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## RESEARCH ARTICLE

# CODE SWITCHING PATTERNS IN DISCOURSES OF TERTIARY TEACHERS ACROSS SELECTED LEARNING AREAS

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### ABSTRACT

Teacher discourses in handling science and mathematics lessons prompts code switching, specifically alterational pattern due to the influence of bilingualism or even multilingualism. The functions of code switching are into varied categories such as communication, authority, emphasis, conceptual, interlocution, ethnicity, psychological, trigger, and lexicon. The reasons of such speech act can be seen in consonance with the observed and expected consequences. It is considered linguistic incompetence with the inability of teachers and students to use the target language in their discourses, while linguistic resourcefulness is coined to mean the strategy employed by teachers and students. This study is limited to patterns, reasons, functions and implications of code switching heeding the recommendation of further research on the functionality of code switching as an instructional strategy to validate the notion that code switching is either linguistic incompetence or linguistic resourcefulness, considering the millennial trends and approaches of teaching and learning, setting of absolute limitations in distinguishing code switching from code mixing as not all studies support the idea that code switching is an umbrella of code mixing, and further researches on the impact of switching can be correlated with results of studies on switching only two languages.

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## INTRODUCTION

Learning a second language takes time and involves a number of factors. During the learning process, the learner tends to stick to the rules of the L1 and may have difficulty in applying the rules of L2. Hence, there is a tendency of mixing languages in an utterance. Referring to dialects or speech varieties of languages, the term code is commonly studied in social contexts of linguistics. In some ways, it is also speakers' style of communicating or reaching their target audiences. In code switching, one language variety or dialect is shifted to another depending on patterns the speakers apply in their speeches. In other words, code switching is an alternation between two codes, also pertaining to languages or dialects, and this language behavior is usually observed among multicultural and immigrant communities. While it is true that code switching can be in the form of alteration within phrases, sentences or long narratives, speakers' code switching patterns are determined by several factors both socially and linguistically. Between two bilinguals or among polyglots in a single normal communication context, code-switching can have

word switches the most, phrase switches secondarily, and clause switches at the least. It is also significant to note that not all cases of alternation of languages are cases of code switching. Code switching and code mixing are distinguished by several sociolinguists. In most related citations, code switching is intersentential while code mixing is intrasentential language alternation. In short, code switching happens after every sentence as code mixing occurs within sentences. There is no provision of the clear-cut distinctions between code switching and code mixing even though many researchers have claimed their theories on the processes of these two language phenomena. The only dominant difference between them can be described in their practical implications: code switching involving the use of two languages in one utterance both contextually and metaphorically while code mixing suggests varieties of both languages used. Code switching can also be considered a pedagogical technique by teachers teaching a second language, and this is primarily directed by the grammar translation method of teaching. Students may have better grasp of the second language if they are provided with translations from their first language. In this case, students may be grouped in pairs, teams, small groups or big groups to learn and understand from one another's language. It is then the interest of the researcher to investigate the effectiveness of listening curriculum to second language

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learners; however, it is undeniably difficult to conduct such study in a short span of time and with limited sources. It is also even harder how to begin the study, thus the researcher thought of starting from scratch, from the underlying principles of listening curriculum. One of these principles is listening competence, which the researcher believes to have an impact in the design of topics and activities in a listening class. Further, the researcher supports the idea that listening competence is affected namely by several attributes and behaviors of listeners in the process. Hence, this study is undertaken as an initial support to a wider investigation.

**Theoretical Framework:** This research is anchored on Discourse Theory by Gee (1996), Interlanguage Theory by Selinker (1972), and Social Interactionist Theory by Vygotsky (1934). This theory emphasizes that language is always used from a perspective and always occurs within a context. In understanding the meaning of sentences, clarity of thought and meaning is usually suggested by the surrounding texts so that readers will be able to comprehend, otherwise known as contextual context. In addition to the abovementioned theories, Muysken (2000) pointed out three main code switching patterns common among multilingual communities. These patterns vary according to speakers' style and convenience and are classified into three: insertion, alternation and congruent lexicalization. Through *insertion* lexical items or the entire constituents from one language is inserted into the syntactical structure of another language including common insertions in the forms of nouns, noun phrases or adverbial phrases in some languages. For *alteration*, a change of base or matrix language and of the predominant lexicon occurs in between utterances or discourses, notwithstanding the structural compatibility or equivalence of languages involved in the switch processes. *Congruent lexicalization* (CL) allows two languages to share a grammatical structure filled lexically with elements from either language, thus is more likely to occur at points of grammatical coordination and subordination among structural elements like function words used in speeches. Such theory provides valuable insights into how learners acquire and use language as they interact with their peers and teachers whose English is their second language. It further suggests that instruction and erudition must be designed in ways that will suit the nature of ESL context, the learners, and the social implications. Prime consideration is devoted to learners' abilities, preparation, and attitudes towards a more effective teaching-learning situation. Moreover, the proponent of the theory sustains the idea that second language learning does not happen within strings of words and utterances alone but considers the process of learning and the context with which the learning takes place. Thus, there is a need to analyze the nature of the teaching and learning situation for the teacher to devise ways to enable students to learn meaningful and relevant target language which is the English language.

**Conceptual Framework:** Everyone experiences the diversity and dynamism of language. Whatever modifications and/or developments therein, the teacher as well as the students become a part of the adjustment. Thus, the knowledge and proficiency of both are challenged. With the number of issues and concerns confronting the educational landscape particularly the teaching of Science and Mathematics in the Philippines, this analysis of code switching in the discourses of teachers in different Higher

Educational Institutes (HEIs) of two identified regions in the country needs research interests. Since code switching has already become a worldwide phenomenon, there is a need to study the rationale behind this occurrence using discourses of college classes. The interpersonal distance and interaction between teachers and students in a language context become essential in the relevant circumstance considering the social context. Similarly, the nature of teaching and learning can be enhanced with the ideas and concepts that aim to be mutually understood, thus implying varied teaching methodologies useful for prevailing classroom and social context. The interlanguage system and the social interaction to realize this end is necessary in dissecting the pedagogical discourses, discourse analysis can be useful through written, visual and oral text analysis, hence giving more depth to the texts when trying to understand the context.

Despite the plethora of recent researches focusing on language teaching, a closer and careful attention should be offered to address a number of concerns. As a matter of fact, it is a pedagogical necessity to reconcile issues in first language and second language learning especially when using code switching in the classroom of learners with diverse linguistic backgrounds. Switching in two languages can, in some ways, determine competence on the use of both languages, but it can also determine poor fluency or inability in one or both of the languages being spoken hence, switching happens. It is for this reason that this linguistic analysis on code switching is realized. The discourse theory is used in dissecting the types and patterns of the classroom discourses of teachers and students and helps analyze the reasons and consequences of their language switches. On the other hand, the interlanguage and social interactionist theories strengthen the foundation in the analysis of the utterances to bring about the desired results of this study. Figure 1 illustrates the conceptual paradigm of this research. As shown in the figure, the researcher transcribed and analyzed the actual oral discourses of teachers in college classrooms of the different identified HEIs in the country to determine the patterns, reasons, and effects of teachers' code switching, specifically to the students' learning. The results were counter validated by the survey questionnaire, the focused group discussion, and the interview among the respondent teachers. Implications on language policy formulation and pedagogy were consequently identified.

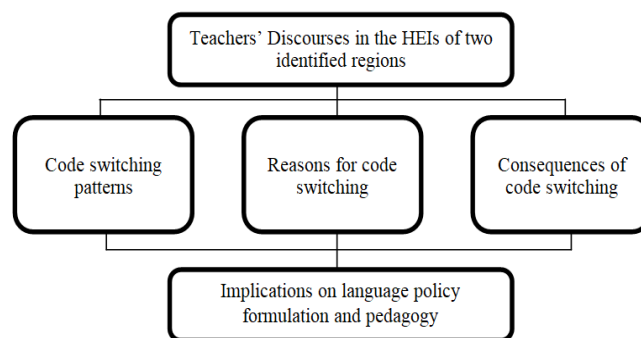


Figure 1. Conceptual paradigm of the study

**Statement of the Problem:** The study dealt with the code switching patterns of the teachers' discourses in the different identified Higher Educational Institutes of two identified regions in the country. Specifically, this study sought to answer the following:

- What are the reasons behind code switching in teacher discourses?
- What are the effects of code switching?
- How does code switching affect language policy formation and pedagogy?

## METHODOLOGY

This section presents the research design, population and locale of the study, data collection procedure, data collection instruments and treatment of data.

**Research Design:** The descriptive method of research was used in the analysis. It is a fact finding study with adequate and accurate interpretation from ethnographic data collections. This descriptive method of research involved code switching patterns, reasons, consequences and implications to language policy formation and pedagogy.

**Population and Locale of the Study:** The subject respondents of the study were all teachers from the identified higher education institutions. Half of the respondents handle science classes while the other half teaches mathematics. They were chosen to be the respondents of the study for the reason that both science and mathematics have complicated terms and conditions for teachers to explain, the English language was used as a medium of instruction.

**Data Collection Procedure:** Having been approved to conduct the study, the researcher recorded classroom interactions, conducted classroom observations and interviews with concerned teachers. Classes were observed thrice for the identification of code switching patterns; the first time for an informal observation, the second time for purposeful observation and the third time for purposive recording.

**Treatment of Data:** To determine the patterns of code switching used by teachers in their discourses, discourse analysis was used. For the reasons and consequences of code switching speech act, frequency ranking is used after the data were properly transcribed, categorized and tabulated.

## RESULTS

## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This section presents the results, conclusions and recommendations.

### Patterns of Code Switching

Results of class observations revealed code switching patterns of teachers who are handling science and mathematics lessons, considering the discussed Muysken's (2000) three main code switching patterns found in transcribed speeches of teachers of identified higher education institutions especially belonging to multilingual communities. In general, majority of the transcribed discourses of teachers handling science and mathematics lessons follow alteration pattern, which specifically shows the typical patterns of intersentential code switching for discourse-organizational and rhetorical purposes. To mention, majority of the respondent teachers are fluent bilinguals if not multilinguals and that to an extent are able to

communicate provided the different degrees and levels of a second language use. Even those with irregular use of a second language are still able to use the second language for a considerable time and purposes.

For transcribed discourses of teachers handling mathematics, majority of code switching occurred intersententially. Just like in the following tags:

**Teacher 1:** (On soil erosion) Today, we'll be discussing all about erosion. Lahat ng mga bagay na may ay matatalakay natin ngayon. It sounds simple. Maraming bagay ang dapat nating malaman tungkol dito. And we will study them individually. Kailangan ninyong makinig nang mabuti. I don't want to repeat my explanation about the following concepts.

**Teacher 2:** (On brain processes) Do you know how many brain processes occur in a person's life span? Sino sa inyo nakakaalam? It's countless to say there are a lot of these processes every bit of time. Hindi madaling maunawaan ang mga ito kaya binigay kong takdang aralin sa inyo ang basahin ang tungkol dito. Let's start with the visionary process. Ano ito? Arlene, pakibasa mo ito. After reading, share to your classmates what you have understood from your readings at home.

**Teacher 3:** (On Newton's laws of motion) There are three laws of motion. Tatlo lang ang laws of motion na binigay ni Newton. The first law states that every object will remain at rest or in uniform motion in a straight line unless compelled to change its state by the action of an external force. Ito ay karaniwang tinatawag na inertia. The key point here is that if there is no net force acting on an object (if all the external forces cancel each other out) then the object will maintain a constant velocity. Kung ang velocity ay zero, hindi gagalaw ang isang bagay. If an external force is applied, the velocity will change because of the force. Can you give your own examples? Gusto kong ang mga halimbawa ay nakikita nyo sa paligid.

Whereas, teachers handling mathematics lessons have phrasal alteration in most of their discourses as transcribed below:

**Teacher 1:** (On prime factorization) To factor a number is to break that number down into smaller parts. To find the prime factorization of a number, kelangan munang i-break ang number down to its prime factors. May dalawang paraan in determining the prime factors of a number. I will demonstrate both methods, at gusto ko sabihin nyo what the best method is. Dahil even number ang 24, the first prime number that can be factored out is a 2. This leaves us with  $2 * 12$ . Again, 12 is an even number, so we can factor out another 2, leaving us with  $2 * 2 * 6$ . At dahil even din ang 6, pwede nating i-factor out a third two, leaving  $2 * 2 * 2 * 3$ .

**Teacher 2:** (On linear equations) This means that the only two things that we need to define a linear equation are where the pattern begins and what that pattern moves by. Ito ay magbibigay sa atin ng tinatawag na slope-intercept form of the linear equation,  $y = mx + b$ , kung saan ang m value is the slope, and the b value is the y-

intercept. Ang iba pang halimbawa nito, you could have  $y = 2x + 1$ ; you could have  $y = -3x$ ; and you could have  $y = (2/3)x - 6$ . Sa bawat equation, the number in front of the  $x$  represents the slope, or the number that it's moving by. The number on the end represents where it begins, or the  $y$ -intercept. Kung walang number after ng  $x$ , nangangahulugan lang ito na ang  $y$ -intercept is zero.

**Teacher 3:** (On properties of function) Let's say meron tayong black box, and we're going to call this our function. Kung lagyan nating ng number 4, we might get out the number 8. Kung lagyan natin ng number 5, we might get out the number 16. For each number that you put in, say  $x$ , you'll get out another number, say  $y$ . Now, sometimes pwede naming maglagay ng two different numbers - let's say 4 and 22 - and get out the same number, say 39. Pero hindi pwedeng you put in one number and get two different numbers out. This may sound complex, pero ito ay kadalasang nangyayari. We can therefore say functions are fundamental to calculus, pero hindi natin namamalayan that we are using them sa totoong buhay. Formally, functions map a set of numbers to another set of numbers

After breaking down the transcribed discourses, the intersentential code switching of teachers handling science lessons and the phrasal code switching of teachers handling mathematics lessons boil down to alteration; in other words, the modification of the codes or languages occurs intersententially and intrasententially, respectively. Hence, if alteration in the forms of sentences, phrases from both languages succeeds each other and switches in a long narrative, alterational code switching is obvious among several bilinguals.

### Functions/Reasons of Code Switching

Despite the differences in the teachers' responses, code switching is deemed necessary as a medium to convey both linguistic and social meanings. To avoid the overlapping reasons for code switching extended by the respondents, they are grouped into nine broader categories such as communication, authority, emphasis, conceptual, interlocution, trigger, ethnicity, psychological, and lexicon.

Through this millennial age, students seem to be reactive in learning concepts. Teachers, then, are faced with challenges as to how to handle their students' varying learning styles. By stabilizing codes in their discourses, students tend to remember and decode new codes easily giving their teachers the essence of establishing authority in dealing with new lessons. Similarly, authority comes with identity. Teachers switch codes to show identity with a group, as in the case of some respondent teachers who would crack a joke in using the first language and give the punch line in the second language, not only because it was better said in the latter language but also to emphasize the fact that majority of the students in the classroom belong to the same minority group, with shared experiences and values. In like manner, teachers switch codes to address a different audience, as when they intend to address students with diverse first language backgrounds.

While communication in the classroom occurs when there is an interaction between the students and the teacher, code switching is a tool used by the teachers to induce more

interactive classroom. Imposing discipline in the classroom is one of the common problems identified by majority of the respondent teachers. Getting students to listen, interact and engage in classroom activities are oftentimes challenging for teachers. Simply, some teachers code switch in giving clearer instructions, presentations and discussions. In some classroom discussions, students are not confident enough to answer teacher questions in straight English, so the extent of switching languages is relatively high, even with the teachers trying to get their students cooperate in the discussion. In this case, teachers do not impose the use of one language in the classroom, but as long as the students can express themselves by answering the questions, learning takes place definitely.

Generally, there are many technical concepts discussed in science and mathematics classes and they are relatively hard to explain for teachers as well as to be understood by the students. These technical concepts, when explained with the same language, remain complicated and confusing on the part of both teachers and students. For instance, a teacher wants to explain a linear equation concept by this, "*Shall we just check itong point na 1 ang value ng X and 2 is the value of y? Ito yung sinasabi ko kanina – the connection between the equations and unknowns. Naintindihan ba?*"

By this kind of explanation, the number of technical and confusing words is reduced to only the concept being explained by using the language or code which is more familiar with the students, thus for easier and longer retention. Some teacher switch codes for the purpose of emphasis of an idea. When teachers try to emphasize key concepts from their presentation and these concepts are seemingly complicated enough to be emphasized using one language, they have the tendency to opt to switch codes instead, and in doing so, the emphasized concepts semantically and pragmatically interpreted. Repetition of lines is also a form of emphasis. With habitual experience, language switching is observed in common phrases for greetings and partings, requests and commands, invitations, discourse markers and foremost expressions of gratitude.

Ethnicity draws its function from establishing authority; however, it is more on considering the cultural background and social context of the languages being switched instead of the people involved. In other words, the process of code switching is defined by the nature and function of the languages involved. It is for a fact that in the Philippines, English and Filipino are the two main languages used in instruction, business, and entertainment, and in most facets of living. When these two languages are switched, people often coin the term *taglish* (mixture of Tagalog and English), noting that Tagalog is a language variation of the Filipino language. Normally, Filipinos would opt to use *taglish* than switching English to other languages because Filipino language or other Philippine languages are innate to them, thus easier to switch from one language to another. As a matter of fact, in the month of August every year, Filipinos celebrate *Buwan ng Wika* to patronize the national language notwithstanding its diverse advocacy on communication, research, globalization and the like. However, English is more preferred by most speakers because of its tenacity and simplicity. Chances are more people would adopt it as a coping mechanism or strategy.

In most cases of class observations and transcribed recordings, code switching happens in the process of interlocutions, or in conversations or dialogues of the teacher

and the students. Rare were there conversations with a single language in it; there were mostly inserted words from another language just like in the case of the following conversation in a mathematics lesson:

*Teacher: Look at the given problems here. Ano sa tingin mo ang best solution to solve them?*

*Student: I think the best solution is substitution.*

*Teacher: Why do you think so?*

*Student: Kasi po 1 and 2 are replaceable by any positive digit maliban sa zero.*

The flow of the conversation might not have been the same when the teacher imposed one language for the student to explain or support his answer. Moreso, when adults speak to children at home, code switching is very dominant in their speeches. When it is time for a child to eat, an adult would say “*Come na. You’ll eat na. You wash your hands na.*” This scenario is coined “*yaya language*” as there are some children, whose parents are both working, who grew up with their nannies. Hence, pragmatic reasons are generally conversational.

To some extent, there are words in the target language that has no exact translation in the language intended to be switched. In a science class, the teacher talks about the essence of mitosis this way “*Dahil sa mitosis, nagkakaroon ng cell division kung saan ang chromatin ng nucleus ay nacocondense into chromosomes.*” Obviously, the key concepts are not switched to another language because it might semantically change or it might even complicate the concepts more. The same was observed in one mathematics class, where the teacher talked about binomials. “*You cannot find the value of X kung hindi mo isolve ang first problem muna. You should transpose values muna para makuha ang value ng X.*” Notice that the word “value” in *value of X* and in *value ng X* remains its value. When switched to Filipino, value is understood as *halaga* o *presyo* which is definitely different from the original meaning as used in mathematical operations and discussions.

Psychologically, code switching is a process of brainwork. It shows how one gathers, organizes and delivers thoughts into words. Speech and other language abilities are lateralized brain functions as in other words, speech is mainly a product of thinking, and can be supported by the scientific fact about that speech functions are controlled by specific brain hemisphere particularly the left hemisphere among most people. However an equal significance to note is that code switching is not a damage nor a malfunction of the left hemisphere because code switching is a matter of choice; thus, it is a voluntary speech act.

Lastly, code switching serves as a stimulus that initiates or precipitates a reaction or a series of reaction as it triggers one to focus attention and to speak the language among others. Imagine a teacher of a distinct area of specialization not inclined with language address students coming from various linguistic backgrounds, violent reactions might as well arise among the latter. They might not verbalize their reactions but they would intellectually diverge in confusing thoughts. In contrast, code switching attracts attention, just like when switching is used in advertisements to attract the attention of the readers/listeners. In this way, it coincides with communication. When students are able to focus, there is a

higher chance of comprehension and interaction. Apart from this, code switching is also used to interject or is used as sentence fillers. Sometimes, even speakers run out of words to say in the middle of their speeches, and they regain their strength with many alibis by which most of the time, these are out of the topic, are uttered in another language and are entertaining enough to hold the listeners’ attention. Likewise in classroom discussion, some teachers fell out of simpler words to explain some concepts, they tend to stop. So as not to be obviously dull in having long pauses, they use fillers to fill the gap between words, phrases or even sentences.

**Effects/Consequences of Code Switching:** The effects of code switching are also worth noting as observed by the researcher and disclosed by the respondent teachers. These can be summarized as follows: a) code switching enables students to discuss freely with their friends, teachers and parents at home and other settings; b) it helps them to understand new concepts better if explained in their first language which means that there are some subjects more effectively explained when switching languages; c) it is because they do not know the word for it in the other language and that the word is readily recalled in the switched language; and d) it serves as a status symbol by which the act of switching serves as a directive function that it involves the listeners directly. In contrast, code-switching effects, as observed in classroom interactions and in student learning progress, are evidently negative. For instance, the act of switching can be a barrier to learning and as being disruptive to the learning environment. Accordingly, the habitual manner of doing such speech act has been considered as a sign of linguistic deficiency on the part of the teachers and incomprehensibility on the part of the learners with differing linguistic backgrounds of those languages being switched. In an academic context with learners having a greater linguistic ability, code switching can be an obstacle to becoming fluent in a second language as used as medium of instruction. In this case, students with a degree of competence in English found it difficult to make progress in a learning environment that permits code switching. Then, in turn, students tend to get familiar with the habit of switching languages in different social contexts.

**Implications on language policy formulation and pedagogy:** While there are several effects of code switching defined by different studies, it would be of great help if language policy makers consider patterns of code switching defining limitations and scope of such speech act; otherwise, it might be interchangeably interpreted as code mixing. Although code switching is viewed as linguistic incompetence, this is not always the case. In terms of pedagogy, it occurs when teachers compensate for a lack of a verbal equivalent in the second language. When words or phrases in two languages may not correspond exactly, a bilingual teacher may switch to one language to express a concept that has no equivalent in the culture of the other language, thus linguistic resourcefulness is coined to term this condition. In the same way, the transfer knowledge to students is in a clear and efficient manner. Code-switching may also be used to emphasize a point, or to add more force to a phrase. In a purely linguistic capacity, code switching may be used to compliment a statement, where it can particularly reinforce an intention or meaning of a spoken discourse.

## Conclusions

With intersentential alteration pattern in teacher discourses among science classroom discussions and with phrasal alteration pattern in teacher discourses among mathematics classroom discussions, it can be concluded that teachers are knowledgeable of the structural backgrounds of the two languages being switched, thus defining them bilingual teachers, multilingual teachers to some who are capable of using more than two languages in their instruction. The reasons of code switching are innumerable many in terms of communication, authority, emphasis, conceptual, interlocution, ethnicity, psychological, trigger and lexicon because such speech act is done in different patterns. Teachers, students, language policy makers and researchers have their own reasons to say and purposes of doing so. The effects of code switching, specifically on pedagogy and student learning, are invariably opposing between linguistic incompetence and linguistic resourcefulness. The language policy on bilingualism has to set limitations and scope of code switching to ward off interchangeable linguistic interpretation between code mixing and code switching.

## Recommendations

**Based on the conclusions, the following are suggested:**

- Further research on the functionality of code switching as a pedagogical strategy should be conducted to validate the notion that code switching is either linguistic incompetence or linguistic resourcefulness, considering the millennial trends and approaches of teaching and learning.
- Language policy makers should set absolute limitations in coining code mixing and code switching as not all studies support the idea that code switching is an umbrella of code mixing.
- Further researches on the impact of switching more than two languages in discourses should be conducted; results of which researches can be correlated with results of studies on switching two languages only.

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