Factors, Forms and Functions: An Analysis of Senior High School Students' Filipino-English Code Switching Behavior

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Abstract - *People who learned two languages demonstrate an interesting behavior known as "code switching." A 'code' is defined as a language or a dialect, thus, code switching (CS) is an alternation of words and phrases between two languages or dialects. Considered as a form of "bilingualism", researches proved that code switching may improve understanding of a concept. ESL teachers, linguists, and researchers believe that code switching is not necessarily a blockage or deficiency in learning or using a language. Bilingual speakers alternate the codes for various reasons during conversation. Thus, this Descriptive-Quantitative study explores the factors, forms, and functions of senior high school students' code-switching behavior in academic or classroom interaction. In order to satisfy the said aims, researcher-made survey-questionnaires were administered to thirty (30) Senior High School students who were selected through Quasi-random Sampling. As per the results, it can be inferred "Loss of Words" is the most dominant factor on why students switch between two languages. In terms of the forms of LCS, most of the students (56.7% answered "most of the time") tend to use Inter-sentential Code Switching. Ultimately, Personification is the most dominant (43.3% answered always) function of LCS. It can be concluded that code switching could be used to help gain mastery of subject contents. Teachers should know when to use the first language (L1) and when to the use second language (L2) appropriately and strategically in order to enable comprehension and meaningful involvement of the learners, which will lead to enhancing academic achievement.*

Keywords – code-switching, senior high school, taglish, ESL, second language

INTRODUCTION

People who have learned two languages demonstrate an interesting phenomenon known as "code switching." A 'code' is defined as a language or a dialect, thus, Code Switching (CS) is an alternation of words and phrases between two languages or dialects. This usually occurs between people who share those particular languages. (Bista, 2010) In the Philippines, which is recognized globally as one of the largest English-speaking nations with majority of its population having at least some degree of fluency in the language, English has always been one of the official languages and is spoken by more than 14 million Filipinos. It is the language of business, as well as the primary medium of instruction in education. Needless to say, English has become the second language of Filipinos. Hence, it is not unusual to hear Filipinos conversing in a mixture of English and the native tongue. This is *Taglish*, or Tagalog-English code switching, the alternation of Tagalog and English in the same discourse or conversation (Gumperz, 1982); it is the use of Tagalog words, phrases, clauses, and sentences in English discourse, or vice-versa. The term is also occasionally used generically for the switching that takes place between a Philippine language (not necessarily Tagalog) and English (Bautista, 2004). On the other hand, the advent of Tag-Lish phenomenon cannot be compared to Japanese *(Gairaigo)* and Korean *(sometimes*

referred to as *"Konglish")* loanwords, which is a form of Lexical Borrowing. As explained by Daulton (2012), Lexical borrowing typically is the adoption of individual words or even large sets of vocabulary items from another language or dialect. It can also include roots and affixes, sounds, collocations, and grammatical processes." In the case of *Taglish,* it is solely the mixing of English and Filipino (Tagalog) words or stretch of words, phrases or even sentences in a single conversational or written discourse. The term is commonly used as a generic name for the switching between any Philippine language variety (not necessarily Tagalog) and English. Since code-switching is the lingua franca of urban areas throughout the Philippine Archipelago (Bautista, 2004), *Taglish* is an inappropriate term to use when referring to code-switching between Filipino language varieties and English because Tagalog is only one of the 110 languages in the Philippines (Durano, 2009).

Bautista (2004), identified two types of *Taglish* code switching as (1) deficiency-driven code switching, that is, the person is not fully competent in the use of one language and therefore has to go back to the other language. Conversely, in (2) proficiency-driven code switching, the person is competent in the two languages and can easily switch from one to the other, for maximum efficiency or effect. Additionally, in a students' language preference survey by Matila (2009) as cited in Valerio (2015) specified the following are predominant reasons for code switching in academic setting: (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.

Some researches proved that bilingualism along instruction may improve understanding of a concept. Abad (2005) claimed 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. In terms of academic interaction, code switching comes into use in both the teachers' and the students' discourse. (Sert, 2006). ESL teachers, linguistics and researchers believe that code switching is not necessarily a blockage or deficiency in learning or using a language. Bilingual speakers alternate the codes for various reasons during conversation. Thus, this study explores senior high school students' code-switching behaviour in academic or classroom interaction. Furthermore, an analysis of the factors, forms, and functions of students' code-switching was provided.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This study explores senior high school students' code-switching behaviour in academic or classroom interaction. Furthermore, an analysis of the factors, forms, and functions of students' code-switching was provided.

MATERIALS AND METHOD

This study utilized Descriptive Quantitative Research Design which involves collections of quantitative information that can be tabulated along a continuum in numerical form. The sample size of this study constitutes to 30 Grade 11 Senior High School students at University of Perpetual Help – Molino. The respondents were selected through Quasi-random sampling technique.

A researcher-made matrix questionnaire was used to gather data. The questionnaire comprises of four parts: Part 1, which contains the respondents demographic profile, Part II, which aims to elicit the dominant factors or reasons that influence the students' Fil-Eng LCS behavior based on the study of Matila (2009), Part III, which deals with forms of students' code-switching based on the different types of LCS by Milroy & Myusken (1995), and lastly, the last part focuses on identifying the different functions of LCS prevalent in senior high school students' oral interaction as proposed on the study of Gumperz (1982). To ensure validity, the questionnaire was validated by three (3) experts in the field of languages and research. Moreover, reliability test through Cronbach's Alpha statistics was carried out to ensure the internal validity of the questionnaires. The Cronbach's Alpha value was .834 which means that it has a good internal validity.

Data from the survey were organized and encoded using Microsoft Excel software, and interpreted through the use of descriptive statistics. The weighted mean for each statements which contribute to a certain factor, forms of functions of LCS was computed. Furthermore, a descriptive interpretation was provided.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Below is the scale used in the study's questionnaire:

Always 4	Most of the time 3	Rarely 2	Never 1
3.6 - 4	2.6 – 3.5	1.6 – 2.5	<1.5

A. Factors of Language Code Switching

Table 1. Easier Self-expression

FACTOR 1	Frequency	Percent
2	4	14.8
3	14	51.9
4	9	33.3
Total	27	100.0

Table 1 indicates that for Factor 1, most of the respondents (51.9%) answered that they use LCS as a mean of self-expression most of the time.

Table 2. Loss of Words

FACTOR 2	Frequency	Percent
2	2	7.4
3	11	40.7
4	14	51.9
Total	27	100.0

Table 2 shows that for Factor 2, most of the respondents (51.9%) answered that they always code-switch if they cannot find the appropriate words to express their thoughts.

Table 3. Influence of People Around

FACTOR 3	Frequency	Percent
1	3	11.1
2	14	51.9
3	7	25.9
4	3	11.1
Total	27	100.0

For Factor 3, as shown in Table 3, 51.9% of the respondents retorted that they rarely code switch just because it is a trend or most of their peers do the same.

Table 4. LCS as a Natural Habit

FACTORS 4 and 7	Frequency	Percent
2	6	22.2
3	12	44.4
4	9	33.3
Total	27	100.0

As illustrated in Table 4, for Factor 4, 44.4% of the respondents answered that they code-switch most of the time just because it is already a habit for them and they feel comfortable.

Table 5. Exposure and Fluency in Filipino and English

FACTORS 5 AND 6	Frequency	Percent
2	9	33.3
3	10	37.0
4	8	29.6
Total	27	100.0

As stated in Table 5, for Factors 5 and 6, 37.0% of the respondents answered that they mostly code-switch between English and Filipino because they are exposed and fluent in both languages.

B. Forms of Language Code Switching

Table 6. Inter-sentential Code Switching

FORM1	Frequency	Percent
2	10	33.3
3	17	56.7
4	3	10.0
Total	30	100.0

Table 6 illustrates that 56.7% of the respondents said that when expressing their thoughts in class, they usually switch from an utterance of a complete English sentence to Filipino or vice versa with no interruptions, hesitations, or pauses.

Table 7. Intra-sentential Code Switching

FORM2	Frequency	Percent
2	12	40.0
3	15	50.0
4	3	10.0
Total	30	100.00%

Table 7 illustrates that 50.0% percent of the selected respondents retorted that when expressing their thoughts in class, they usually mix English and Filipino phrases in one sentence intentionally and consciously.

Table 8. Supra-sentential Code Switching

FORM3	Frequency	Percent
2	16	53.3
3	11	36.7
4	3	10.0
Total	30	100.0

As shown in Table 8, it is clear that 53.3% of the respondents claimed that when expressing their thoughts in class, they usually mix English and Filipino words together in a single sentence

C. Functions of Language Code Switching

Table 9. Quotation

FUNCTION1	Frequency	Percent
1	1	3.33
2	9	30.0
3	16	53.3
4	4	13.3
Total	30	100.0

Table 8 demonstrates that 53.3% of the respondents answered that they usually switch or mix English and Filipino when quoting a statement or expression from others most of the time.

Table 9. Addressee Specification

FUNCTION2	Frequency	Percent
2	6	20.00%
3	17	56.67%
4	7	23.33%
Total	30	100.00%

As illustrated in Table 9, 56.67% of the selected respondents retorted that they usually switch or mix English and Filipino when expressing their thoughts to a specific person or audience most of the time.

Table 10. Repetition

FUNCTION3	Frequency	Percent
2	6	20.0
3	18	60.0
4	6	20.0
Total	30	100.0

It is clearly stated in Table 10 that 60% of the selected students said that they usually switch or mix English and Filipino to avoid dead air in expressing my thoughts/conversations most of the time.

Table 11. Interjection

FUNCTION4	Frequency	Percent
2	6	20.0
3	14	46.7
4	10	33.3
Total	30	100.0

Table 11 indicates that 46.7% of the respondents answered that they usually switch or mix English and Filipino when they want to emphasize a previously uttered statement or expression most of the time.

Table 12. Message Qualification

FUNCTION5	Frequency	Percent
2	2	6.7
3	19	63.3
4	9	30.0
Total	30	100.00%

Table 12 shows that 63.3% of the participants said that they usually switch or mix English and Filipino when they want to explain further or elaborate a previously uttered statement or expression.

Table 13. Personification

FUNCTION6	Frequency	Percent
2	3	10.0
3	14	46.7
4	13	43.3
Total	30	100.0

As indicated in Table 12, 46.7% of the respondents answered that from English, they switch to Filipino when they would like express personal thoughts and opinions to someone in class and vice versa most of the time.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Relative to the results of the study, it can be inferred that most students (51.9% answered "always") code-switch just because they cannot find the appropriate words to use when expressing their thoughts. In other words, "Loss of Words" is the most dominant factor on why students switch between two languages (English and Filipino). This has something to do with competence in using the two aforementioned languages. As discussed in the previous studies cited on the RRL, Language Code Switching (LCS) is not detrimental, however, this may indicate a poor proficiency in either of the languages in use. However, in terms of the forms of LCS, most of the students (56.7% answered "most

of the time") tend to use Inter-sentential Code Switching which is a switch between complete stretches of utterances or sentences. This could indicate that students are developing proficiency in both languages. Ultimately, in terms of Functions of LCS, is Personification, is the most dominant. 43.3% of the respondents claimed that they always use LCS when they would like express personal thoughts and opinions to someone in class and vice versa.

On the other hand, aside from the factors discussed in this study, there are still other factors that might lead students to code switch and these may include enhancing academic achievement among others. Therefore, Code Switching could be used to help gain mastery of subject contents. For the facilitators of learning, teachers should know when to use the first language (L1) and when to the use second language (L2) appropriately and strategically in order to enable comprehension and meaningful involvement of the learners, which ultimately leads to enhancing academic achievement.

For future researchers that would like to dwell on a similar study, it is recommended to increase the sample size, and proceed with an in-depth FGD (Focus Group Discussion) in order to provide a richer analysis of data as support to statistical data.

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