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THE USE OF CODE–SWITCHING AMONG HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

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ABSTRACT : This study explored the use of code-switching among high school students in Olongapo City who engage in code-switching during class discussions. Using a qualitative approach, the research aimed to understand the motivations, perceived challenges, and potential solutions related to this practice from the students' perspectives. The study involved 18 students from three public secondary schools in Olongapo City, selected using purposive sampling. Data was collected through a structured in-depth group discussion and analyzed using thematic inductive analysis. The findings revealed that students' code-switching experiences are driven by a complex interplay of cognitive, social, and emotional factors. Three main themes emerged regarding their experiences: "Experiencing difficulty in expressing oneself," "Experiencing varied environment and surrounding," and "Explaining to classmates". Reasons for code-switching were categorized into three themes: "Cognitive and Pedagogical Tool," "Academic Pressure," and "Group Identity". Students reported using code-switching to overcome linguistic struggles like limited vocabulary and a lack of grammatical knowledge, to manage nervousness and fear of humiliation, and to foster a sense of belonging with peers. The study also identified significant challenges, which were grouped into the themes of "Communicative Competence," "Academic Factor," and "Confidence Level". Students reported that code-switching can lead to disorganized sentences, a perceived decline in communication skills, and a lowered sense of confidence, especially when faced with institutional expectations to speak only English and the fear of being judged. In response to these challenges, students' suggestions for improving communication skills fell into two themes: "Code-Switching as an Accepted Classroom Communication Tool" and "Strategic and Intentional Practice". They recommended that schools formally accept code-switching to boost confidence, while also recognizing the need to balance its use with dedicated English practice, such as reading, group discussions, and self-talk. This research concludes that code-switching is a dynamic and essential communicative strategy for high school students. It is a tool for problem-solving and a means to achieve clarity, comfort, and group identity, rather than a sign of laziness.

I. INTRODUCTION

Language is more than just a way to talk to other people; it's also a way to show who we are, what we think, and what our culture is like. People who know more than one language often switch between them in the same sentence. This is normal and happens all the time. This isn't just a random mix of languages; it's a complicated process that is influenced by social, cultural, and cognitive factors. Code-switching is a very important way to talk to people that shows who you are and helps you get along with others in social situations. A 2024 study on code-switching in Ireland's multilingual communities found that people use it a lot to talk to each other and show who they are. The study found that people switch languages to fit in with different cultures, show that they belong to a group, and say things that are only true in their culture. A 2023 study of code-switching in popular culture found that people use it to show who they are socially, support a certain group, or make a point stronger. You can use it to show you care, limit how much you can talk to people, or make it easier for people to talk to each other. But teachers still don't agree on it. Some people think that students will learn the most if they only speak the language they want to learn. Some people think it's fine and even helpful to switch between languages. Some people who study this think it means you're lazy or don't know how to speak well, which makes it harder to learn a second language. In the Philippine context, code-switching, particularly between English and Filipino, is a well-documented and prevalent practice in educational settings. Filipino teachers often code-switch, even in English-dominated classrooms, despite policies that prescribe the exclusive use of English for content courses like mathematics and science. Local studies have found that code-switching serves various educational objectives, such as facilitating cooperation, understanding, and the delivery of content knowledge. Researchers like Asuncion (2020) argue that code-switching should not be considered wrong or illegitimate, as it helps learners become communicatively competent bilingual members of society.

In the Philippines, students often switch between English and Filipino. In math and science classes, you can only speak English. Filipino teachers often switch between languages, even in classrooms where English is the main language. Research in this domain has shown that code-switching serves various educational purposes, such as promoting collaboration, enhancing comprehension, and facilitating the dissemination of knowledge. Asuncion (2020) and other researchers assert that code-switching is neither erroneous nor unlawful, as it facilitates the development of bilingual individual's adept in effective communication.

This is typical, but the research is evidently insufficient. Local and international studies provide substantial macro-level insights into the prevalence and functions of code-switching; however, they often fail to clarify the "why" and "how" of individuals' language choices from their personal perspectives. A comprehensive analysis of code-switching behaviors among students in Olongapo City, a former U.S. naval base noted for its unique amalgamation of Tagalog, English, and other Philippine languages, has not yet been undertaken. This phenomenological study seeks to elucidate the reasons behind code-switching, the perceptions of students regarding its impact on their learning, and its significance within this context. This research seeks to elucidate individual experiences, moving beyond simple observation to deepen the understanding of code-switching, thus guiding more effective language instruction and policies that acknowledge linguistic diversity as a vital resource.

II. METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study employed a phenomenological research design, which aimed to explore and described the lived experiences and perceptions of students who code-switch during oral participation in class. Phenomenology is a qualitative research approach that seeks to understand the meaning and essence of human experiences.

The study involved 18 high school students who code-switch during oral participation in class. Participants were selected from a public high school in Olongapo City, and they were fluent in their native language which Filipino. Purposive sampling had been used to select participants who had actively experienced code-switching during oral participation in class.

The research design of the study was qualitative and the analysis was phenomenological. Creswell & Creswell (2018) described the qualitative research method as a method that provided emerging research where participants were interviewed using open-ended questions in a focus group discussion and data was analyzed to find patterns and themes that help the researcher establish meaning. McMillan & Schumacher & Fuster-Guillen, (2019) described the qualitative research process as the researcher's intention to provide an understanding of experiences. According to Creswell & Creswell (2018), phenomenological researchers describe the essence of lived experiences within a particular phenomenon presented through interviews or observations of several individual participants.

Phenomenological research is best used when researchers want to understand an experience as it is understood by those who have experienced it (Cohen Kahn & Steeves, 2021). McMillan & Schumacher (2018) described the phenomenology research method as an approach that helps the researcher better understand how individuals view their situation and how they make meaning of it. Additionally, Peoples (2021) described the idea behind phenomenology as a method in which individuals strictly understand experiences as they are lived. Meaning is found by studying only experiences as they are seen by the individual who lived them. Researchers interview multiple participants and seek commonalities amongst the study participants to clarify their understanding of the phenomenon (Peoples, 2021). This research design will include identifying an experience to explore, collecting data from those who have experienced the phenomenon to determine what those experiences were like, identifying commonalities of what individuals experienced and how they experienced it, and finally culminating the results into a general description of what it means to be (Peoples, 2021). There are several qualitative research methods, and the researcher will utilize the phenomenological research design for this study.

Creswell (2013) advanced the notion that the aim of a researcher in qualitative research is to understand and explain. The purpose of this research study is to establish meaning and gain a better understanding of the experiences of senior high-school students in the use f code-switching during oral communication while attending public secondary schools. FGDs or Focus Group Discussions excel at exploring why people behave as they do, revealing insights into the social processes that shape their views. The group dynamic itself is a key advantage, as the interaction among participants can illuminate shared understandings and generate new ideas that would be difficult to obtain through individual interviews or surveys. This method allowed researchers to gain deeper insights into people's beliefs, attitudes, feelings, and experiences, as participants feel free to share their honest opinions in a non-threatening environment.

Data Collection

McMillan & Schumacher (2018) identified five phases of qualitative data collection. Phase one, planning, included the researcher getting permission to do the study. Next, the researcher sought the permission and assistance of the Schools Division Superintendent, School Principals/Heads, of the Public Secondary High School of the Division of Olongapo, the Adviser, English teacher, students and Parents in the conduct of the interview to participant students. The data gathering was conducted in the months of June and July 2025 where public secondary high schools were already open.

After identifying the participants, each were asked to provide their consent to participate. According to McMillan & Schumacher (2010), phase two is collecting data. For this research study, data collection began as the researcher establish the relationships and interviewed study participants.

Phase three was called primary data collection, the process where the researcher began to process the data and document descriptions of the collected data. This study used interview/focus group discussion as primary date gathering method. Interview was a qualitative research method that relied on asking questions in order to collect data. Interviews according to George (2022) involve two or more people, one of whom is the interviewer asking the questions. George (2022) discussed that semi-structured interviews were a blend of structured and unstructured interviews. While the interviewer had a general plan for what they want to ask, the questions do not have to follow a particular phrasing or order.

During the conduct of the interview, the researcher first established rapport with the respondents, so that they will feel comfortable by the researcher's presence. Each interview was recorded and transcribed for this study, and each transcription were reviewed to assure accuracy. Additionally, copies of interview transcripts were sent to participants, and each were asked to review their statements and clarify any unclear or confusing comments. In this phase, transcripts were coded, and notes were written indicating the researcher's thoughts and questions. Also, as commonalities emerged across interviews or patterns will also be documented.

The phase four was closing data collection which included finishing interviews as data saturation becomes evident and giving more attention to data analysis, theme identification, and interpretations. Phase four of the study includes interviewing and observing participants. As interviews finished, more time was given to coding and identifying common themes among interviewees. Further analysis confirmed data saturation, provided rich descriptions of the phenomenon, and allowed the researcher to document the essence of the experiences of single parents attending community college. Finally, phase five was completion. McMillan & Schumacher (2010) identified this phase as the completion of the data collection process with a transition toward, the construction of meaningful way to present the data.

Adhering to the ethical practice of research on humans, the following principles were strictly observed by the researcher during the study. First, the researcher secured a permit approved by the SDS DepEd Division of Olongapo. Second, the participants were duly informed about the concept, objectives, and scope of the study. The researcher secured a consent from the participant for the conduct of the study. All data were kept confidential and anonymous. Every participant had the right to withdraw from the study at any time. Third, all participants were given the freedom to choose whether to participate or not. Aside from this, the participants were informed about their rights if they wished to discontinue being an informant. Fourth, the participants were informed that they can invoke their rights to privacy if they felt that the question being asked are too invasive for them. Lastly, interviews were done on safe venues, specifically on the participants' school premises.

Data Analysis

The analysis of data in this study was conducted using an inductive thematic analysis approach, which enabled the researcher to interpret and make meaning from participants lived experiences. This method was appropriate for a phenomenological qualitative study because it focused on understanding how respondents make sense of their English language learning experiences. The thematic inductive analysis process, as explained by Braun and Clarke (2021) and McMillan and Schumacher (2019), allowed the researcher to systematically identify, organize, and interpret patterns across the dataset. Below were the techniques and processes used:

Thematic Analysis was applied to examine and synthesize the participants' narratives. Through this method, recurring ideas were organized into categories and developed into themes, providing a deeper understanding of the phenomenon being studied (Braun & Clarke, 2021; Creswell, 2014).

Coding Procedures were implemented to classify significant statements derived from the interview transcripts. Both inductive coding—emerging from the data itself—and deductive coding—guided by the research questions—were utilized. Coding served as the foundation for theme generation and ensured systematic interpretation (McMillan & Schumacher, 2019; Peoples, 2021).

Memoing and Interpretive Notes were created throughout the analysis. These memos documented the researcher's insights, reflections, and emerging connections during coding, helping refine the structure of themes and maintain a clear audit trail of the analysis process (Peoples, 2021).

Validation Techniques were integrated throughout the analysis. Member checking was conducted by allowing participants to review their interview transcripts and confirm the accuracy of their responses.

ANALYSIS

The analysis of data in this study was conducted using an inductive thematic analysis approach, which enabled the researcher to interpret and make meaning from participants lived experiences. This method was appropriate for a phenomenological qualitative study because it focused on understanding how respondents make sense of their English language learning experiences. The thematic inductive analysis process, as explained by Braun and Clarke (2021) and McMillan and Schumacher (2019), allowed the researcher to systematically identify, organize, and interpret patterns across the dataset.

Lived Experiences of High School Students in Code Switching During Class Discussion

Table 1 : Participants' Perception on Code Switching as Begin a High School Student

Open Codes (Verbatim Responses)	Axial Codes (Sub-Themes)	Themes (Emerged Themes)
"I find it difficult for me to express my thoughts clearly in just one language." "..coz sometimes nakakalimutan ko po yung word" "..kasi may mga words Talaga sa tagalog na madaling I express in English" ",.. I didn't know some Tagalog words" **Groups 1, 2 and 3**	Limited vocabulary	**Having trouble in expressing oneself**
".Minsan sir nahihirapan po ako sa grammar." "Nag-cocode switch ako sa class discussion kapag hindi ko alam ang exact term sa English, "..lalo na po kung namemental block" **Groups 1, 2, and 3**	Lack of knowledge	
"…gusto ko po ma clear yung thoughts ko po. "it's easier and parang natural po sya" "And sometimes I more comfortable in expressing myself in English than in filipino." **Groups 1, 2 and 3**	Clear expression of thoughts	
"I talk my my cousin because my cousin and my brother my baby brother because they they know how to speak English then I speak English too. " "…especially in the family po kasi my mom speaks English a lot and my dad sakto lang" "…sakin po sa mga peers ko po and my mom" "..nasanay napo kasi ako sa bahay si mama English teacher si dad tagalog naman" **Groups 1, 2, and 3**	Family Background	**Experiencing varied environment and surrounding**
"..dito sa city po na culture shock po Talaga" ako " "I have this um online friend but since 2020 um she's from Malaysia and um when we communicate, we always um we always communicate in English"	Culture	

“nababanggit in Hiligaynon na parang hindi napo nila ako naiintindihan that’s why I code switch po **“** **Groups 1,2, and 3**		
“During class class discussion and when talking to my friends or classmates. “ “Po nagpaptulong po sya sakin para ipaliwanag mga topics nagcocode swith po ako” “.hindi lamang po para sa kapakanan ko Kundi para Narin sa kapakanan ng nakikinig para maintindihan nila in both languages” “yung nagpapaliwanag ako sa kaibigan tungkol po dun sa mga bagay na tinatanong nya tungkol sa diniscuss.” **Groups 1, 2, and 3**	Explaining to classmates	

The provided data effectively illustrates the multifaceted experience of high school students with code-switching during class discussions. The analysis, moving from open codes (verbatim responses) to axial codes (sub-themes) and finally to emerged themes, reveals two primary drivers of this linguistic behavior: internal communicative challenges and external environmental influences. Additionally, the data points to the functional motivations behind code-switching.

According to Gee (2015), Discourse Theory and Language Use as Perspective, language is always used from a particular perspective, and speakers make choices about language use based on their identity, context, and purpose. In the context of code switching, this means that students use language to negotiate meaning, establish relationships, and construct identities (Gee, 2015).

Reasons Why High School Students Code Switch During Class Discussion

Table 2 : Participants’ Reasons on Using Code Switching During Class Discussion as a High School Student

Open Codes (Verbatim Responses)	Axial Codes (Sub-Themes)	Themes (Emerged Themes)
“I'm encouraged to code switch when the topic is hard to hard to explain in English.” “..kapag may certain topic po na biglang itatopic po na diko alam” “. I have this nahirapan po Talaga ako.” “Whenever it is difficult to explain is so usually it happens during difficult times.” **Groups 1, 2 and 3**	Difficult topic	Cognitive and Pedagogical Tool
“I'm working in a group with my classmates since they also speak Tagalog to make it clear and faster. “ “nagpapaliwanag ako sa kaibigan tungkol po dun sa mga bagay na tinatanong nya tungkol sa diniscuss.” “the people around me can only speak the one language” “ang kausap ko ay hindi marunong mag tagalog at hindi maka speak ng English mafoforce po ako na mag speak ng tagalog” **Groups 1, 2, and 3**	Group Collaboration	
“When I'm nervous” “Pag ninenerbyos po ako mas hindi ko masabi yung mga dapat kong sabihin.” “..pag ninenerbyos na po ako” “For me po when I'm nervous also po” **Groups 1, 2 and 3**	Nervousness	Academic Pressure
“to um to avoid awkward silence.”	Fear of humillation	

"nahihiya ako sa sasabihin ng iba kaya nagcocode switch nalang ako." **"**nahihiya po ako sa ibang tao kaya diko matuloy mag english" **Groups 1, 2 and 3**		
"to my friend's po to make it natural and to express my ideas more clearly" "nagpapaliwanag ako sa kaibigan" ": I code switch with my friends" **Groups 1, 2 and 3**	Peer belonging	Group Identity
"more on tagalog kapag nakikipag usap sa bahay" **"**nanonood po kasi sila ng mga English na movies" "Nag cocode switching lang po kaming dalawa minsan. Trip lang." **Groups 1, 2, and 3**	Family Background	
"she was from New Zealand and then um I speak I tried to speak English po " "sa Baretto po diba maraming kano, kaya napapa code switch po ako minsan" "whenever i speak with my siblings they speak full English so I speak English to them." **Groups 1,2, and 3**	Societal Influence	Language Imperialism

The provided data from Table 2 outlines several key reasons why high school students in the study engage in code-switching during class discussions. The qualitative data, composed of student verbatim quotes, has been categorized into "Open Codes," which are then grouped into "Axial Codes" (sub-themes) and finally, "Themes." The analysis reveals that students' use of code-switching is a multifaceted phenomenon driven by three main, interconnected themes: Cognitive and Pedagogical Tool, Academic Pressure, and Group Identity.

The theory of Semilin'ualism, first proposed by Nils Erik Hansegård, refers to a state where an individual is perceived to have limited proficiency in two or more languages compared to a monolingual speaker in their language. Hansegård originally defined it by deficits across several linguistic domains, including vocabulary size, grammatical correctness, and language creation. For instance, a study might state that "individuals may engage in code-switching as a compensatory strategy when they feel unable to fully express their intended meaning in one language due to vocabulary gaps or grammatical uncertainties" (Palmes, 2023)

Perceived Challenges of High School Students in using Code Switching

Table 3 : Participants' Perception on the Challenges of Code Switching as Being a High School Student

Open Codes (Verbatim Responses)	Axial Codes (Sub-Themes)	Themes (Emerged Themes)
"it makes my sentences a bit disorganized po " "They make me cautious po." "..hindi po dapat ako mag code switch pero napapa code switch" **Group 1, 2, and 3**	Disorganized	Communicative Inompetence
"naapektuhan po ang communication skills" "nagiging less ang confidence kasi natatakot ako na ma judge yung grammar " "siguro bawas na yung vocabulary ko kaya nagagawa ko yun." **Groups 1,2, and 3**	Poor Communication Skills	
"expected na mag English kami" **"**sa subject po ni mam cecile. We are expected to speak in English language" **"**po naka base po sa what language po ng subject." **Groups 1,2, and 3**	Requirement	Rigid Academic Factor
"I feel shy in front of my classmates since I was a new transferee in school" "tumatahimik nalang po ako pag ano hindi po ma ano yung mistake" "I do feel dissatisfied" "it slightly lower my confidence"	Lower confidence	Lack of Self-steem

"nagiging less confident tayo mas nakakatakot na mag recite" **Group 1, 2, and 3**		

The provided data from Table 4 details the challenges high school students face when code-switching. The analysis reveals three primary themes: Communicative Incompetence, Rigid Academic Factor, and Lack of self-esteem. These themes show that while code-switching is a useful tool, it also presents significant cognitive, social, and emotional challenges for students, often creating internal conflict between their linguistic habits and academic expectations. De Castro, Parajito, Realco, and Dacara (2024) conducted a study on the effects of code-switching on the communicative competence of 21st-century learners in the Philippines. Their findings directly support the themes enumerated, revealing a negative significant relationship between the frequency of code-switching and students' level of communicative competence in English. The study concluded that while students use code-switching to express their thoughts, it also leads to challenges such as "struggling with the construction of clear, complete, and understandable sentences" (De Castro et al., 2024, p. 2). This directly corresponds to the "Communicative Competence" theme and the sub-theme of "Disorganized" sentences.

While Linguistic Interdependence Hypothesis of Cummins' suggests that students' linguistic proficiency in one language can influence their proficiency in another language. In the context of code switching, LIH implies that students' proficiency in one or both languages can impact their ability to navigate multiple linguistic contexts and code switch effectively. For example, a student who is proficient in both languages may be able to code switch seamlessly, while a student with limited proficiency in one language may struggle to navigate multiple linguistic contexts (Salebi 2023).

According to Cummins' hypothesis, a strong cognitive foundation in both languages (high Common Underlying Proficiency - CUP) facilitates the transfer of skills and knowledge between them. Conversely, if an individual has limited proficiency in one or both languages (lower CUP), this can lead to struggles during code-switching. Common Underlying Proficiency (CUP), a concept introduced by James Cummins, suggests that despite having distinct surface features, a bilingual individual's two languages are interconnected at a deeper cognitive level.

Suggestions or Recommendations in Relation to Code Switching that Will Help Enhance Communication Skills as a High School Student

Table 4 : Participants' Suggestions or Recommendations in Relation to Code Switching

Open Codes (Verbatim Responses)	Axial Codes (Sub-Themes)	Themes (Emerged Themes)
"po pwede na rin pong mag code switching like sa subjects in English" "mas tumataas po ang confidence siguro pag may code switching na nagaganap." "dapat pong maging allowed ang code switching" "Siguro po ipagpapatuloy ko po muna sya sa ngayon yung pag cocode switching" **Groups 1, 2, and 3**	Acceptance	Accepted Classroom Communication Tool
"allow us to speak more and code switch po without the fear of being judged." "dapat po minimal lang minsan po" "pwede ka naman mag code switch pero minimal lang" **Group 1, 2, and 3**	Minimal Usage	Remedy
"I recommend to have more practices like group discussion po or casual debates po" "it would be beneficial to have at least one class wherein we are able to speak in English alone for us be able to speak more comfort comfortably in that	Strategy	Communicative Strategy

language." "more on reading po." "Sakin po Self talk" **Groups 1, 2, and 3**		

The data from Table 4, which outlines high school students' suggestions for enhancing their communication skills in relation to code-switching, reveals two central and seemingly contradictory themes: Code-Switching as an Accepted Classroom Communication Tool and a need for Strategic and Intentional Practice. This highlights a sophisticated understanding from the students, who see code-switching as both a necessary and beneficial tool, but also recognize the need to develop their English skills independently.

The student data from Table 4, which outlines suggestions for enhancing communication skills through code-switching, reveals a sophisticated understanding that is well-supported by recent literature. The students' suggestions form two seemingly contradictory, yet ultimately complementary themes: Code-Switching as an Accepted Classroom Communication Tool and a need for Strategic and Intentional Practice. This indicates that students see code-switching as a beneficial resource but also recognize the importance of dedicated practice to achieve independent proficiency. This theme is rooted in the students' desire for a supportive and inclusive learning environment. The quotes "dapat pong maging allowed ang code switching" and "mas tumataas po ang confidence" show that students link the institutional acceptance of code-switching directly to their confidence and ability to participate. They are not asking for a free pass to use their native language, but rather for their natural communication style to be legitimized. The students' desire for the official acceptance of code-switching suggests that they are currently operating in an environment where it is either discouraged or implicitly forbidden.

This aligns with research that criticizes rigid "English-only" policies, which can create a psychologically unsafe classroom where students are afraid to speak for fear of making a mistake. By advocating for the use of code-switching, students are articulating a need for an environment that fosters participation and reduces anxiety (Sarwar & Ghani, 2024). They understand that the ability to switch languages when needed makes them feel "more comfortable," which in turn empowers them to be more confident in expressing their ideas. This is not a request for a lowering of standards, but a request for a more effective and humane pedagogical approach that leverages their bilingual abilities.

III. DISCUSSION

The Lived Experiences of High School Students in Code Switching During Class Discussion

The qualitative data that was collected from students in high school indicate that the lived experiences of code-switching during class discussions are complicated and are influenced by three primary themes: "Experiencing difficulty in self-expression," "Encountering diverse environments and surroundings," and "Clarifying to peers."

- **Having Trouble in Expressing Oneself**

To cope with difficulties, they encounter in their own language and thoughts, students frequently engage in the practice of code-switching. According to the findings, the issue at hand goes beyond simple convenience; it is also a response to the challenges of having a "limited vocabulary" and "lack of knowledge" in a particular language. The fact that students find lexical gaps in both English and Filipino, as shown by their exact answers, shows that there is a "bi-directional difficulty." This exercise also serves as a "mental reset" for students who are having trouble remembering names, helping them get past cognitive blocks and keep thinking. The main goal is the "clear expression of thoughts," which stresses the importance of being able to communicate one's ideas in a way that is easy to understand over the importance of using perfect grammar.

- **Experiencing Varied Environment and Surrounding**

According to the research, code-switching is a behavior that has been acquired and adopted by students. It is a practice that is deeply rooted in the social and cultural settings in which students exist. The "Family Background" sub-theme shows that students often learn to switch languages at home, where they are surrounded by many different languages. The "Culture" sub-theme also shows that code-switching is a way to help people from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds talk to each other. This is like when you have a conversation with someone whose first language is not the same as yours.

- **Explaining to Classmates**

This theme demonstrates the motivation behind individuals' decisions to transition to a different language for altruistic and educational purposes. Not only do students alternate between languages to benefit themselves, but they also do so in order to bring about "kapakanan ng nakikinig," which means "the benefit of

the listener." Students have the opportunity to assist one another in gaining a better understanding of challenging topics and collaborate in their learning efforts by serving as peer tutors.

Reasons Why High School Students Code Switch During Class Discussion

Students' reasons for code-switching were primarily categorized into three themes:

- **Cognitive and Pedagogical Tool**

Students frequently use code-switching as a strategic, problem-solving method to navigate academic challenges. They rely on it to overcome linguistic limitations, such as a lack of vocabulary or grammatical knowledge ("nakakalimutan ko po yung word" and "nahihirapan po ako sa grammar"). They also use it as a cognitive bridge to articulate complex thoughts and clarify difficult topics ("when the topic is hard to hard to explain in English"). This is also a tool for group collaboration, helping them explain concepts to peers "to make it clear and faster".

- **Academic Pressure**

The emotional and psychological states of pupils have a significant influence on the language that they choose to use. To deal with their nerves and the fear of embarrassing themselves, they switch codes ("pag ninenerbyos po ako mas hindi ko masabi yung mga dapat kong sabihin"). People engage in this behavior as a coping mechanism for the anxiety that comes with giving a presentation in front of an audience and the dread of being evaluated by their classmates or instructors

- **Group Identity**

Code-switching is also a social and cultural act used to express belonging and connect with peers. It is a normalized behavior learned from family and peers and brought into the classroom. Students use it to foster a sense of "peer belonging" and to express their identity within their social group.

Perceived Challenges of High School Students in using Code Switching

Students identified several challenges associated with code-switching, which were grouped into three themes:

- **Communicative Incompetence**

Students reported that code-switching can make their sentences "a bit disorganized" and affect their overall "communication skills". They also expressed a self-perceived linguistic deficiency, believing that code-switching is a sign of a shrinking vocabulary.

- **Rigid Academic Factor**

Students feel pressure from institutional expectations, such as being "expected na mag English kami" in certain subjects. This can create a hostile environment where they feel compelled to suppress their natural communication style, leading to fear and a reluctance to speak.

- **Low Self Esteem**

Students who have to switch between several languages may feel "stupid" and lose confidence in themselves, which can be bad for their mental health. If you're worried that your classmates will judge you negatively, you might feel even more awkward and not want to talk to them.

Suggestions or Recommendations in Relation to Code Switching that Will Help Enhance Communication Skills as a High School Student

Students' suggestions for enhancing communication skills through code-switching fell into two main themes:

- **Code-Switching as an Accepted Classroom Communication Tool**

Students advocated for the formal acceptance of code-switching in the classroom, believing it would boost their confidence and make them more comfortable in expressing themselves.

- **Remedy**

The high school students' suggestions demonstrate a sophisticated understanding of code-switching's role in their language learning journey. They see it as a tool for confidence and comprehension, but they also recognize the importance of intentional practice to enhance their skills. This data suggests that educators should not view code-switching as a problem to be eliminated, but rather as a natural and accepted part of the learning process that can be strategically managed to create a more supportive and effective learning environment. By integrating student-led activities and gradually reducing reliance on code-switching, teachers can leverage this practice as a bridge to greater English proficiency, ultimately empowering students to become more confident and capable communicators.

- **Strategy**

Students also recognized the need to balance code-switching with deliberate practice to improve their English proficiency. They suggested strategies such as limiting code-switching to a "minimal" level, engaging in "more practices like group discussion," and having dedicated classes where they can speak "in English alone".

IV. CONCLUSION

Code-switching is a dynamic and essential communicative strategy for high school students, driven primarily by the need to overcome linguistic, cognitive, and emotional barriers. It highlights that code-switching is a learned and normalized behavior deeply embedded in a student's social and cultural context. This is not merely a choice of convenience but a response to having a "limited vocabulary" and a "lack of knowledge" in a specific language. It is a tool for problem-solving and a means to achieve clarity and comfort in expression, rather than a sign of laziness or a lack of effort.

The practice of code-switching is not an isolated academic behavior but is deeply embedded in students' social and cultural contexts. They rely on it to overcome linguistic limitations, such as a lack of vocabulary or grammatical knowledge. This behavior is a coping mechanism to manage the pressure of public speaking and the fear of being judged by their peers or teachers. Their linguistic habits are shaped by their family background and peer interactions, which they carry into the classroom to foster a sense of group identity and belonging.

Despite its benefits, code-switching presents significant challenges for students, particularly in formal academic settings. They also expressed a self-perceived linguistic deficiency, believing that code-switching is a sign of a shrinking vocabulary. External pressures from institutional "English-only" policies and the fear of negative judgment from peers and teachers create a sense of anxiety and can erode students' self-confidence. This creates a hostile environment where they feel compelled to suppress their natural communication style, leading to fear and a reluctance to speak.

Students possess a sophisticated, dual perspective on code-switching. They desire an environment where the practice is accepted to foster confidence, but they also recognize the importance of intentional and strategic practice to improve their English proficiency. Their recommendations reflect a desire for a balanced pedagogical approach that leverages their bilingual abilities while still providing structured opportunities for language development. They believe it would boost their confidence and make them more comfortable in expressing themselves, but they also recognize the importance of intentional practice to enhance their skills.

The proposed framework provides a comprehensive and dynamic understanding of code-switching as a communicative adaptation driven by a continuous cycle of a student's internal state and external influences. Far from being a random or static behavior, code-switching is a fluid process where students actively manage their cognitive and emotional needs within a specific academic and social context. The framework's central loop illustrates how the act of code-switching itself generates a feedback loop, leading to either positive or negative consequences. These outcomes then directly inform the student's future linguistic decisions, influencing their confidence and strategies for learning. Ultimately, this model highlights that students are not passive users of language; they are metacognitively aware agents who constantly negotiate their linguistic practices in a self-regulating effort to achieve effective communication and long-term language proficiency. The framework thus serves as a valuable tool for educators to recognize and support this complex process, moving beyond simple judgment to create a more supportive and effective learning environment.

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