

CODE-SWITCHING AMONG THE FACULTY MEMBERS OF THE COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES OF NOTRE DAME UNIVERSITY

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Abstract: This study attempts to describe the practice of code-switching among selected teachers of the College of Arts and Sciences of Notre Dame University. The study employed the quasi-qualitative descriptive design. The data are transcriptions of the linguistic expressions spoke and recorded during the observation sessions. They were words, phrases, statements or whole discourses in both English and Tagalog. Transcriptions because they were recorded and been transcribed.

There were two youngest among respondents and they are 24 years old. The oldest is 56, most of them fall under the 25-30 and 36-40 age range. Eighteen of the respondents were male and twenty two were female. Most of them have MA/MS units. In term of length of service, most respondents have served for only one to five years.

The biggest number of frequency of code-switching is 32 and the least is 1 but the most cases of code-switched expression contained language mixing. In fact, the two highest cases of language mixing are 47 and 57. This happened because the teacher did not just code-switch, most of the time, they language mixed.

The pattern of code-switching used are the following: (a) English-Filipino-English (EFE); (b) Filipino-English (FE); (c) English Language Mix (ELM); (d) Filipino Language Mix (FLM); (e) Language Mixing (LM)

Observation of the transcribed statements reveal that code-switching is done at any point in the string of statements. They are found in the initial, medial and terminal positions.

1. INTRODUCTION

Code switching is a natural occurrence in bilingual and multilingual societies. The verbal repertoire of the speaker of these societies is those which are easily comprehensible by those that are commonly heard, and those spoken by elite groups or institutions.

A bilingual policy was in 1974 and this has been amended several times through the years to cope with the changing language situation. However the Philippine educational system generally adheres to English as an effective medium of instruction. Most schools expect teachers to speak English while conducting class.

Bilingualism as a policy was issued in 1974 and it is still effective since it has not been repealed despite claim that the national language has already attained some degree of intellectualization and can therefore be used in teaching many disciplines (Bautista, 1995).

The situation has caused a dilemma in the classroom because there is an addition of English as the mandated medium of instruction along with Filipino. There is always a tendency among teachers to language mix, that is, switch from one language to another on the word level or to code switch, which is switching from one language to another in a sentence level. Language borrowing is even believed to be often practiced.

It has always been a repeated recommendation of PAASCU (Philippine Association of Accrediting Schools, Colleges and Universities) that fluent English be used as medium of instruction in the discipline ought to be taught in the language. The team members might have noticed the phenomenon as a common occurrence in the classroom aside from the observation of the use of poor English by students or the use of Cotabato variety of Tagalog when reciting. This is a mixture of Tagalog words, which are predominantly Cebuano, Ilonggo and Maguindanao. It is this variety observed to be commonly switch with English.

It is in this light that the researcher is interested in describing the practice of code-switching of College of Arts and Sciences teachers in selected classrooms. The study simply described the patterns of code-switching and the frequency with which it is occurring in the classrooms. It also determined what type of switching is prevalent, whether it is switching in the word level or in the sentence level.

The study can shed light on why the use of fluent English in the classroom has always been PAASCU's repeated recommendations among others. Also, this is attempting to participate in national movement for improving instruction using English as a medium. It cannot be denied that most disciplines taught in Philippine schools are foreign and they are better understood in the language with which the component concepts are originally discussed.

Many socio-linguistic literatures contain studies on code switching but there is still dearth in the aspect of describing the phenomenon in specific, local situations. This study is hoped to contribute in the general goal of studying societies and peoples to better understand humanity.

Research objectives

This study attempts to describe the nature of the practice of code-switching of the teachers. Specifically, it sought to provide answers to the following questions:

1. What is the profile of respondents based on age, sex, length of experience, highest educational attainment and tribal affiliation?
2. How often do the teacher respondents code-switch?
3. What percentage of the respondents code-switch?
4. What are the patterns of code-switching observed?
5. In which particular point in a sentence is code-switching done?
6. What are the reasons for code-switching identified by the respondents?

Theoretical framework

Code-switching is a natural occurrence. Brown (1994), cites Eric Lenneberg as saying that there is a language center at the left side of the brain responsible for the acquisition of language. The process of the development and maturation of the center is called lateralization process. It usually begins at the age of two and is completed around the age of five. Children therefore becomes proficient in their first language in their first few years.

When children or adults are placed in bilingual or multilingual settings, they still have the capacity to acquire the second languages. Appel and Muysen (1987) expanded the Paradis theory which asserts that there may only be one side of the brain responsible for language learning but when there is constant encounter of the language items of second languages, the center has the capacity to develop extensions to accommodate other subsystems. They say that the center develops some kind of mental switch that closes one system while another system is working. The process of the alternating functions of two or more subsystems allows a speaker to switch from one language to another. The frequency of the switching can depend upon the close contact between the two languages.

2. METHODOLOGY

The study employed the quasi-qualitative, descriptive design since the aimed of the study was to describe the nature of the practice of code-switching of the teachers. The respondents were teachers belonging to the College of Arts and Sciences. There were 101 teachers in the college and all of them were considered as the general population without regard for age, sex, department where they belong, or the subjects they were handling.

Forty teachers were selected as respondents. The teachers teaching Filipino subjects were not included in the counting of the total population. The simple random sampling technique was used to give each one a fair chance of being selected. All the teachers said in the target observation class sessions of one hour for Monday, Wednesday, Friday and one and half hours for Tuesday and Thursday were recorded. The ones that could not be transcribed because they are unintelligible were discarded.

The data gathering technique employed by Pascasio (1978), Bautista (1988) and Quillo (1998) were used. These followed the Gumperz Model (Giglioli, 1972) in the conduct of socio-linguistic studies where interlocutions are considered the main data. The data transcriptions of the linguistic expressions spoken and recorded during the observation sessions. They were words, phrases, statements or whole discourses in both English and Tagalog. Transcriptions because they were recorded and been transcribed. Tape recording of lectures and whatever exchanged that took place were done. Two classes of each respondent teachers were observed.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

1. Profile of Respondents. There were two youngest among the respondents whose age was 24 years old while the oldest is 56. Most of them fall under 25-30 and 36-40 ranges. Eighteen of the respondents were male and twenty two were female. Most of them have MA/MS units. In terms of length of service, most respondents have served for five years and less.

2. Frequency of Code-switching. The biggest number of frequency of code-switching is 32 and the least is 1 but the most cases of code-switched expression contained language mixing. In fact, the two highest cases of language mixing are 47 and 57. This happened because the teacher did not just code-switched, most of the time they language mixed.

3. Pattern of Code-switching. The pattern of code-switching used are the following: (a) English-Filipino-English (EFE); (b) Filipino-English (FE); (c) English language mix (ELM); (d) Filipino Language Mix (FLM); and (e) Language Mixing (LM). The most prevalent among the pattern was also found to be common but not as frequent as the first pattern. Most of the code-switched expressions contained language mixing.

4. Points in the String of Statement Where Code-switching is Done. Observation of the transcribed statements reveals that code-switching is done at any point in the string of statements. They are found in the initial, medial and terminal positions.

5. Reasons for Code-switching. From the interview and informal conversations conducted with the respondents, the following reasons for code-switching were generated: (a) to explain clearly; (b) to clarify or emphasize terms to let students understand better; (c) to be able to go down to the level of the students; (d) to supply a word immediately when the English term is forgotten; (e) to make the lesson simple; (f) to lessen the gap between teacher and students; (g) to translate terms; (h) to emphasize important concepts; (i) to express nationalism; (j) to give examples which are easily understood; and (k) to explain further.

4. CONCLUSION

The findings revealed that most teachers used English as a medium of instruction but the frequency of code-switching was very high. It was rampant among teachers of the College of Arts and Sciences. The frequency of language mixing was even higher. Both were commonly observed in the initial, medial and terminal positions in the string of statements. All these showed that code-switching and language mixing were a rampant practice among the teachers of the College of Arts and Sciences.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that administrators come with a clear-cut policy because the mandated policy is the Policy on Bilingualism which does not allow code-switching and language mixing. While it is true that both phenomena are pervasive in our society, the academe is a training ground for the development of proficiency of both languages. When proficiency has been attained, there is freedom for the practice when the graduates now mainstream themselves in the wider society. Further, it is also recommended that regular monitoring is done by administrator directly involve in supervising the teachers.

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