

Effective use of code-switching as a communication strategy in English for second language classroom among Grade 12 students

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to examine the effectiveness of code-switching as a communication strategy in the teaching of English as a Second Language (ESL) among Grade 12 students of St. William's Academy, Bulanao Inc. A quasi-experimental research design was used in this study, particularly pre-test and post-test control group design. The respondents are divided into two which are the control and experimental group. Data collection instruments were valid pre-test and post-test measures of the performance of the students in their English proficiency. Statistical techniques such as mean, paired 't'-test, independent 't'-test, and one-way ANOVA were applied to analyze the collected data at 0.05 significance level. There are improvements in the post-test scores of the control and experimental groups compared to their pre-test scores. This indicated that both teaching strategies were effective. However, there were no significant differences in the mean gain scores of the control and experimental groups. This indicated that code-switching was not more effective than teaching in English only. There were significant differences in the post-test scores of the students according to their strand, with STEM having higher scores than HUMSS and ABM. The study concludes that while code-switching is an effective communication strategy in enhancing students' comprehension and participation, it does not significantly outperform English-only instruction in improving overall academic performance in English. Therefore, both strategies may be used complementarily in ESL classrooms depending on students' needs and learning contexts.

Keywords: Academic performance, Communication strategy, Code-switching, English as a Second Language (ESL), English proficiency, quasi-experimental design, teaching strategies, strand differences, statistical analysis.

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INTRODUCTION

In the 21st century, with the process of globalization and technological developments, international communication has increased, and English is one of the most widely used languages in the world in terms of education and business. Therefore, many nations, including the Philippines, have made significant developments in English language learning to prepare

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their students for a globalized world. In the Philippines, English is one of the primary mediums of instruction in the country's educational system, mainly in English, Science, and Mathematics, while Filipino and local languages are used to make it easier for students to understand and relate with their own culture.

Code-switching is defined as “the phenomenon of using two or more languages in one conversation or discourse. Code-switching is one of the linguistic phenomena in multilingual communities such as the Philippines, where in their educational settings people used more than one language. Current studies have shown that code-switching in second language classrooms is significant in bridging the linguistic gaps and assisting students in their comprehension of the language, which they have not yet mastered (García & Wei, 2020). Code-switching is most commonly used in English as a Second Language (ESL) classrooms by both instructors and students to facilitate the understanding of complex ideas, explain concepts, manage interactions, and facilitate learning. Macaro (2020) states that the strategic use of the first language in language classrooms helps students improve their comprehension and minimize cognitive overload when learning complex academic content in a second language. Hall and Cook (2012) highlighted that the first language used by students can be a resource, not a barrier, for language learning.

Code-switching has been proven to have a significant, positive effect on student engagement and participation in learning. Code-switching helps students feel comfortable sharing their ideas, asking questions, and participating in classroom interactions, as highlighted by Lin (2022), when the teacher uses it as a strategy. Code-switching can be used as a learning tool to help students relate their prior knowledge in the first language to the new information they learn in English, hence facilitating comprehension.

In the context of the Philippines, code-switching, which is also called “Taglish” and refers to the mixing of English with Filipino or other local languages, has become an integral part of natural communication in the classroom. Research done in the context of ESL classrooms in the Philippines has confirmed that code-switching can be an effective teaching tool to explain complex vocabulary, reinforce instructions, and make sure that students understand the material presented in class (Borlongan, 2021). In addition, it can be an effective tool in facilitating classroom communication, especially for those who may have difficulty articulating themselves in English.

Despite the above-mentioned benefits of code-switching, some teachers have also argued that it can be detrimental to students' language acquisition, as it can restrict their exposure to the language. However, contemporary linguistic research has now accepted code-switching as an effective teaching tool, provided it is used in an appropriate manner (Turnbull & Dailey-O'Cain, 2021). In fact, it has been accepted as a communicative tool that bilingual speakers use to maintain effective communication. In addition, it is no longer considered to be an indication of language deficiency.

In St. William's Academy, Bulanao Inc., students usually make use of the language “Filipino and other Local dialects of the region” in their day-to-day communication, at the same time learning English as a second language in the classroom setting. Code-switching, as a communication strategy, would be very useful to gain insight on how to improve language learning and teaching techniques, especially since mastering English, along with other languages, can be very difficult for many ESL students, especially for Grade 12 students who are preparing to face the world of higher learning and career.

Code-switching, as used by Grade 12 students, would be very useful to gain insight on how to improve language learning and teaching techniques, especially since mastering English, along with other languages, can be very difficult for many ESL students, especially for Grade 12 students who are preparing to face the world of higher learning and career.

Thus, the purpose of this study is to examine the effective use of code-switching as a form of communication strategy in teaching English as a Second Language among Grade 12 students at St. William's Academy, Bulanao Inc. Specifically, it aims to examine the effect of code-switching on students' comprehension, interactions, and overall communication in learning the English language.

Statement of the Problem

Generally, the study aimed to investigate the effectiveness of code-switching as a communication strategy in English for second language classroom among Grade 12 students of St. William's Academy.

Specifically, it sought answers to the following questions:

1. What are the pre-test and post-test performances of the Grade 12 students in English in the control group using English only instruction and in the experimental group using English with code-switching before and after the intervention?
2. Is there a significant difference in the pre-test and post-test scores of the control group and experimental group?
3. Is there a significant difference in the mean gain scores of the students in the control group and experimental group?
4. Is there a significant difference in the post-test scores of the students when grouped according to their strand?

METHODOLOGY

This study employed a quasi-experimental research design, particularly a pre-test and post-test control group design, to determine the impact of the intervention. The respondents were grouped according to their academic strands and sections. In the HUMSS strand, which consisted of four sections, two sections were assigned as the control group while the remaining two sections served as the experimental group. For the STEM strand, which had two sections, one section was designated as the control group and the other as the experimental group. Similarly, in the ABM strand, which also comprised two sections, one section was assigned as the control group and the other as the experimental group. This grouping allowed for a comparison between groups exposed to the intervention and those who were not.

The participants of this research were the Grade 12 students of St. Williams Academy enrolled for the School Year 2025–2026. Intact sections of Grade 12 students were chosen as the subjects of the study using purposive sampling. This type of sampling was applied since the researcher could not assign students into groups randomly because they were grouped by the school administration. There were two groups in the study. The control group was instructed using English only instruction during the intervention phase, while the experimental group was instructed using code switching as a communication strategy wherein English was strategically blended with Filipino during explanations and classroom discussions. Each section consisted of 49 students, depending on the size of the class. Both groups learned the same English lessons from the same instructor, for the same amount of time, and with the same instructional materials to maintain consistency. The only factor that changed between the two groups was the language strategy employed during instruction. This configuration enabled the researcher to contrast the students' post-test and pre-test English scores among the two groups and identify whether code switching significantly impacts students' English lessons.

The primary research tools employed in this research were the pre-test and post-test English performance tests. These tools were constructed to gauge the level of English proficiency of the students before and after being exposed to the intervention through code switching as a communication strategy. Both tests were constructed to determine basic English language capabilities such as grammar, vocabulary, reading, and writing skills competencies that are consonant with the Grade 12 English curriculum mandated by the Department of Education (DepEd). The pre-test was administered to the control and experimental groups prior to the intervention. Its aim was to gauge the students' baseline English performance before any instructional strategy was employed. The test scores were used as a point of comparison with the post-test scores to ascertain improvement. The post-test was given to both groups following the intervention period. It had the same question types as the pre-test, with similar levels of difficulty, to make it comparable. The post-test was used to assess any improvement in English performance following instruction of students using the corresponding instructional approaches.

This research employed a systematic approach that had three primary phases namely the Pre Implementation Phase, Implementation Phase, and Post Implementation Phase. These phases facilitated the orderly execution of the research and the validity of the findings obtained. During the Pre Implementation Phase, permission was obtained from the school principal and Senior High School coordinator. The research instruments were validated by three English experts to establish content validity. A pilot test was used to establish reliability. Thereafter, informed consent was sought from the respondents. The pre-tests were administered to both groups. During the Implementation Phase, the intervention was conducted within a certain period of time. The control group was strictly taught in English, while the experimental group was taught using code switching and integrating Filipino words to help explain complex words. This phase aimed to ascertain whether code switching would yield better results in terms of learning outcomes. During the Post Implementation Phase, both groups were given the post-test after the intervention.

The data collected in this study were assessed using several statistical tools. Frequency and Percentage were used to describe the data of the scores of the students in the pre-test and post-test according to their score ranges. This identified the level of performance of the students. Mean was utilized to determine the average performance of the students in the control and experimental groups in the pre-test and post-test. Paired Sample t test was used to determine if there was a significant difference between pre-test and post-test scores of the control and experimental groups. Independent Sample t test was conducted to determine if there was a significant difference in the mean gain scores of the control and experimental groups. One Way ANOVA (Analysis of Variance) was conducted to determine if there was a significant difference in the post-test scores of the students when grouped according to their strand namely ABM, HUMSS, and STEM. Post Hoc Test was conducted to determine the specific group that was significantly different after obtaining a significant result in the ANOVA.

The researcher conducted this study strictly following all ethical standards. Informed consent of all respondents was obtained after clearly explaining the purpose, procedure, and their rights as respondents. Confidentiality and anonymity were maintained by keeping the participants' identities and personal information private and by using the collected data solely for academic purposes. The researcher ensured that no physical, emotional, or psychological harm would occur during the conduct of the quasi-experimental activities, especially since there was a control and experimental group. Permission from the school administration and concerned teachers was secured prior to data collection. Finally, in recording, analyzing, and reporting the results, the researcher upheld honesty and integrity; thus, no data were manipulated or misrepresented.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents, analyzes, and interprets the data gathered from the Grade 12 students to determine the effectiveness of code-switching as a communication strategy in teaching English among English as a Second Language (ESL) learners. The study involved Grade 12 students who were categorized into control and experimental groups and were exposed to different instructional strategies. The control group was taught using English-only instruction, while the experimental group was exposed to code-switching as a classroom communication strategy. A quantitative research design was utilized, and data were gathered through pre-test and posttest assessments administered to both groups. Statistical treatments such as mean, percentage, paired sample t-test, independent sample t-test, one-way ANOVA, and post hoc analysis were employed to determine differences in performance and the significance of the findings. The discussion presented in this section is grounded on the actual data gathered and interpreted in direct relation to the objectives of the study in order to determine the effectiveness of code-switching in improving students' English performance.

The level of performance of the Grade 12 students in the control group revealed that students initially demonstrated limited mastery of the concepts prior to the intervention. In the pre-test, 0 students or 0.00% obtained scores ranging from 33-40, while 6 students or 5.26% scored within 25-32. The majority of the students, composed of 71 students or 62.28%, obtained scores ranging from 17-24, whereas 37 students or 32.46% scored within 9-16. No student obtained scores within 0-8, equivalent to 0.00%. The computed pre-test mean was 18.43, equivalent to 46.08%, which falls under the Beginning level according to the DepEd proficiency standards. This finding indicates that students had minimal understanding of the concepts before the implementation of the instructional intervention. Following the intervention, the posttest results showed noticeable improvement in students' performance. Seventeen students or 14.91% scored within 33-40, while 72 students or 63.16% obtained scores ranging from 25-32. Twenty-one students or 18.42% scored within 17-24, and only 4 students or 3.51% scored within 9-16. Similar to the pre-test, no student obtained scores within 0-8 or 0.00%. The posttest mean increased to 27.90, equivalent to 69.75%, which still falls under the Beginning level despite the observed improvement. The increase in mean scores indicates that students improved after exposure to English-only instruction, although the level of mastery remained below the expected proficiency standard. This finding suggests that continuous exposure to English as the medium of instruction can contribute to students' language development, although substantial support is still needed to achieve higher proficiency levels. The result supports the claim of Murad et al. (2024) that structured English instruction is necessary in improving students' understanding and performance in ESL classrooms. The findings imply that students can develop language proficiency even without code-switching when English is consistently used in classroom instruction.

Similarly, the level of performance of the Grade 12 students in the experimental group demonstrated limited understanding of the concepts during the pre-test phase. The data showed that 0 students or 0.00% obtained scores ranging from 33-40, while only 3 students or 2.56% scored within 25-32. Fifty-five students or 47.01% obtained scores ranging from 17-24, whereas 56 students or 47.86% scored within 9-16. In addition, 3 students or 2.56% obtained scores ranging from 0-8. The computed pre-test mean was 16.7, equivalent to 41.75%, which is also classified under the Beginning level according to the DepEd proficiency standards. These findings indicate that students in the experimental group initially possessed very limited understanding of the subject matter before the implementation of code-switching as a

communication strategy. After the intervention, the posttest results revealed improvement in students' performance. Eleven students or 9.40% obtained scores ranging from 33-40, while 76 students or 64.69% scored within 25-32. Twenty-seven students or 23.08% obtained scores ranging from 17-24, and only 3 students or 2.56% scored within 9-16. No student obtained scores within 0-8 or 0.00%. The posttest mean increased to 27.2, equivalent to 68.00%, which still falls under the Beginning level despite the observed progress. The increase in the mean score demonstrates that code-switching contributed to improved student performance and facilitated better understanding of the lessons presented in class. However, the results also indicate that students still require substantial instructional support to reach the expected level of proficiency. The findings support the study of Almutairi and Alqarni (2023), which revealed that code-switching promotes better understanding and communication among ESL classroom learners. This suggests that the integration of students' first language alongside English can facilitate comprehension and classroom interaction, particularly among learners with limited English proficiency.

The analysis on the significant differences between the pre-test and posttest scores of the Grade 12 students according to group was determined using the paired sample t-test. For the control group, the pre-test mean was 18.4, while the posttest mean increased to 27.9. The computed t-value was -16.1 with a p-value of $< .001$. Since the p-value is less than the 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis was rejected, leading to the interpretation that there was a significant difference between the pre-test and posttest scores of the control group. This indicates that English-only instruction significantly improved the students' English performance. For the experimental group, the pre-test mean was 16.7, while the posttest mean increased to 27.2. The computed t-value was -18.0 with a p-value of $< .001$. Since the p-value was also less than 0.05, the null hypothesis was rejected, indicating a significant difference between the pre-test and posttest scores of the experimental group. The findings demonstrate that code-switching as a communication strategy also significantly improved students' English performance. The results imply that both English-only instruction and code-switching were effective instructional approaches in enhancing students' language proficiency. The substantial improvement observed in both groups confirms the findings of Agemso (2023), who emphasized that instructional interventions are crucial in improving students' language proficiency. The results further imply that both instructional approaches possess the capacity to support language development when implemented effectively in ESL classrooms.

The analysis on the significant differences between the mean gain scores of the Grade 12 students from the control and experimental groups was determined using the independent sample t-test. The control group obtained a mean gain score of 9.47, while the experimental group obtained a mean gain score of 10.5. The computed t-value was -1.24 with a p-value of 0.215. Since the p-value is greater than the 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis was not rejected, resulting in the interpretation that there was no significant difference between the mean gain scores of the control and experimental groups. Although the experimental group obtained a slightly higher mean gain score compared to the control group, the difference was not statistically significant. This finding suggests that both English-only instruction and code-switching have comparable effectiveness in improving students' English performance. While code-switching may facilitate comprehension and communication, its advantage over English-only instruction was not statistically established in terms of academic performance. The result corroborates the findings of Omongos et al. (2025), who revealed that code-switching improves comprehension but does not necessarily result in significantly higher academic achievement. The findings imply that both instructional strategies possess similar potential in enhancing students' performance in English classes.

The analysis on the significant differences between the posttest scores of the Grade 12 students when grouped according to strand was determined using one-way ANOVA. For the

control group, the ABM strand obtained a mean score of 17.2, the HUMSS strand obtained a mean score of 27.3, and the STEM strand obtained the highest mean score of 30.3. The computed F-value was 100 with a p-value of $< .001$. Since the p-value is less than the 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis was rejected, indicating a significant difference in posttest scores among students when grouped according to strand. Similarly, for the experimental group, the ABM strand obtained a mean score of 17.8, the HUMSS strand obtained a mean score of 26.9, and the STEM strand obtained the highest mean score of 29.6. The computed F-value was 42.5 with a p-value of $< .001$. Since the p-value was less than 0.05, the null hypothesis was likewise rejected, indicating a significant difference in posttest scores according to strand. The findings reveal that STEM students consistently achieved the highest posttest scores in both the control and experimental groups, followed by HUMSS students, while ABM students obtained the lowest scores. This pattern suggests that students' academic orientation and strand specialization influence their English performance and comprehension abilities.

The post hoc analysis further clarified the specific group differences among the strands. In the control group, significant differences were found between HUMSS-1 and 12-STEM 1, with a mean difference of -2.96^{**} and a p-value of 0.001, interpreted as significant. A significant difference was also found between HUMSS-1 and 12-ABM, with a mean difference of 10.2^{***} and a p-value of $< .001$. Likewise, a significant difference existed between 12-STEM 1 and 12-ABM, with a mean difference of 13.1^{***} and a p-value of $< .001$. In the experimental group, significant differences were likewise identified between HUMSS 2 and 12-STEM 2, with a mean difference of -2.12^{*} and a p-value of 0.0379, interpreted as significant. Significant differences were also observed between HUMSS 2 and 12-ABM, with a mean difference of 9.10^{***} and a p-value of $< .001$, as well as between 12-STEM 2 and 12-ABM, with a mean difference of 11.22^{***} and a p-value of $< .001$. These findings indicate that students from different academic strands possess varying levels of English proficiency and performance, possibly due to differences in curriculum focus, academic demands, and learning orientation. The findings support the study of Saligumba and Barcelona (2022), which emphasized that students' academic background significantly influences English achievement. The results imply that teachers should consider strand-related differences when designing instructional strategies and communication approaches in ESL classrooms to ensure that instruction is responsive to students' academic orientations and learning needs.

Overall, the findings of the study revealed that both English-only instruction and code-switching significantly improved the English performance of Grade 12 students, as evidenced by the significant differences between pre-test and posttest scores in both groups. Although the experimental group obtained a slightly higher mean gain score of 10.5 compared to the control group's 9.47, the independent sample t-test revealed no significant difference between the two instructional strategies, indicating that both approaches were comparably effective in enhancing students' performance. Furthermore, the one-way ANOVA and post hoc analyses demonstrated that students' strand significantly influenced posttest performance, with STEM students consistently obtaining the highest mean scores, followed by HUMSS students, while ABM students recorded the lowest scores. These findings highlight the importance of instructional intervention, language exposure, and academic orientation in influencing students' English achievement. The study contributes to the growing body of literature on ESL instruction by demonstrating that code-switching can facilitate comprehension and communication without necessarily producing significantly higher academic performance compared to English-only instruction. The results further emphasize the need for teachers to

adopt flexible and context-sensitive instructional strategies that consider students' linguistic needs and academic backgrounds in order to improve learning outcomes in English classrooms.

CONCLUSION

The study concluded that both English-only instruction and code-switching significantly improved the English performance of students, indicating that each instructional strategy contributed positively to learning outcomes in the English classroom. The findings revealed that code-switching was not significantly more effective than English-only instruction since both approaches produced comparable gains in students' academic performance. This suggests that the effectiveness of language instruction does not solely depend on the exclusive use of English, but rather on how instructional strategies are applied to support students' comprehension and engagement in the learning process. Furthermore, the study established that students' academic strand significantly influenced their English performance, with STEM students demonstrating higher levels of achievement compared to students from the HUMSS and ABM strands. This difference implies that students' academic orientation and exposure to language demands within their respective strands may affect their capacity to perform in English related tasks and classroom activities.

In light of these findings, the study recommends that teachers continue utilizing both English-only instruction and code-switching as effective pedagogical strategies in English classrooms, depending on the learning needs and proficiency levels of students. Code-switching may be particularly beneficial in facilitating the understanding of complex concepts among learners with lower English proficiency, thereby promoting clearer communication and more meaningful classroom interaction. The findings also highlight the need for additional academic support programs for ABM students to help strengthen their English performance and reduce disparities across strands. Moreover, teachers are encouraged to consider students' academic strand when selecting instructional materials, classroom activities, and teaching approaches to ensure that strategies are responsive to learners' varying abilities and academic contexts. Finally, future researchers are encouraged to explore other teaching strategies and additional variables that may produce more significant differences in students' learning outcomes and contribute further to the development of effective English language instruction.

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