Code-Switching in the English Classroom: Impact on Grade 11 General Academic Strand (Gas) Students' English Comprehension

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the impact of code-switching on the English comprehension of Grade 11 General Academic Strand (GAS) students at Taal High School, Bocaue, Bulacan. Given the multilingual nature of the Philippines, code-switching is a common instructional strategy, yet its effectiveness remains a topic of debate. The study employed a correlational research design through Spearman's Correlation, utilizing a total population of 30 students to gather data from Grade 11 GAS students. Results indicate that while students perceive benefits from code-switching in facilitating comprehension, statistical analysis reveals a weak and insignificant correlation between the use of code-switching and English academic performance. Moreover, a moderate negative correlation suggests that excessive code-switching may contribute to lower final English grades. These findings highlight the need for balanced language instruction, integrating both English and the native language strategically to optimize comprehension without undermining language proficiency. The study's outcomes have implications for language policies and teaching methodologies in multilingual classrooms.

Keywords: Code-switching, English comprehension, multilingual classrooms, language proficiency, pedagogical strategy, bilingual education, instructional approach, General Academic Strand (GAS), second language acquisition, language policies.

INTRODUCTION

The Philippines has a large population that speaks English as a second language, yet teaching English concepts remains a challenge for many teachers. To improve students' understanding, teachers are using various techniques and approaches, including code-switching, which involves using both English and the students' native language to explain concepts. Code-switching refers to the shifting from one linguistic code (a language or dialect) to another, depending on the social context or conversational setting (Morrison, 2025).

As defined further by Abdelmounaim, & Mohamed, 2024, code-switching is an alternating use of two or more languages or language varieties within a conversation or discourse. In multilingual classrooms, this is common as teachers and students code-switch from their native language and the target language, for most contextual reasons and understanding (Habintwali, Niyibizi, & Kamanzi, 2024). The occurrence of code-switching is more rampant in regions where English is not the mother tongue used for instruction purposes but serves as a bridging language for learning purposes (Hamouda, and Aljumah, 2020).

Code-switching in the English classroom has emerged as a major factor influencing students' comprehension, especially among Grade 11 General Academic Strand (GAS) students. The practice has drawn considerable attention in various educational contexts, asserting both positive and negative impacts on learners' understanding of the English language. Recent studies have explored the implications of code-switching in classroom instruction, particularly concerning its impact on students' understanding of instructional content.

In the Philippine context, where classrooms often comprise students fluent in both Filipino and English, code-switching emerges as a natural and potentially effective pedagogical strategy. The Philippines is a multilingual society where Filipino and English hold the status of being the Philippines' official languages. Filipino, rooted in Tagalog, serves as a native language. Since the Americans colonized the Philippines, English has been the primary medium of instruction in schools and institutions. Since then, teaching of the English language has improved as Filipinos have recognized the need to learn English to engage with Westerners for commercial and

tourism purposes (FutureLearn, 2022). The Philippines' 1987 constitutional mandate and the National Board of Education's 1973 policy on bilingualism led to the implementation of a bilingual education system by the Department of Education, Culture, and Sports (DECS). This system designates Filipino and English as the languages of instruction for specific subjects. Filipino is used for social studies, music, arts, physical education, and character education, while English is used for science, mathematics, and technology, as outlined in DECS Order No. 25. The policy aims to ensure nationwide proficiency in both languages by teaching and using them as mediums of instruction across all educational levels (Espiritu, 2015).

Despite its proper usage in various educational settings, particularly in the Philippines, teachers often code-switch between English and Filipino or other local languages to enhance understanding and teaching effectiveness, particularly in GAS Classrooms. The General Academic Strand (GAS) in the Philippine Senior High School curriculum emphasizes a broad-based education, necessitating strong comprehension skills across various subjects. Integrating code-switching into GAS instruction may provide a scaffold that bridges linguistic gaps, thereby strengthening students' grasp of complex academic concepts.

This study aims to examine the impact of code-switching on the comprehension skills of Grade 11 GAS students in Taal High School, Bocaue, Bulacan. By analyzing the effects of strategic language alternation in instructional settings, the research seeks to determine whether code-switching serves as an effective tool for enhancing students' understanding and retention of academic material. The findings are expected to contribute to the development of informed language policies and teaching methodologies that leverage the linguistic diversity inherent in Filipino classrooms.

Statement of the Problem

The purpose of the study is to determine the impact of code-switching teaching approach on Grade 11 senior high school learners' English comprehension under the strand of General Academic Strand (GAS) in Taal Highschool in Bocaue, Bulacan.

Specifically, the research sought to answer the following questions:

What is the demographic profile of the Grade 11 senior high school learners under the strand of General Academic Strand (GAS) in terms of their:

1.1 age; and

1.2 gender?

What are the impacts of code-switching teaching approach on Grade 11 learners' English comprehension skills considering the following factors/ dimensions:

1.1 Learners' Proficiency in English

1.2 Code-Switching in Teaching

1.3 Impact of Code-Switching on English Comprehension

1.4 Learners' Attitude Toward Code-Switching in Teaching

1.5 Learners' Perceived Benefits of Code-Switching; and

1.6 Impact of Learners' Attitudes on English Comprehension?

Are there significant differences in the levels of English comprehension between students in classrooms where code-switching is frequently used and those where it is minimally used?

How may these factors/ dimensions be remedied?

What plan/ program may be proposed to improve learners' overall comprehension skills and language proficiency.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The researchers made use of the correlation as statistical method to investigate the impact of code-switching teaching approaches on the English comprehension skills of Grade 11 senior high school learners under the General Academic Strand (GAS). This methodology was adopted to comprehensively examine how the independent variables (code-switching teaching approach) influence the dependent variables (English comprehension).

In Statistical Methods for Psychology (2013), David C. Howell provides a detailed explanation of correlation, emphasizing its theoretical foundations and practical applications in psychology research. He describes correlation as a statistical technique used to measure and evaluate the strength and direction of the relationship between two continuous variables.

Population/ Subject of the Study

The study used total population sampling to collect data. Total sampling typically refers to a sampling method in research where the entire population of interest is included in the study, rather than selecting a subset of participants. It is often used in cases where the population is small, and researchers want to gather data on every individual in that population. Total sampling is particularly useful when the study seeks comprehensive information and aims to avoid sampling errors that might arise from excluding members of the population.

The respondents of the study were Grade 11 Senior High School learners. The questionnaires were distributed in General Academic Strand (GAS) division of the Senior High School Department in Taal High School, Bocaue, Bulacan. The respondents were chosen based on a total population of 30 students. The researchers chose the Grade 11 General Academic Strand (GAS) as the subject of the study to have an in-depth understanding of the impact of code-switching teaching approach in the English comprehension of the learners. In addition, in line with the researchers' profession, this will greatly impact the researchers' approach in teaching.

Data Collection Procedure

The researchers sought the permission of the school principal and advisory teacher of the Grade 11 General Academic Strand (GAS) in Taal High School from which the study was conducted before administering the questionnaire to the respondents of the study.

Upon approval, the researchers asked for a schedule in administering questionnaires and in gathering information which is convenient to the school and to the respondents in a way that would not disrupt classes and other related activities of the school and the students.

The researchers provided verbal instructions and explanations to the students as the researchers facilitated the answering of the questionnaires. Additionally, the researchers also provided the rationale of the study. A period of a week has been devoted by the researchers to gather all the needed data for the analyzation of the study. After retrieval of the questionnaires, the researchers processed the collected information for an in-depth analysis and interpretation of the data.

All relevant data were kept confidential and used exclusively for survey purposes. As the respondents were students, their data were kept private and secured through the use of codes to protect their identity.

Data Processing and Statistical Treatment

This research initially planned to use Pearson's Correlation Coefficient, a parametric statistical test, to analyze the relationship between variables. However, after examining the data, it was determined that the data did not

meet the assumptions required for Pearson's correlation. Specifically, because the data was collected using a Likert scale, it is considered ordinal rather than interval and likely violates the assumption of normality. Therefore, a non-parametric approach was chosen as the statistical method instead. Spearman's correlation is specifically designed for ordinal data or data that does not meet the normality assumption, as it relies on the ranks of the data rather than the actual values. This makes it a more suitable choice for the Likert scale data, which are inherently ordinal, representing ordered categories rather than precise numerical quantities.

Using Spearman's correlation allows for a more accurate and reliable analysis of the relationship between variables in question, given the nature of the data collected. To facilitate a meaningful interpretation of respondents' perspectives and experiences on the code-switching teaching approach and its impact on their English comprehension, mean scores for each statement were categorized into predefined ranges as follows:

3.50 – 4.50 Strongly Agree

2.50 – 3.49 Agree

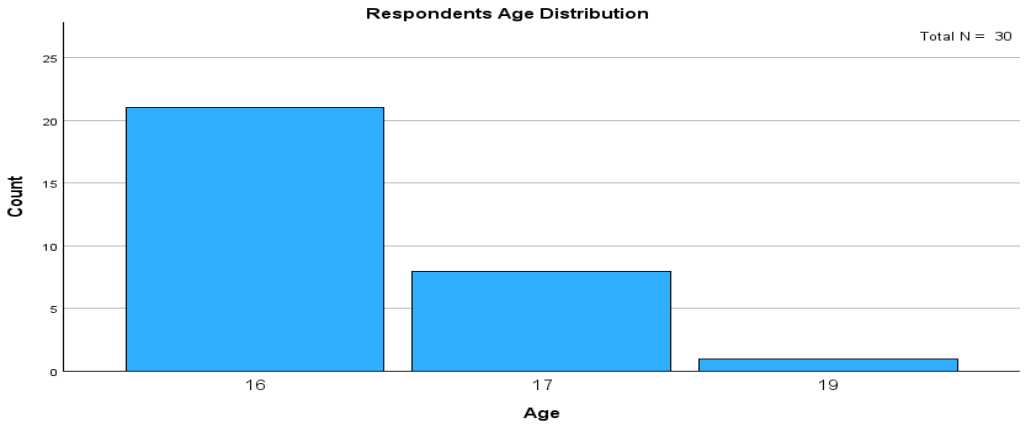
1.50 – 2.49 Disagree

0.00 – 1.49 Strongly Disagree

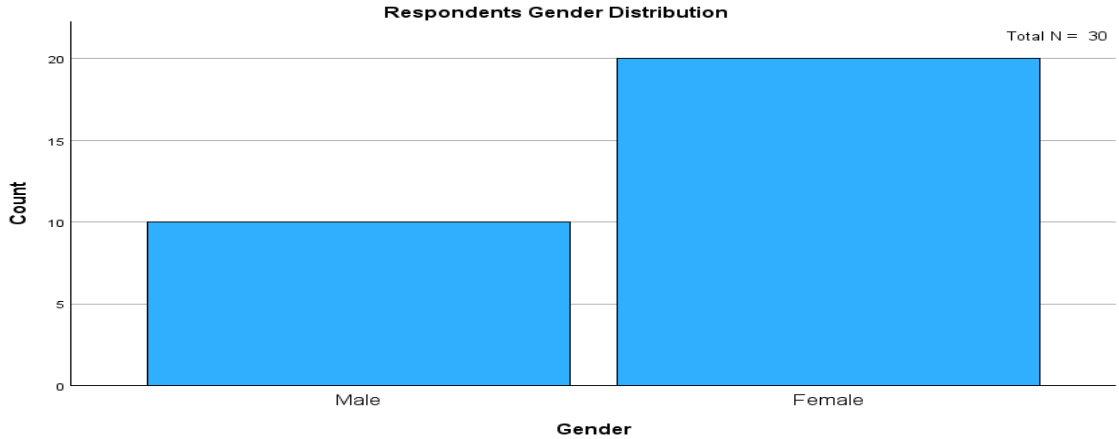
RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

On the Demographic Profile of the Respondents

This section describes the demography of the respondents in terms of their age and gender.



The profile of the Grade 11 General Academic Strand (GAS) students in Taal High School Bocaue, Bulacan regarding their age distribution ranged from 16 years old (70%), 17 years old (27%), and 19 years old (3%). The data revealed that most of the respondents are in the 16-year-old range.



The figure showed the gender demographic of Grade 11 General Academic Strand (GAS) students in Taal High School Bocaue, Bulacan. The total number of male respondents is 33%, while the number of female respondents is 67%. The data showed that there are more female respondents compared to male respondents in terms of their gender.

On the Dimension of Code-Switching Teaching Approach

Table 1 Dimension of Code-Switching Teaching Approach: Learners' Proficiency in English

Variable	**N**	**Mean**	**Std. Deviation**	**Range**
English Final Remark	30	87.7673	2.87640	10.33
Learner Proficiency in English	30	3.0933	.49196	2.20

	English Final Remark	**Learner Proficiency in English**
Spearman's rho	1.000	.001
Sig. (2-tailed)		.997
N	30	30

As shown in Table 1, the mean score of 3.0933 (SD = .49196) on the learners' proficiency in English scale suggest that, on average, learners tend to agree slightly with their self-assessed English proficiency. However, the agreement is not strongly pronounced, as the mean is not highly skewed 'strongly agree' (4). The standard deviation of .49196 suggested that most learners' self-perceptions are clustered around this slightly positive average, with relatively consistent responses.

The spearman's rank-order correlation between learner proficiency in English and final English grades was very weak and positive (rs = .001). However, this correlation was not statistically significant (p = .997). The results indicate no meaningful association between how students responded on the Likert scale measuring their English proficiency and their Final English grades. In other words, students' self-reported proficiency (via the Likert scale) does not appear to be related to their performance in the English course.

Table 2 Dimension of Code-Switching Teaching Approach: Code-Switching in Teaching

Variable	**N**	**Mean**	**Std. Deviation**	**Range**
English Final Remark	30	87.7673	2.87640	10.33
Code-Switching in Teaching	30	3.1067	.60283	2.40

	English Final Remark	**Code-Switching in Teaching**
Spearman's rho	1.000	-.413
Sig. (2-tailed)		.023
N	30	30

As shown in table 2, the mean score of 3.1067 (SD = .60283) on the code-switching in teaching scale suggests that, on average, learners tend to agree that their teachers use code-switching in their teaching practices.

However, the agreement is not strongly pronounced, as the mean is not highly skewed towards 'strongly agree' (4). The standard deviation of .60283 indicates a moderate amount of variability in responses, suggesting a mix of opinions regarding code-switching in teaching.

Spearman's rho correlation coefficient is at -.413 which indicates moderate negative relationship between English Final Remark and Code-Switching in Teaching. As code-switching in teaching (as measured by Likert scale) increases, final English grades tend to decrease. The p-value of 0.023 is less than .05, this shows that the correlation is statistically significant. The negative correlation as the key finding suggests that teachers who are perceived (or who perceive themselves) as using more code-switching tend to have students with lower Final English grades. However, this does not prove that code-switching causes lower grades.

Table 3 Dimension of Code-Switching Teaching Approach: Impact of Code-Switching on English Comprehension

Variable	**N**	**Mean**	**Std. Deviation**	**Range**
English Final Remark	30	87.7673	2.87640	10.33
Impact of Code-Switching on English Comprehension	30	3.1400	.55869	2.00

	English Final Remark	**Impact of Code-Switching on English Comprehension**
Spearman's rho	1.000	0.90
Sig. (2-tailed)		.636
N	30	30

As shown in table 3, the mean score of 3.1400 (SD = 0.55869) on the impact of code-switching on English comprehension scale suggests that, on average, learners tend to agree slightly that code-switching has a positive impact on their English comprehension. However, the agreement is not strongly pronounced, as the mean is not highly skewed towards 'strongly agree' (4). The standard deviation of .55869 indicates a moderate amount of variability in responses, suggesting a mix of opinions on the perceived impact of code-switching.

Spearman's rho correlation coefficient shows a very weak, positive correlation between perceived impact of code-switching and final English grades (rs = .090). As perceived positive impact increases, final English grades tend to increase slightly, but the relationship is very weak. However, this correlation was not statistically significant. The results indicate a negligible relationship between students perceived impact of code-switching on their English comprehension and their final English grades. The correlation of .090 suggests that the two variables are essentially unrelated. The lack of statistical significance (p = .636) further supports this conclusion.

Table 4 Dimension of Code-Switching Teaching Approach: Learners' Attitude Toward Code-Switching in Teaching

Variable	**N**	**Mean**	**Std. Deviation**	**Range**
English Final Remark	30	87.7673	2.87640	10.33
Learners' Attitude Toward Code-Switching in Teaching	30	3.0933	.49196	2.20

	English Final Remark	**Learners' Attitude Toward Code-Switching in Teaching**
Spearman's rho	1.000	-.208

Sig. (2-tailed)		.269
N	30	30

As shown in table 4, the mean score of 3.0933 (SD = 0.49196) on the learners' attitude toward code-switching in teaching scale suggests that, on average, learners tend to have a slight positive attitude toward code-switching in teaching. However, the agreement is not strongly pronounced, as the mean is not highly skewed towards 'strongly agree' (4). The relatively low standard deviation suggests that most learners' attitudes are clustered around this slightly positive average, with less diverse opinions.

Spearman's rho correlation coefficient is at -.208 which indicates a weak negative relationship between learners' attitude towards code-switching and their final English grades. As more positive attitudes towards code-switching (as measured by Likert scale) increase, final English grades tend to decrease slightly. Moreover, the p-value of .269 shows much greater than the conventional threshold of 0.05. This means the correlation is not statistically significant. It's very likely that the weak negative relationship observed is due to chance.

Table 5 Dimension of Code-Switching Teaching Approach: Learners' Perceived Benefits of Code-Switching

Variable	**N**	**Mean**	**Std. Deviation**	**Range**
English Final Remark	30	87.7673	2.87640	10.33
Learners' Perceived Benefits of Code-Switching	30	3.1133	.55007	2.20

	English Final Remark	**Learners' Perceived Benefits of Code-Switching**
Spearman's rho	1.000	-.045
Sig. (2-tailed)		.812
N	30	30

As shown in table 5, the mean score of 3.1133 (SD = 0.55007) on the learners perceived benefits of code-switching scale indicates that, on average, learners tend to agree that there are benefits to code-switching. However, the agreement is not strongly pronounced, as the mean is not highly skewed towards 'strongly agree' (4). The relatively low standard deviation suggests that most learners' perceptions are clustered around this slightly positive average, with less diverse opinions.

Spearman's rho correlation coefficient is at -.045 which indicates a very weak, negative relationship between learners perceived benefits of code-switching and their final English grades. As students perceive more benefits from code-switching, their final grades tend to decrease slightly. Moreover, the p-value of .812 is much greater than 0.05. This means the correlation is not statistically significant. The weak negative relationship observed is very likely due to chance.

Table 6 Dimension of Code-Switching Teaching Approach: Impact of Learners' Attitudes on English Comprehension

Variable	**N**	**Mean**	**Std. Deviation**	**Range**
English Final Remark	30	87.7673	2.87640	10.33
Impact of Learners' Attitudes on English Comprehension	30	3.0867	.59581	2.40

	English Final Remark	Impact of Learners' Attitudes on English Comprehension
Spearman's rho	1.000	-.039
Sig. (2-tailed)		.839
N	30	30

As shown in table 6, the mean score of 3.0867 (SD = .59581) on the impact of learners' attitude on English comprehension scale suggests that, on average, learners tend to agree that their attitudes positively influence their English comprehension. However, the agreement is not highly skewed towards 'strongly agree' (4). The standard deviation of .59581 indicates a moderate amount of variability in responses, suggesting a mix of opinions on the perceived impact of attitudes.

Spearman's rho correlation coefficient is at -.039 which indicates a very weak, negative relationship between the impact of learner' attitude on English comprehension and their final English grades. As more positive attitudes toward code-switching increase, final English grades tend to decrease slightly. Moreover, the p-value of .839 is much greater than 0.05. This means the correlation is not statistically significant. The weak negative relationship observed is very likely due to chance.

CONCLUSIONS

The findings of this study indicate that while code-switching is an effective strategy for bridging linguistic gaps and enhancing student comprehension, its overuse may negatively impact English language proficiency. The study revealed that students generally acknowledge the benefits of code-switching in making lessons more accessible. However, statistical analysis suggests that heavy reliance on this practice correlates with lower English academic performance. This suggests that while code-switching can serve as a useful pedagogical tool, it should not entirely replace English immersion in language instruction. Instead, educators should be cautious in using code-switching, ensuring that it supplements rather than substitutes direct English instruction.

Furthermore, the research highlights the importance of striking a balance between native language use and English proficiency development. The weak correlation between students' self-assessed English proficiency and their final English grades underscore the need for more objective assessment methods. These findings suggest that strategic use of code-switching, in conjunction with comprehensive language exposure, may provide optimal learning outcomes. To enhance students' English comprehension while maintaining the benefits of code-switching, educational institutions should integrate structured approaches that gradually transition students toward greater English proficiency.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the discoveries about the impact of code-switching on the English comprehension of Grade 11 General Academic Strand (GAS) students at Taal High School, it is highly recommended, developed, tested, piloted, and evaluated to execute the following:

1. **Strategic Use of Code-Switching** – Teachers should use code-switching selectively to explain difficult concepts but encourage students to engage in English-dominant discourse to build their language proficiency.

2. **Enhanced Teacher Training** – Professional development programs should focus on equipping teachers with strategies for integrating code-switching without compromising English proficiency.

3. **Curriculum Development** – Educational policymakers should consider refining the English curriculum to include structured guidelines on the appropriate use of code-switching in language instruction.

4. **Student Exposure to English** – Schools should implement supplementary programs such as English immersion activities, debates, and reading programs to enhance students' comprehension and fluency.

5. **Further Research** – Future studies should explore the long-term effects of code-switching on English proficiency across different grade levels and subject areas, using larger sample sizes and experimental research designs.

By implementing these recommendations, educators can maximize the benefits of code-switching while ensuring the development of strong English language skills among students.

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