Abstract: The primary purpose of this study was to determine the perception of the students toward code-switching in an ESL classroom. The respondents were 182 AB-English students enrolled in 2nd semester, school year 2015-2016. This study used descriptive-correlational method to determine the relationship between the respondents’ profile and the students’ perception toward code-switching. Data were collected through the adopted questionnaire from the study of Joanna Tiffany Selamat (2014) in her “Code Switching in the Malaysian ESL Classroom”. The result showed that participants were generally positive towards the use of code-switching in their classes regardless of their profile. Students’ perception toward code-switching has no significant relationship with their gender, however, it has a strong relationship in terms of their ethnic affiliation. Explanations about the findings were discussed in the summary and conclusion. The study recommends the use of code switching during class discussions to better improve language performance of the learners.

1. Introduction

After centuries of British colonization, English became a common denominator among nations across the globe. Eventually, English became the lingua franca for global communication. Due to the colonial history and the events that led to indigenization of English in the Philippines, English dominated in school, work and media.

In addition, Thompson (2003) claims that English is mostly associated by Filipinos with better opportunities for higher education and better employment.

It can be said that nearly all schools choose English as a foreign language, because this language is considered as an international language. In Isabela State University, English is taught as a second language (L2).

We may still hear inside and outside of the class students speaking English, but if there is no other way to say the word in English, the speaker suddenly switches back in his/ her own vernacular which we call as code-switching.

It is stated that the ability of people who are able to enjoy languages perfectly to choose between the languages in their linguistic abilities is called as code switching (Gulzar, 2010). Code switching is one of the ways which is applied in foreign language classrooms. Various studies had shown that code-switching benefited students and teachers (Metila, 2009).

In bilingual classrooms worldwide, using code switching is a frequent practice. Thus, code-switching between Filipino and English as well as the borrowing of English words are born out of necessity. It is an unavoidable alternative used to teach new concepts, to introduce new ideas in curricular subjects where the supposed medium of instruction is English (Durano, 2009).

Through this research, the researcher hopes to make the benefits of code switching in academic settings in Isabela State University more apparent so that bilingual students may be allowed to use this strategy as a learning aid.

2. Statement of the Problem

This study was conducted to determine the students’ perception toward code-switching in an ESL classroom.

Specifically, it was conducted to answer the following:

1. What is the perception of the respondents toward code-switching in English classroom?
2. What relationship exists between the respondents’ gender and ethnicity and their perception toward code-switching?

3. Methodology

The design of the research is descriptive-correlational to determine the relationship between the respondents’ profile and the students’ perception toward code-switching in English classroom.

Out of 335 enrolled students of Bachelor of Arts major in English, there are 182 randomly selected respondents. There are110 students from 1st year but only 60 students were chosen. Among the 2nd year students, there were 137 students, and 75 students were selected. 66 students were in the 3rd year and 34 of them were chosen, and 13 respondents were selected out of the 22 students from 4th year.

The researcher used a standardized questionnaire adapted from Selamat, J. (2014) in...
her study “Code Switching in the Malaysian ESL Classroom” in order to gather data and that suit the study on perception towards code-switching.

The researcher presented the questionnaire with 15 statements that described the perception of the students toward code-switching in English classroom. The respondents were asked to rate each statement using Likert type scale described as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scale</th>
<th>Descriptive Scale</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Never</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Hardly Ever</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Often</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Most of the Time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Every Time</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The total number of respondents needed for the study was determined through Slovin’s formula. Out of 335 students, there were 182 respondents chosen to take part in the study.

The data were computed through the process of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). To determine the relationship of the respondents’ perception to their year level, gender and ethnicity, Chi-square test was used.

All data were computer-processed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS).

Specific statistical treatments were used to describe the following:
1. Frequency counts and percentages were used to describe the respondents’ profile.
2. Weighted mean was utilized to determine the level of respondents’ perception toward code-switching in English classroom.
3. Chi-square was used to determine if there is a relationship between the respondents’ profile and their perception toward code-switching in English classroom.

### 4. Results and Discussion

#### Perception of the Respondents

Table 1. Mean-computed and qualitative description of the perception of the students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perceptions</th>
<th>Mean-computed</th>
<th>Qualitative Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. The use of my first language by the teacher helps me to enjoy the lesson.</td>
<td>3.63</td>
<td>Most of the time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. The use of my first language by the teacher helps me to understand the lesson better.</td>
<td>3.73</td>
<td>Most of the time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. The use of my first language by the teacher makes me feel more confident and motivated in learning English.</td>
<td>3.71</td>
<td>Most of the time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. The use of my first language by the teacher enables me to focus on the lesson without worrying about unfamiliar words and sentences.</td>
<td>3.54</td>
<td>Most of the time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. The use of my first language by the teacher encourages me to actively participate in classroom activities.</td>
<td>3.65</td>
<td>Most of the time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. I would prefer the teacher to use English only during lessons and not to use my first language.</td>
<td>3.60</td>
<td>Most of the time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. I would prefer the teacher to minimize the use of my first language during lessons.</td>
<td>3.51</td>
<td>Most of the time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. I would prefer the teacher to use both English and my first language during lessons.</td>
<td>3.77</td>
<td>Most of the time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. I don’t like it when the teacher uses other languages during English lessons.</td>
<td>2.90</td>
<td>Often</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. I find it difficult to learn when the teacher does not explain new words/topics/concepts in my first language.</td>
<td>3.31</td>
<td>Often</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. I find it difficult to concentrate during English lessons when the teacher uses English only.</td>
<td>3.18</td>
<td>Often</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. I use code switching to help me maintain the flow of conversation.</td>
<td>3.42</td>
<td>Often</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. I use code switching when I communicate</td>
<td>3.52</td>
<td>Most of the time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. I use code switching when I communicate</td>
<td>3.47</td>
<td>Often</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
with my peers who share the same language.
15. I use code switching when explaining difficult words and sentences to my peers.

| Grand Mean | 3.49  | Often |

Table 1 reveals the perception of the students in code-switching. Out of 15 statements, the item “I would prefer the teacher to use both English and my first language during English lessons” topped with a mean of 3.77 and “Most of the time” as its descriptive equivalent. It was followed by the statements ranging 3.51-3.73, respondents said that “Most of the time”, “The use of my first language by the teacher helps me to understand the lesson better”, “The use of my first language by the teacher makes me feel more confident and motivated in learning English.”, “Encourages me to actively participate in classroom activities.”, “Helps me to enjoy the lesson.”, “I would prefer the teacher to use English only during lessons and not to use my first language.”, “The use of my first language by the teacher enables me to focus on the lesson without worrying about unfamiliar words and sentences.”, “I use code-switching to help me maintain the flow of conversation.”, and “I would prefer the teacher to minimize the use of my first language during lessons.”

It is also evident from the above table that some of the statements had descriptive equivalent of “Often”. The following were ranked according to their mean; “I use code switching when explaining difficult words and sentences to my peers.” with a mean of 3.49; “I use code switching when I communicate with my peers who share the same language.” with 3.47 as its mean; “I use code switching when I am unable to express myself in English.” with 3.42; “I find it difficult to learn when the teachers do not explain new words/topics/concepts in my first language.” with 3.31; “I find it difficult to concentrate during English lessons when the teacher uses English only.” with 3.18; and “I don’t like when the teacher uses other languages during English lesson.” with a mean-computed 2.90. The grand mean was found to be 3.49, described as “Often.”

This was in line with the previous research of Selamat (2014), in her study on the Malaysian ESL code-switching inside the classroom. She stated that students believe that teacher code switching is a useful classroom strategy which enhances their language learning experiences. Students perceive several advantages of teacher code switching, which include facilitating students’ comprehension during lessons and providing affective support such as encouraging participation and improving students’ motivation to learn the target language. However, there are inconsistencies in the students’ opinions of code switching and target language use in the classroom. Students either preferred minimal use of the first language or total exclusion of the first language in the ESL classroom.

Code-switching can be enjoyed in the class to assist learners overcome communication issues (Zabrodskaja, 2007). Code-switching can also be used to make a difficult point easier for the learners in EFL classes because the learners are not familiar with all the EFL points. It was recommended that to emphasize and highlight important and key learning points, code switching can be a suitable tool for instruction as learners have difficulties in gaining the notes related to EFL points (Agneta and Ana, 2010).

### Relationship between Respondents’ Gender and Ethnicity and their Perception

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perceptions</th>
<th>Gender x²- comp.</th>
<th>p-value</th>
<th>Ethnicity x²- comp.</th>
<th>p-value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. The use of my first language by the teacher helps me to enjoy the lesson.</td>
<td>4.75**</td>
<td>0.78</td>
<td>1.49**</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. The use of my first language by the teacher helps me to understand the lesson better.</td>
<td>4.80**</td>
<td>0.77</td>
<td>76.94**</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. The use of my first language by the teacher makes me feel more confident and motivated in learning English.</td>
<td>3.93**</td>
<td>0.86</td>
<td>68.66**</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. The use of my first language by the teacher enables me to focus on the</td>
<td>10.99**</td>
<td>0.20</td>
<td>39.70**</td>
<td>0.30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Lesson without worrying about unfamiliar words and sentences.

5. The use of my first language by the teacher encourages me to actively participate in classroom activities.

6. I would prefer the teacher to use English only during lessons and not to use my first language.

7. I would prefer the teacher to minimize the use of my first language during lessons.

8. I would prefer the teacher to use both English and my first language during lessons.

9. I don’t like it when the teacher uses other languages during English lessons.

10. I find it difficult to learn when the teacher does not explain new words/topics/concepts in my first language.

11. I find it difficult to concentrate during English lessons when the teacher uses English only.

12. I use code switching when I am unable to express myself in English.

13. I use code switching to help me maintain the flow of conversation.

14. I use code switching when I communicate with my peers who share the same language.

15. I use code switching when explaining difficult words and sentences to my peers.

Table 3 shows tests on relationship between the respondents’ perception toward code-switching in ESL classroom and their profile in terms of gender, year level, and ethnicity.

As shown in this table, in terms of their gender, one statement was found to be significantly related to their perception. The statement “I use code switching when explaining difficult words and sentences to my peers” was found to have significant relationship as $\chi^2$-computed 17.52 and $P$-value of 0.02.

Perception on the first statement “the use of my first language by the teacher helps me to enjoy the lesson” ($\chi^2$-comp.= 80.70, $P$-value= 0.00) was found to be highly significant with their ethnic affiliation. Another highly significant statements were; “I would prefer the teacher to use both English and my first language during lessons” ($\chi^2$-comp.=79.77, $P$-value=0.00), “The use of my first language by the teacher helps me to understand the lesson better” ($\chi^2$-comp.=76.94, $P$-value=0.00), and “The use of my first language by the teacher makes me feel more confident and motivated in learning English” ($\chi^2$-comp.=68.66, $P$-value=0.00)). The results show that there is a
strong relationship between the perception of the respondents and their ethnic affiliation.

The result reveals, in connection with the study of Valerio (2014), that Filipinos, being a multi-lingual race consider English as their Second Language. However, combining the international language with the vernacular becomes a habitual practice among Filipinos both in rural and urban scenarios. It is commonly used as a marked socio-linguistic activity. Filipino language consists of several dialects being spoken in the different regions of the country. In the Philippine setting, however, to sound more formal and dignified, the use of English both in written and oral communication language becomes a common socio-linguistic practice.

As to UNICEF (2007:77) research shows that “learners learn better in their own mother tongues as a prelude to and complement of bilingual education approaches.” Therefore there should be a way to facilitate the use of learners’ L1 and thereby promoting their identity preservation; a basic human right. The supporters of crosslingual or code-switching strategy like Tikinoff and Vazquez-Farial (1982), Levine (2003), Chen Liping (2004), etc., assert that the use of the L1 enhances the learning process of target language and switching to L1 deserves its right place in foreign language classroom.

Also, Goldstein (2003) found that students simply did not speak, used their L1 quietly, and felt a sense of shame when they were punished for using their own language. Learning another language should add richness to students’ lives; it should not devalue their own language and culture. By allowing L1 use, students would get the sense that learning another language is a positive experience because they can have access to a valuable resource that supports them, and they do not have to feel guilty for doing what comes naturally.

5. Conclusion

The results of the study showed the positive views of the respondents on code-switching as one instructional strategy of learning, the same with the different studies which agreed with the use of the said strategy. The findings indicated that code switching should be allowed for effective communication between students and the instructor in a natural and comfortable way. Code switching can be a good technique to highlight the significance of a specific piece of information and explanation of complex concepts.

Even though many teachers still feel uncertain towards the merits of code-changing in teaching a foreign language, code switching may be considered as a useful technique in classroom interaction, especially if the goal is to clarify and convey the information to students in an efficient way. Program developers and policy makers should bear in mind that in the case of language, first we develop understanding and then we develop the language (Soodeh Hamzehlou Moghadam, Adlina Abdul Samad, & Elham Rahmani Shahraki).

Soodeh Hamzehlou Moghadam et al., also said in the findings of their study “Code Switching as a Medium of Instruction in an EFL Classroom”, while the research regarding code switching seems to indicate that its primary purpose is to communicate more effectively, there is still a need to consider how this language behavior affects students’ learning ability. As what UNESCO (2003) states that, in the end it is the individual schools and classroom teachers who decide what is the appropriate application of language policies in their respective schools and classrooms.

6. Recommendations

To upsurge the performance of the students, especially AB-English, in learning English as a second language, the use of code-switching as a strategy is recommended since the respondents indicated positive views about it. Teachers should allow the students to code-switch in classroom discussion. Code-switching should be used as a vehicle for seeking understanding and effective production of communication and when learners struggle to express themselves in giving answers, teachers should, in any means, use code-switching to clarify concepts and not teach in the mother tongue. Nevertheless, it can support language development if used in the right way. Language teachers should encourage learners to read English books that will equip them to become a good second language speaker any time. It is also recommended to let the students be involved in different seminars, trainings and other venues to expose them more and will eventually lead to their improvement in using a second language.

A further study should be conducted to investigate on how do code-switching works and the function of code-switching in enhancing the second language learner.

7. References


