances as teacher J said that her students need not read from the beginning to the end and translated the idea in Bisaya; and as teacher K discussed the concept of pathos and how to do it effectively.

It is clear that inter-sentential code-switching occurs within sentences and at grammatical pauses like those following periods and question marks. While not quite as fluid as intra-sentential, these code shifts still show the speaker's level of confidence with language use.

Lastly, tag-switching, as expected, was applied the least. Expressions used by the participants, such as 'right?', 'yeah', and 'oh' belonged to this category. According to Mangila's (2018) research, teachers used code-switching in their lessons for various pedagogical reasons. Sentential-level research revealed that teachers frequently

engaged in code-switching in their classroom speech. Teachers most frequently utilized intra-sentential, inter-sentential, and intra-word code-switch types; extra-sentential code-switch was not used in their classroom discourses. The stated research findings confirmed the results of this study on the use of the teacher participants of intra-sentential and inter-sentential code-switching but unlike the mentioned research findings, in this study, the use of tag-switching is observed in five participants.

One model considered for this study is Myers-Scotton's Markedness Model (1997), in which he emphasizes that a bilingual individual has a sense of markedness in reference to the relationship with the speaker, who is effectively the one determining the code in the dialogue. In such a case, the speaker is viewed as the rational actor who can make either the unmarked decision, which is more secure and expected, or the marked choice, which is generally unexpected in conversation (Myers-Scotton 169). Unlike Gumperz' (1982) argument that bilingual speakers are often unaware when they code-switch, Myers-Scotton claims (1997) that, in general, bilingual speakers are aware when they code-switch, such as what the consequences of making the marked or unmarked choice are. Myers-Scotton's Markedness Model confirmed the idea that the participants are totally conscious and make a decision on when to do CS. In the transcribed data, it can be assumed that the participants already anticipated the moment of doing CS during classroom instructions.

Reasons Why Teachers Code-Switch

It was found out that the participants in CS main reasons are easy access to learning, self-efficiency and convenience, and time constraints. Given these considerations, it is reasonable to conclude that the participants do CS not only for the benefit of the students but also for their own.

Easy Access to Learning, the alternating use of two or more languages in teaching and learning for easy knowledge acquisition by learners is known as code-switching. Code swapping benefits both students and teachers (Promnath, 2016). This is greatly aligned with the gathered results of this study. Furthermore, easy access to learning as one of the reasons for CS is justified when they reveal that with the use of CS, students are greatly participative, easily understand the lesson, and quickly respond right to questions. With this it can be said that the participants intentionally do CS to improve students' learning process holistically. According to Yim and Bialstock (2012), it can be viewed as a planned act as opposed to interference or a lack of full linguistic proficiency. In other words, since the learners must be able to understand the topic in order for them to learn the material expected of them, even the instructors choose to code-switch. Teachers employ code-switching in the classroom to provide open communication between themselves and the students.

Self-efficiency, on the other side, as I listened to them talk about how convenient it is to do CS which leads teachers to become self-efficient, I realized that it is true indeed that CS can facilitate effective and productive teaching. Their personal experiences are likely similar to mine, as I also do code-switching in my English class. CS is truly helpful during class discussions. This realization of mine is affirmed by Cook (2008), who states that code-switching also leads to more efficient teaching for the simple reason that the students understand faster and more thoroughly. Hence, teachers' code-switching is an important tool for explanations and instructions.

Convenience and Time Constraints, Lastly, convenience and time constraints are shallow reasons for doing CS. Still, limited time is one of the big challenges that teachers have to overcome, which makes the teaching process inconvenient. Teachers must be able to impart knowledge within the given time frame. Hence, CS contributes so much to time management and convenience for both teachers and learners. With CS, learning happens conveniently, which helps in saving time. Subsequently, Ahmad (2009) claims that code-switching allows students to interact and improve their comprehension. Additionally, it saves teachers time because they can explain things or look up simple words to clear up any misunderstandings. Promnath's (2016) research showed that code-switching improved pupils' comprehension. Code-switching during instruction helped pupils feel more at ease and competent while saving time.

Generally, the teacher participants have positive intentions of doing CS. Their reasons for doing CS in an English classroom are undeniably acceptable and should be considered by other teachers with negative perceptions of it. We just have to remember Cook's (2008) idea that when teachers' code-switching is planned ahead, it can contribute to a more efficient understanding of a specific topic or be a part of language learning.

Insights of the Teachers

When the participants were asked about their insights on the use of CS, most of them encouraged the use of CS since it can make teaching convenient and efficient, it strengthens students' understanding, and it can be considered as an innovation. Each participant had given different justifications yet it turns out that they are into the use of CS as an effective tool in facilitating teaching and learning process. They focused the conversation on its benefits rather than its drawbacks.

Convenience and Efficiency in Teaching, according to the evidence, CS makes teaching more convenient and efficient. Based on the participants' insights, it can be deduced that teachers use CS as a method to achieve maximum output with little wasted work or expenditure in the teaching process. CS also improves the flow of classroom teaching because participants do not have to spend as much time explaining to

students or searching for the most basic terminology to clear up any misconceptions that may arise. Indeed, Ibrahim (2013) is true when he claims that teachers advocate code-switching. They contended that minor code flipping was permissible as long as it did not interfere with basic learning processes.

Additionally, the benefits of code-switching in the classroom, particularly for language teaching, were highlighted in studies by Johanes (2017). In the classes where English is a second language, CS is employed as a teaching method. Johanes (2017) added that it facilitates interactions for language learning. I then came to understand that CS inside English classes brings some favorable experiences to the participants as they undergo the teaching of the target language. It also flourished in the results that CS makes teaching efficient which is aligned with the results from a study from the 1980s which suggested that both teachers and students code-switched to a larger extent in informal situations whereas the target language dominated in formal ones. Later studies show that code-switching is used to create close relationships between students and their teachers and that students find classroom interaction more natural and easier when code-switching is allowed (Lin 2013).

This comfortable atmosphere that code-switching can contribute to is important in the teacher-student relationship since it gives them an opportunity to communicate in a more informal way where the risk of misunderstandings due to language shortcomings can be avoided. In formal situations code-switching can be used to make the teaching more effective. When a teacher explains what is said in the curriculum or another academic text it can be useful to translate or explain some concepts further in the students' L1 (Lin 2013).

CS strengthens students' understanding, On the other side, the participants assert that CS strengthens students' understanding is manifested in the insights of the participants as they share their personal experiences with regard to the use of CS. Their statements confirm the idea that CS strengthens students' understanding. With teachers' code-switching in an English classroom, students actively listen and participate during class discussions which make them more confident and comfortable in sharing their ideas and opinions.

Code switching also leads to more efficient teaching for the simple reason that the students understand faster and more thoroughly. Hence, teachers' code switching is an important tool for explanations and instructions (Cook 2008). Grammar and vocabulary learning can also be facilitated by code-switching. Hendra (2018) discussed that in year 2012, Kumar and Arenda found that grammar instruction was the area that contained the largest amount of code-switching. When code-switching, L2 teachers were able to draw upon students' L1 grammar knowledge, which agreed with what Cook found in her study from 2008. It showed that explicit grammar teaching could be conveyed more thoroughly in the students' L1; even students with

a high L2 proficiency level absorbed information about grammar better if it was in their L1 (Cook 2008).

Another area where the effects of code-switching have been studied is that of vocabulary learning where Lin's (2013) findings indicate that code-switching seems to increase the amount of cognitive processing made by students. Lin suggests that a larger cognitive effort is required to process words when there is both an explanation in the students' second language and a translation into the students' first language, which could mean that the students will learn new vocabulary more thoroughly. Whereas Lin's study did not show that code-switching was more effective when learning new vocabulary, it did show that code-switching did not affect vocabulary learning in a negative way.

Modification and Innovation are Significant. Generally, the participants considered CS as an innovation in the teaching field which they wanted to let other English teachers know and be aware of. They shared that modifying the classroom instruction using CS can help you connect deeply with each learner which can help in creating a meaningful experience for them.

In a study from 2009, Song and Andrews found that students tended to accept their teachers' code-switching regardless of what and how often they code-switched. The three teachers that participated in Song and Andrew's study varied their code-switching regarding amount, purpose and topic. The key to the students' acceptance seemed to be confidence in their teacher. The students thought that the medium of teaching chosen by their teacher fulfilled a purpose and served to help them to meet different needs (Song & Andrews 2009).

D. Conclusion

Teacher participants who emphasize the benefits of CS exhibit positive attitudes and opinions in response to the results of exposing the multiple facets of code-switching in the context of education. CS does not prevent teachers from imparting the language skills required for their pupils in their language lessons, thus the school, the teachers, and eventually the students might realize that CS enriches the teaching skills of the teachers. It has even been found that CS influences language teachers to give their all for the benefit of their students. Therefore, the employment of CS as a useful tool can then be considered by English teachers who do not acknowledge the many advantages it offers in teaching and learning in an English class.

E. Acknowledgement

We would like to thank all the people behind the success of this research.

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