

Beyond borders of language: Effect of code-switching on the senior high school discourse inside the classroom

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ABSTRACT

The study examined how San Jose Community High School senior high school students made use of code-switching during a classroom discourse. Also, determine whether the conversations among senior high school students are impacted by the utilization of code-switching. In addition, they analyzed the circumstances that lead these students to switch from one language to another in communication and when they employ code-switching. The

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DOI: <http://doi.org/10.69651/PIJHSS0501824>

Recommended citation:

San Pascual, A. L., Casanova, J. P., Sunga, L. J., Ponce, R. N., & Yayong, S. (2026). Beyond borders of language: Effect of code-switching on the senior high school discourse inside the classroom. *Pantao (The International Journal of the Humanities and Social Sciences)*, 5(1), 9144–9156.

researchers examined the importance and significance of employing and utilizing two languages in strengthening and bridging the conversation, its convenience as a communication and pedagogical tool, and its efficiency in a classroom setting. Moreover, they scrutinized its involvement in the performance in a school discourse, the implication of code-switching as a communicative skill, and its significance in terms of expressing ideas. Additionally, they assessed the crucial role of shifting to a more informal or familiar variety to connect with co-students and educators. Due to this topic being rare and infrequently addressed, the researchers increased the level of awareness with regard to the utilization of bilingualism. This study also expands the students' familiarity with code-switching. Furthermore, the findings in this research may serve as a basis for teachers to better understand students' linguistic behavior inside the classroom. It may also help educators develop teaching strategies that acknowledge and appropriately apply code-switching to enhance learning and participation during discussions. By recognizing bilingualism in classroom interaction, schools may foster a more inclusive and supportive learning environment for students and teachers.

Keywords: Code-Switching, Bilingualism, Language, Classroom Discourse

Date Submitted: February 5, 2026

Date Accepted: February 18, 2026

Date Published: March 7, 2026

INTRODUCTION

Language is an essential factor for students in having the ability to understand, communicate, and express their feelings towards their peers. Language that covers the development of writing and reading skills is necessary for students in their educational journey and interaction. Furthermore, it has a broader context of academic language that includes speaking and learning of specific vocabulary and grammar.

Bilingualism is one that the students possess by having two languages that they use in speaking and understanding. Bilingualism is the ability of an individual to communicate effectively by using languages other than their native language. This enhances the cognitive flexibility, cultural awareness, and changes in personality that opens an opportunity for a deeper human understanding, (Tickner, 2025).

Bilingualism is important for the students because speaking a second language can mean that we have a better attention span. It is the individual's ability to comprehend the languages. In school, we use bilingualism because we have to communicate in two languages. It helps us to connect with people of different cultures and backgrounds.

Code-switching is a common phenomenon, it is about shifting how you express yourself depending on the context or audience. Code-switching happens when a speaker alternates between two or more languages during a single conversation. In code-switching, people can practice alternating between two or more languages and dialects. Code-switching is something that individuals use all the time without even realizing it. It is used everyday, people do it whenever they want and sometimes students are the ones who usually utilize code-switching.

During an interaction, individuals tend to use two languages. Those are bilingual people who are flexible in deciding what language they will use in a conversation. More experienced bilinguals also displayed distinct patterns in the speed/accuracy trade-off depending on task

difficulty (Gallo et al., 2025). According to Wulandari et al., (2025), people who use code-switching often mix the languages together in a smooth way and follow rules to do it. Moreover, it can sharpen their cognitive development in order to adapt to new situations.

For multilingual groups, code-switching is observed in various settings, including classrooms, online platforms, and everyday conversations. In a classroom setting, it refers to the practice of alternating between two or more languages or language varieties during instruction. According to Carota (2021), research has demonstrated that strategic code-switching enhances the L2 learning experience by reducing cognitive burden, and while educators and students hold conflicted attitudes toward it, its purposeful use was associated with improved assessment scores. Code switching in the classroom is an effective teaching strategy, especially when it involves the intentional integration of learners' native language. Code-switching in the classroom is an effective strategy for teaching, especially when it intends to improve communication. Teachers and students are allowed to switch from one language to another as long as they fulfill academic functions and expand students' vocabulary.

When it comes to classroom settings, discourse can enlighten cultural linguistic patterns that can cause miscommunications. Code-switching also gives satisfaction for both teachers and students in a way that they would be able to express their thoughts and ideas clearly. It has a significant contribution in helping students address gaps in unfamiliar English words by removing and replacing them with equivalent words and parts of speech in their own language. According to Dorji and Wangchuk (2025), students perceived code-switching as an effective way of understanding complex research concepts, making the classroom environment inclusive, and fostering engagement. Furthermore, the application of code-switching has become a way to enhance convenience for students in participating in discussions, expressing their inner thoughts more authentically, and attaining a deeper understanding of the content within the discourse.

Teachers beliefs play a crucial role in shaping classroom practices and influencing how their teaching and learning are executed inside the classroom. According to Mante Estacio and Tupas (2022), teachers' beliefs about reading strongly affect their decisions, interactions with students, and the types of learning experiences they focus on in the classroom. These beliefs often guide teachers' actions and not always expressed or measured through conventional research methods. The study highlights that beliefs are based in what teachers choose to question, reflect on, and explore in their practice. This perspective shows that educational reality are more shaped by teachers' own belief systems, which traditional research agendas may overlook whenever they focus only on observable practices rather than the underlying questions and assumptions that informs them.

It has been observed that code-switching is a social practice in multilingual societies, (Rehman et al., 2025). As it has been a common practice to switch from one language to another, students and teachers are more confident in conveying their ideas. Not only in expressing thoughts, but also in explaining complex concepts in a way that it is more comprehensible.

In connection to every day usage of code-switching, it is evident that it affects the teachers and students' communication in a classroom setting, as well as how teachers apply bilingualism as a pedagogical tool. Pedagogy is a method that is related or suitable to teachers or education that involves the use of appropriate teaching strategy according to the audience.

On the other hand, communication between teachers and students is the key for a particular pedagogy to be effective. Communication is delivering and receiving information

by means of various methods of telling, listening, and understanding messages between message conveyors and recipients.

Classroom discourse focuses on the communicative language used by teachers and students when discussing and interacting. This includes oral discussion and written communication. Discourse is a tool for sharing language knowledge and providing information on the use of natural language in everyday life and allows students a way to articulate their own ideas, reasoning, and thinking.

Many studies are also related when it comes to code-switching inside the classroom. But, the only gap that exists between those studies is the language used. The existing researches are more on foreign including from India and Zimbabwe. Therefore, the gap that the researchers aim to fill is the code-switching inside the classroom that involves English and Filipino language. The researchers have decided to find out how code-switching bridges communication and language barriers inside the classroom as a pedagogical tool and as a tool for effective communication.

One of the researches that took place abroad is Code-Switching Patterns in Multilingual Classrooms: A Study of Pedagogical Strategy, which has been conducted on Iraq. Moreover, there are many published studies internationally but with the exception of the Philippines. Another one that took place abroad is Ethnography of Code-Switching: A Classroom-Based Study in Bilingual (English–Arabic) Islamic Boarding Schools, which has been conducted on Indonesia. According to Ahmadi (2025), this research explores the phenomenon of code-switching in bilingual (English–Arabic) classrooms within Islamic boarding schools (pesantren) in Indonesia.

This research will contribute to the individuals who will benefit from this study; this will provide knowledge on how code-switching affects the educational discourse and journey of the Senior High School students and teachers. The study will benefit the students, as it can help them be more knowledgeable about the impact that they can encounter when using code-switching. Next, this study will also focus on teachers to be more informed on how the application of code-switching in their teaching methods can influence the concepts and lessons that they are teaching. The school will also benefit from this study in which it will gain insights and basis into how code-switching can be a way to enhance teaching and learning processes and improving the school's academic performance, teachers' style of educating, and students' capabilities in a discourse. This study can help the future researchers to gain additional and broader knowledge to improve their works, and because of this, it can also be a guide for them to successfully conduct their research.

Statement of the Problem:

This study can help the Senior High School students to know how the use of two languages can affect their conversation inside the classroom.

Specifically, this research seeks answers to the following questions:

1. What is the level of the use of code-switching of the students' interaction inside the classroom?
2. How does code-switching relate to language proficiency in bilingual individuals?
3. How do students use code-switching in their studies?
4. How can the use of two languages be effective in a daily conversation?

METHODOLOGY

This study utilized a mixed-methods research design to investigate the effectiveness and lived experiences of Senior High School students regarding code-switching. By integrating both quantitative and qualitative approaches, the researchers aimed to provide a comprehensive analysis of how alternating between English and Filipino serves as a functional tool in classroom discourse. This dual-method strategy ensures that the numerical trends gathered from surveys are supported by the deeper, more nuanced perspectives provided through student interviews.

The researchers employed purposive sampling to select 35 Senior High School students from San Jose Community High School as the primary participants. This non-probability sampling technique was chosen specifically to target individuals with a bilingual background who could offer meaningful insights into the implications of code-switching. By focusing on this specific demographic, the study ensured that the data collected was highly relevant to the research objectives and captured the authentic linguistic habits of the student body.

To gather data, two primary research instruments were developed: a researcher-made questionnaire and a semi-structured interview guide. The questionnaire utilized a Likert scale to measure the level of code-switching usage and its perceived relationship to language proficiency. Following the survey, interviews were conducted and audio-recorded—with the participants' formal consent—to explore the "why" behind their communication choices and to foster an environment where students could reflect on their linguistic practices.

The data gathering followed a systematic procedure, beginning with the validation of instruments by qualified experts to ensure reliability. Once validated, the questionnaires were distributed and collected, followed by the conduct of face-to-face interviews. The researchers then tabulated the survey responses and meticulously transcribed the interview recordings to prepare for a thorough analysis of the students' shared experiences.

For the final analysis, the researchers applied weighted mean and standard deviation to the quantitative data to identify general patterns and levels of agreement among the respondents. Simultaneously, thematic analysis was used to process the qualitative data, allowing the researchers to categorize interview transcripts into major themes such as "Expressing Thoughts Easily" and "Cognitive Benefit." This combined analytical treatment provided a holistic view of how code-switching functions as a vital bridge for communication and academic engagement.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Level of the use of code-switching of the students' interaction inside the classroom

Table 1
Level of code-switching usage

| Indicators | Weighted Mean | Interpretation |
|------------|---------------|----------------|
|------------|---------------|----------------|

| | | |
|--|------|----------------|
| 1. I use code-switching to express my ideas clearly. | 4.29 | Strongly Agree |
| 2. I talk to others with the use of code-switching for convenience. | 4.11 | Agree |
| 3. I can easily adjust my language use depending on the subject/topic. | 3.94 | Agree |
| 4. I substitute some English words with Tagalog words and vice versa. | 4.2 | Agree |
| 5. I use code-switching to determine the appropriateness of using the Filipino language during English class | 4 | Agree |
| 6. I determine the specific set of words to be used during different subjects/classes. | 3.97 | Agree |
| 7. I encounter academic terms during casual conversations. | 3.94 | Agree |
| 8. I use code-switching to enhance my vocabulary in both casual and academic communication. | 4.2 | Agree |
| 9. I communicate effectively with my classmates because of sharing the same language use. | 4.29 | Agree |
| 10. I use code-switching to make the interactions between me and my classmates more comfortable. | 4.09 | Agree |
| | 4.10 | Agree |

As shown in Table 1, among the 35 responses of Senior High School students toward their level of use of code-switching varies. The responses highlight the statement “I use code-switching to express my ideas clearly” with the highest weighted mean of 4.29 (Strongly Agree) and a standard deviation of 0.789, the lowest among the 10 statements which indicates a positive response among students toward the use of code-switching to express ideas in an understandable manner.

This result is consistent with Hoffman’s Theory of Code-switching (1991;2024), which posits that code-switching is a phenomenon of alternating to two languages inside the same discussion or context, making the discourse more connected and expressing of ideas easier.

Furthermore, Murtiningsih et. Al (2022) found out that using code-switching in discussing specific topics makes teaching and learning more practical, managing the classroom easier, helps in building social relationship, and encourages students’ active participation. Also, it is indicated that teachers code-switched for academic, managerial, and social functions as supported by the study of Temesgen and Hailu (2022).

Relationship of code-switching relate to language proficiency in bilingual individuals

Table 2
 Language proficiency and bilingual identity

| Indicators | Weighted Mean | Interpretation |
|--|---------------|----------------|
| 1. I practice code-switching to improve my vocabulary. | 4.45 | Strongly Agree |

| | | |
|---|------|-------|
| 2. I enhance my language skills through code-switching. | 4.17 | Agree |
| 3. I understand lessons easier through code-switching. | 3.97 | Agree |
| 4. I use code-switching when communicating with people with different languages for convenience. | 3.89 | Agree |
| 5. I can easily explain my ideas when using code-switching. | 4.31 | Agree |
| 6. I developed my skills in speaking two languages because of code-switching. | 4.09 | Agree |
| 7. I use code-switching in order for me to easily switch languages during a conversation. | 4.09 | Agree |
| 8. I use code-switching to expound my knowledge about bilingualism. | 4.03 | Agree |
| 9. I know how to use code-switching and it made an impact in my progress in deeply understanding languages. | 4.17 | Agree |
| 10. I use code-switching and it became a natural part of me, reflecting my proficiency and flexibility in both languages. | 4.11 | Agree |
| | 4.13 | Agree |

As shown in Table 2, among the 35 responses of Senior High School students toward the idea of how code-switching relates to the proficiency of bilingual individuals differs. The responses highlights the statement “I practice code-switching to improve my vocabulary” with the highest weighted mean of 4.45 (Strongly Agree) and a standard deviation of 0.65, the lowest among the 10 statements which indicates a positive response among students toward the significance of code-switching to the proficiency of bilingual individuals.

This result is consistent with the study of Blair and Morini (2023), which states that code-switching significantly helped the range of vocabulary of Senior High School students wherein through exercising code-switching, the word choices of individuals on their first and second language has greatly improved.

Moreover, Mulyani et. Al (2024) revealed that the alternation between two or more languages, is a prevalent yet underexplored phenomenon in multilingual classrooms. It plays a vital role in explaining complex concepts, translating vocabulary, checking comprehension, and managing classroom interaction, and enhancing the overall learning experiences of the students.

Students’ use code-switching

Table 3
 Functional use of code-switching in studies

| Indicators | Weighted Mean | Interpretation |
|------------|---------------|----------------|
|------------|---------------|----------------|

| | | |
|---|-------------|----------------|
| 1. I translate words to Tagalog that are not clear in the English language. | 4.4 | Strongly Agree |
| 2. I use code-switching in recitation. | 4.03 | Agree |
| 3. I use code-switching in participating group activities. | 3.97 | Agree |
| 4. I can share my ideas with my classmates using code-switching. | 4.11 | Agree |
| 5. I listen to video lessons that discuss a lesson in a language that I can easily. | 4.23 | Strongly Agree |
| 6. I use code-switching in reporting. | 4.09 | Agree |
| 7. I use code-switching whenever I want to ask my classmate. | 3.74 | Agree |
| 8. I use code-switching to clarify things regarding the lesson. | 3.97 | Agree |
| 9. I use codes-witching to enhance my vocabulary both in Filipino and English. | 4.2 | Agree |
| 10. I use two languages so that I can express my thoughts inside the classroom clearly. | 4.26 | Strongly Agree |
| | 4.10 | Agree |

As shown in Table 3, among the 35 responses of Senior High School students toward how they utilize code-switching in their studies varies. The responses highlights the statement “I translate words to Tagalog that are not clear in the English Language” with the highest weighted mean of 4.4 (Strongly Agree) and a standard deviation of 0.69, the lowest among the 10 statements which indicates a positive response among students toward the use of code-switching in their learning circumstances.

This result is consistent with the study of Arlianda (2022), wherein loanwords were being labeled as borrowing because these words were adopted by speakers from one language to another, which involves the concept of language contact.

Furthermore, as stated by Sevillano et al. (2023), the Philippines was a colony of the United States from 1898 to 1946, during which the Americans influenced the Filipinos with their cultures, resulting in the colonized country adapting to the colonial mentality of Americans, including learning the English language. With this said, involving the translation between English to Filipino and vice versa highlights that code-switching has an important role in the studies of Senior High School students in order for them to have a better understanding of the topic.

Effective use of two languages be in a daily conversation

How often do you use code switching when having a daily conversation with your peers?

The thematic analysis derived from the interview transcripts reveals eight major themes regarding the frequency and nature of code-switching among the Senior High School participants. The most prevalent themes identified include Frequent Use of Code-switching, Peers’ Frequency of Use, Expressing Thoughts Easily, Dependence on Mood, Language

Difficulty, Use of Code-switching with Similar Dialects, Dependence on the Person Talking to, and Code-switching Adaptation.

Specifically, the theme “Expressing Thoughts Easily” was highlighted by participants who noted, “I often use code-switching when talking with my peers because it feels more natural or easier to express my thoughts.” This suggests that students recognize the functional benefits of bilingualism in maintaining a smooth conversational flow. Conversely, some students noted that their usage is situational, as seen in the theme “Dependence on the Person Talking to,” where a participant stated, “Depende dun sa kung sino yung kinakausap ko... kung nahihirapan ako i-Tagalog yung word.” The high prevalence of Frequent Use of Code-switching aligns with contemporary linguistic studies which highlight the utilization of code-switching based on specific social and academic contexts. According to Essuman (2025), when a communication gap occurs in a conversation, bilinguals will occasionally turn to their language repertoire to select the appropriate linguistic unit. This emphasizes that when students face communication barriers, they utilize code-switching to bridge the gap, thereby enhancing their proficiency in carrying a discourse.

Furthermore, the identification of “Code-switching Adaptation” indicates that while students are proficient, they are still in the process of developing their bilingual flexibility. This aligns with the findings of Cayanong (2021) and Villanueva et al. (2022), who argued that code-switching serves as a linguistic bridge that boosts student confidence, particularly when learners operate within their “linguistic comfort zone”.

These findings underscore the significance of both frequent usage and adaptive strategies in improving the communicative competence of Senior High School students. By understanding these lived experiences, the study provides a nuanced look into how code-switching functions as a vital tool for classroom discourse and social interaction.

What is the importance of the Filipino and English language in a daily conversation?

The thematic analysis derived from the interview transcripts reveals six major themes regarding the perceived significance of bilingualism among the participants. These themes are classified as: Daily Use of Code-switching, Audience-Dependent Communication, Code-switching as a Tool to Express Ideas, Cognitive Benefit, Importance of Exercising Code-switching, and the Need to Learn English because of Globalization.

The theme “Daily Use of Code-switching” is highlighted as a fundamental necessity, with one participant noting, “The importance of Filipino and English language is nagagamit po natin ito sa pang araw-araw na buhay since English language is the universal language... kailangan intindihin at aralin.” This suggests that students view bilingualism as an essential life skill for daily survival and global connectivity. Furthermore, the theme “Audience-Dependent Communication” illustrates that students strategically adapt their language based on their social environment to improve how they communicate with others.

The qualitative data also points toward a “Cognitive Benefit,” where students believe that alternating between languages enhances their critical thinking and social skills. However, a significant cultural observation was made under the theme “Importance of Exercising Code-switching,” where a respondent reflected on the historical influence of American colonization, stating that while Filipino is their native tongue, English has become more dominant to the point that the local language is “parang medyo natatabunan na.”

These findings align with the study of Puspita and Ardianto (2024), which describes code-switching as a dynamic and adaptive strategy employed in diverse social contexts, serving as a tool for flexible communication. Additionally, the emphasis on globalization in the students' responses resonates with the research of Adawiyah and Gumartifa (2022), which posits that the English language's growth in the era of globalization has made it a vital influential factor in economic and educational aspects.

Ultimately, these themes illustrate that for Senior High School students, the importance of both languages lies in their ability to bridge the gap between local identity and global participation, providing them with the necessary communication strategies to navigate a modern, bilingual society.

How can you say that code-switching is effective in a discourse?

The thematic analysis presented in the qualitative portion of this study identifies six major themes regarding the effectiveness of code-switching in discourse. These themes are recognized as: Effectiveness in Discourse, Implication of Bilingualism, Nurtures Communication Proficiency, Broad Application of Code-switching, Utilizing Parallelism, and Anticipation of, or Concern with, Listener's Feedback.

The theme "Effectiveness in Discourse" emerged as a primary finding, with participants asserting that code-switching is an indispensable part of daily life. One student noted, "Ito yung way kung paano natin ma-e-express yung mga gusto natin sabihin... it can be a way to express our thoughts and ideas very well." This suggests that for Senior High School students, effectiveness is measured by the clarity and ease with which they can convey complex ideas. Furthermore, the theme "Broad Application of Code-switching" illustrates that students view this practice as a way to reach a wider audience, ensuring that their message is understood clearly regardless of the listener's primary language.

Additionally, students highlighted how code-switching "Nurtures Communication Proficiency." A participant explained that by alternating languages, they improve their social interactions and expand their vocabulary. This is supported by the theme "Utilizing Parallelism," where students use English and Tagalog as functional alternatives to ensure no information is lost in translation.

These findings align with the research of Nazri and Kassim (2023), who emphasize that code-switching serves multiple roles in varied discourse settings, including broadening vocabulary and aiding in clarification and explanation. The data shows that code-switching is highly effective for fostering communication efficacy among bilingual learners. This is further supported by Ghaderi et al. (2025), whose study indicates that adapting linguistic practices based on proficiency levels—much like the students' use of parallelism—contributes to interlingual unity and effective communication.

Finally, the theme regarding "Listener's Feedback" suggests that while some students remain hesitant to integrate code-switching, the practice allows for more comprehensive interactions. As noted by Zargarán (2025), constructive feedback is academically fruitful; thus, utilizing code-switching as a tool for dialogue enables interlocutors to express their thoughts more thoroughly, ultimately enhancing the overall classroom discourse at San Jose Community High School.

CONCLUSION

A range of responses were acquired for each questions. According to these findings, the use of code-switching is effective, especially when used in a discourse. It also mitigates the students' expression of their thoughts and ideas, as well as its useful functions in the aspect of education. The participants have varying perspective and application of code-switching. The students who are utilizing code-switching have also faced various challenges when it comes to using one language to another. Several articles and studies have supported this study's conclusion.

The participants of this study had a high level of awareness towards using Code-Switching in Discourse inside the Classroom. All participants are still motivated and interested in making use of Code-Switching. This study has proven that the students have a high level of awareness towards utilizing Code-Switching and most participants still hold the same perceptions regarding it.

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