

Language Bridges: Code-Switching as a Pedagogical Approach to Teaching Purposive Communication

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This study aimed to determine the effectiveness of code-switching as a pedagogical strategy in improving the English language performance of first-year students. Specifically, it examined the level of English language performance before and after the implementation of code-switching, the mean gain between pretest and posttest scores, the respondents' performance during classroom instruction in terms of comprehension, English language performance, engagement and participation, perception of code-switching, and attitude and confidence, as well as the significant difference between the pretest and posttest results. A one-group pretest-posttest design was employed among first-year students using a researcher-made English Language Performance Test and a survey questionnaire during a one-month code-switching instructional intervention. The findings revealed that students initially demonstrated a moderate level of English language performance, which improved to a high level after the implementation of code-switching, with a positive mean gain indicating improved learning outcomes. Moreover, the respondents demonstrated high levels of performance in terms of comprehension, English language performance, engagement and participation, perception of code-switching, and attitude and confidence, reflecting positive learning experiences during classroom instruction. The results further showed a significant difference between pretest and posttest performance, indicating that the observed improvement was influenced by the use of code-switching as an instructional strategy. These findings confirm that code-switching, when used strategically, enhances students' understanding, participation, and overall English language performance. Therefore, the integration of code-switching in English instruction is recommended to support effective teaching and learning in multilingual classrooms.

Keywords: Code-Switching, English Language, Multilingual Classrooms, Pedagogical Strategy.

I. INTRODUCTION

English language proficiency remains an essential component of academic success and effective communication in higher education. In multilingual classroom settings, however, many learners experience difficulty understanding lesson concepts when English is used exclusively as the medium of instruction. To address this challenge, teachers often employ code-switching, a pedagogical practice that involves the alternation of two or more languages during classroom interaction. In the Philippine context, where English serves as a second language and local languages are widely used, code-switching has become a common instructional strategy to facilitate comprehension, participation, and language learning.

Code-switching is recognized as a valuable instructional tool that assists learners in understanding unfamiliar concepts by connecting new knowledge with their existing linguistic resources. According to Sociocultural Theory, learning occurs through social interaction and language serves as an important tool for cognitive development. Similarly, Translanguaging Theory emphasizes that learners utilize their entire linguistic repertoire to construct meaning and acquire new knowledge. Krashen's Input Hypothesis further suggests that language acquisition occurs when learners are exposed to comprehensible input, while the Affective Filter Hypothesis highlights the importance of reducing anxiety to facilitate learning. These theories collectively support the use of code-switching as a scaffolding mechanism that can enhance language learning and classroom interaction. [4][6]

Despite the widespread use of code-switching in multilingual classrooms, questions remain regarding its effectiveness in improving students' English language performance. This study was conducted to determine the effectiveness of code-switching as a pedagogical strategy in improving the English language performance of first-year Bachelor of Science in Computer Science students at Capiz State University–Pontevedra Campus. Specifically, the study examined students' English language performance before and after the implementation of code-switching, assessed their classroom performance during instruction, and determined whether a significant difference existed between pretest and posttest scores.

II. RELATED LITERATURE AND STUDIES

Code-switching has long been recognized as an instructional strategy used in multilingual classrooms to facilitate communication and learning. It refers to the alternation of two or more languages within a conversation, discourse, or instructional setting. According to Cook, the strategic use of learners' first language in the classroom can support comprehension and reduce learning difficulties, particularly among second-language learners. [2]

Similarly, Turnbull and Dailey-O'Cain emphasized that first-language use can serve as a valuable resource in language instruction when applied appropriately and purposefully. [6]

Several studies have highlighted the positive role of code-switching in English language teaching. Ahmad and Jusoff found that teachers frequently use code-switching to clarify lesson content and support learners with limited English proficiency. [7] Alharbi reported that code-switching functions as an effective communicative strategy that promotes understanding and facilitates classroom interaction. [10] Anggraini et al. revealed that code-switching assists students in understanding complex concepts and encourages greater participation during classroom discussions. [11]

Research has also shown that code-switching contributes to learners' language development and academic performance. Gonzales and Bautista reported that code-switching supports language development by enabling learners to connect prior linguistic knowledge with new language concepts. [13] Nguyen described code-switching as a scaffolding strategy that assists learners in processing information and constructing meaning. [24]

In addition to its cognitive benefits, code-switching has been associated with improved classroom engagement and learner confidence. Maruf et al. reported that learners become more actively engaged in classroom activities when code-switching is used as a support mechanism. [22] Nurhamidah et al. noted that the use of learners' first language helps reduce anxiety and creates a more comfortable learning environment, thereby promoting confidence in language use. [26]

The theoretical perspectives of Sociocultural Theory, Translanguaging Theory, and Krashen's hypotheses collectively support the pedagogical value of code-switching in multilingual classrooms. [4][6]

Although previous studies have documented the benefits of code-switching in language instruction, limited research has examined its effectiveness among first-year Bachelor of Science in Computer Science students in the local context. This gap in the literature provided the basis for conducting the present study.

III. METHODOLOGY

This study employed a one-group pretest-posttest research design to determine the effectiveness of code-switching as a teaching strategy in improving students' English language performance. The respondents consisted of 103 first-year Bachelor of Science in Computer Science students enrolled in GE 106 – Purposive Communication at Capiz State University–Pontevedra Campus during the second semester of the academic year 2025–2026. The respondents were selected through purposive sampling because they were enrolled in the course and were directly exposed to English language instruction.

Data were gathered using a researcher-made English Language Performance Test and a survey questionnaire. The English Language Performance Test consisted of 30 multiple-choice items that assessed vocabulary, grammar, and reading comprehension. The survey questionnaire measured students' classroom performance in terms of comprehension skills, English language performance, engagement and participation, perception of code-switching, and attitude and confidence. Prior to implementation, the instruments underwent content validation by experts and pilot testing. The reliability analysis yielded a Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of 0.87, indicating a high level of reliability.

The study was conducted over a one-month period. A pretest was administered to determine the baseline level of English language performance of the respondents. Thereafter, code-switching was systematically integrated into classroom instruction through the use of intersentential, intrasentential, and tag-switching strategies. English and Hiligaynon were alternately used during lesson discussions, classroom interactions, clarification of concepts, and instructional activities. Following the intervention, the respondents completed the survey questionnaire and subsequently took the posttest. The gathered data were analyzed using mean, standard deviation, mean gain, and the Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The findings revealed that the respondents obtained a pretest mean score of 19.95 (SD = 4.21), which increased to a posttest mean score of 22.59 (SD = 4.34). The computed mean gain of 2.65 indicated improvement in students' English language performance following the implementation of code-switching as a teaching strategy. Furthermore, the Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test revealed a statistically significant difference between the pretest and posttest scores ($Z = -4.007$, $p < .001$), indicating that the observed improvement was not due to chance.

The survey results further showed that the respondents demonstrated favorable levels of classroom performance during instruction. The overall mean scores obtained were 4.16 (SD = 0.74) for comprehension skills, 4.18 (SD = 0.82) for English language performance, 4.08 (SD = 0.80) for engagement and participation, 4.29 (SD = 0.77) for perception of code-switching, and 4.12 (SD = 0.76) for attitude and confidence. These findings suggest that code-switching contributed positively to students' understanding of lesson concepts, participation in classroom activities, and confidence in using English during instruction.

The results support Sociocultural Theory, which emphasizes the role of language and social interaction in facilitating learning. The findings likewise align with Translanguaging Theory, which recognizes learners' linguistic resources as valuable tools for meaning-making and knowledge construction. Moreover, the improvement in performance supports Krashen's Input Hypothesis, which posits that learners acquire language more effectively when instructional input is comprehensible. The positive levels of engagement and confidence also support the Affective Filter Hypothesis, which suggests that reduced anxiety contributes to more successful language learning outcomes. [4][6]

V. CONCLUSION

Code-switching is an effective instructional strategy that enhances students' English language performance. The results of the study confirm that code-switching plays a significant role in improving students' comprehension and ability to express ideas in English.

Code-switching contributes to measurable improvement in students' learning outcomes. The positive mean gain between the pretest and posttest scores demonstrates that students were able to improve their English language performance after exposure to code-switching.

Code-switching promotes a supportive learning environment that enhances engagement, participation, and confidence.

There is a statistically significant difference between the pretest and posttest scores, confirming the effectiveness of the intervention.

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