Intrusion of Code-Switching in Exploring the Principles of Sentence and Paragraph Constructions: An Explanatory Sequential Study

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Abstract

The Philippines is one of the countries that produce proficient English speakers in the world. In the previous years, Filipino English proficiency is slowly declining and worsened due to the Covid-19 pandemic which impacted not only students but also the global workforce. Hence, several studies on the use of code-switching were proposed to find answers to such emerging problems; and to determine which medium of instruction aids students' English proficiency, the researchers conduct sequential-explanatory research about the intrusion of code-switching in exploring the principles of sentence and paragraph construction. A total of 60 students divided into two (2) groups: a) experimental group (code-switched class) b) control group (English only) underwent the pre-test, class intervention, and post-tests for quantitative data and a total of six (6) students from experimental groups underwent in-depth-interview. The results of the study emphasized that there are significant differences between the experimental and control group test scores. The findings from the qualitative data further explain the numeric data that the intrusion of code-switching in the class improves students' test scores and positively enhances comprehension, and knowledge, and reduces language anxiety. The study findings present strong indications that the use of code-switching aids students' English proficiency. This study highlights the implication to determine the type of code-switching appropriate to use in a language classroom.

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Introduction

Schools in the Philippines are required to use English as a medium of instruction. However, the study shows that there is a deterioration in the English proficiency level of Filipino students, as mentioned in the study by Baclig (2020). Thus, research on the intrusion of code-switching to explore which medium of instruction enhances students' English proficiency is limited. Therefore, this study should be conducted to fill in that gap.

Methodology

This study adopted the mixed-methods sequential explanatory design consisting of two distinct phases: quantitative (numeric) followed by qualitative (personal experiences) (Creswell et al. cited by Bowen et al. 2017).

This study used two (2) different sections from a Bachelor of Science in Office Administration, a control class, and an experimental class, with a total number of not less than 30 students per class, to gather quantitative data. After gathering the numeric data, the researcher undertakes an In-depth-Interview (IDI) with a limited number of six (6) students from the experimental class, and four (4) students undertake focus group discussion (FGD) from the control group.

The study used test questionnaires: a. Pre-test; and b.) Post-test and face-to-face interviews as tools for collecting data.

Findings

The findings of the study supported the use of code-switching in the classroom. Though, quantitative findings reveal that in terms of the pre-test the control group obtained high scores compared to the Experimental group, it doesn't affect the overall English proficiency of the students.

A respondent stated that prior knowledge and gut feelings are some of the factors why the control group respondents obtained high scores in the pre-test compared to them. Bukhari (2019) states that pre-assessment is a diagnostic tool used to speed up the process of building new concepts on top of pre-existing knowledge blocks and to gauge how prepared learners are to take on new ideas. It exclusively measures student growth over time. In this study, the researchers use a pre-

test to display the student's level of comprehension before and following instruction. The qualitative results reveal some of the factors affecting experimental group pre-test scores.

Meanwhile, another respondent claimed that some of the participants did not give importance to the test. Not giving importance to the test shows that learners have low expectations of getting high scores. According to Toujani and Hermessi (2018), low self-esteem among students encourages them to have low expectations, which ultimately results in low English achievement.

Another respondent agreed and stated that the medium of instruction used in the test affected the results of the assessment as some of the respondents cannot understand some of the words in English which are supported by a recent survey study by Xie (2020) where he concluded that the obvious obstacle to learners' progress in English, is their inadequate vocabulary and grammar knowledge.

In terms of the post-test results, the findings of the study revealed that the experimental group who underwent code-switching in the classroom improved. The results of the qualitative data supported the numerical data. A respondent claimed that the use of code-switching during the class discussion helps them better comprehend the lesson which makes their test scores improve in the post-test. According to Utami (2019), code-switching provides the opportunity to engage in meaningful learning as it aids students' lack of knowledge of one language in that language on a certain subject.

Another respondent stated that the use of code-switching as a medium of instruction helps them to learn better, especially when an instructor uses difficult English words. Alang and Idris (2018) supported this notion as they claimed that students feel code-switching is required to assure their understanding of the course and to clarify the explanation.

Based on the qualitative result of this study, respondents claim that integrating code-switching during the discussion helps them to comprehend the lesson better. It helps students comprehend the information presented, increase their vocabulary, and become more engaged in classroom discussions (Harmilawati, 2018).

In terms of the mean gained scores of the experimental and control group pre-test and post-test scores, the data revealed that there is a significant difference between the groups. This difference means that the use of code-switching to improve students' English proficiency is effective.

Further, in this study, students' reasons for code-switching are because of a lack of knowledge and anxiety to create grammatical mistakes. Students prefer their teachers to code-switch when it comes to providing lesson examples and giving feedback, and instructions.

According to Appel and Muysken's (2006 as cited by Utami, 2019) six functional models of code-switching, three of which occurred in this study: *referential function* wherein students resort to code-switch to express their answer more comprehensively. A lack of knowledge of one language or a lack of facility in that language on a certain subject causes the student to code-switch; *phatic function* as students prefer their teachers to code-switch when giving another example of the same lesson. Code-switching indicates a change in the tone of the conversation to help students feel at ease and understand better, and *poetic function* usually occurs when teachers are trying to provide an example that students could relate to.

Code-switching helps students as well as teachers to create more meaningful learning as words, funny phrases, or jokes in a code-switched manner create entertainment which makes learning more enjoyable.

Utilizing code-switching in the classroom should be limited only to the following functions presented in this study as the quantitative data reveals that using it is not an assurance to obtain high scores in an English test as scores remain satisfactory in both pre- and post-assessment. But instead, it is one of the factors that improve learners' comprehension, enhance their knowledge, and create an environment that is conducive to learning.

Conclusion

Findings show that students in all English classes have better prior knowledge, so it is necessary to keep students monitored in terms of their language usage as both mediums of instruction aid students in different aspects. Code-switching is a great help to students struggling to express their answers in English and comprehend the lesson in an English manner. The use of the local language helps them improve their comprehension skills, which resulted improvement in scores during their post-test assessment. However, the researchers suggest that the use of local languages should be used in moderation to avoid too much dependency on them. The use of code-switching should be limited only to referential, poetic, and phatic functions.

Instructors should utilize code-switching but should be limited only to the three functions of code-switching found in this study: *referential function* wherein students resort to code-switch to express their answer more comprehensively; *phatic function* as students prefer their teachers to

code-switch when giving another example of the same lesson; and *poetic function* usually occurs when teachers are trying to provide an example that students could relate to.

To future researchers, the negative effects of maximizing the use of code-switching, identifying the type of code-switching appropriate in a language classroom, and the effects of code-switching on students majoring in English should be studied. A much larger population should also be considered to ensure that code-switching is a phenomenon and should not be disregarded.

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