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Research Article

Code Switching and Academic Performance Among Students

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to determine the extent of code-switching utilization among the respondents in teaching English, Science, and Mathematics, as well as its association with the academic performance of the students. Thirty-nine (39) senior high school teachers agreed to serve as respondents of the study after meeting the requirements. Research protocols of DepEd-Camiguin were religiously observed in gathering the required data. Appropriate statistical tools were used to produce reliable results and sound insights. The descriptive statistics showed that females dominated in the teaching profile with a balanced distribution across age groups and experience levels. Analysis further revealed that the respondents had maintained a consistent, very high utilization of code-switching as a deliberate and strategic instructional tool. The students' academic performance was noted as being distributed between "Very Satisfactory" and "Outstanding" levels. The study found no significant relationship between code-switching and academic outcomes. This indicates that, as code-switching helped students to learn, this pedagogical approach does serve as a good predictor of the academic performance of the students. The study also found that respondents' utilization of code-switching did vary significantly when grouped by sex, age, educational attainment, or years of teaching experience. It can be concluded then that the utilization of code-switching has become a routine among the respondents in the delivery of the lessons to the students. Banking on the findings, future researchers are encouraged to consider the mediation effect of code-switching in breaking the learning barriers and gaps towards comprehending the concepts and ideas in the core learning areas in the Philippine basic education.

Keywords: *Academic Performance, Code-switching, Senior High School Teachers*

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Background of the Study

The quest for educational excellence is aligned to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4, which requires that all learners achieve functional literacy and numeracy by 2030. To achieve this, there is a need to remove linguistic barriers that might have hindered equitable and inclusive education. In the Philippines, the transition from the mother tongue to English as the primary medium of instruction continues to pose a "comprehension crisis." Recent studies revealed that Filipino learners often face a "linguistic cognitive load," which is evident in the struggle of learners to decode or understand English words, inhibiting them from comprehending the message (Reyes & Arzadon, 2024).

To address these challenges, educators resorted to pedagogical code-switching, that is, the use of the vernacular language in understanding English. Others viewed this approach as a sign of linguistic deficiency; however, recent studies confirmed from high-indexed journals the effect of translanguaging practices in understanding the primary medium in the school. Madrunio (2023) theorized that code-switching in Philippine classrooms serves as a scaffold to understand meaning, giving students the opportunity to decode and get the meaning from the given words or passage. This is a relevant approach, particularly in rural areas where exposure or interaction using the English language seldom happens outside the school.

Moreover, code-switching has been observed to have increased student engagement and reduced "affective filters." Tupas and Martin (2022) discovered that code-switching offers a "psychologically safe environment" when teachers use it for clarity of instruction, and encourage non-native speakers of English to participate in discussions without being ridiculed by others. Due to this conducive learning environment, the confidence of the students gets high, which may likely contribute to the positive correlation of improved retention rates of learning complex subjects like Science and Mathematics. Through this, the students experienced a deeper understanding and mastery of concepts in the said learning areas (Lumabi & Castillo, 2021).

Regardless of the common practice of teachers in code-switching, its impact has been the target of intense inquiry in terms of the academic achievement of students. Although code-switching has greatly contributed to the comprehension of the students, its effect on the standardized assessment outcomes and student retention requires empirical validation. For this reason, the study aims to investigate the role of code-switching in the improvement of the academic performance of the senior high school students in select schools of DepEd-Camiguin in Northern Mindanao, Philippines.

Methods

The researcher utilized a quantitative descriptive research design. Creswell and Guetterman (2019) confirmed that this is an appropriate approach to provide a statistical picture of a specific phenomenon, particularly, the utilization of code-switching in the delivery of the lessons to the senior high school students.

Survey questionnaire was used to gather the required data. Informal interview with selected respondents was conducted to merely validate the responses contained in the research instrument. This process allowed the researcher to clarify ambiguous responses, confirm the authenticity of the questionnaire results, and minimize potential self-reporting bias, thereby strengthening the overall validity and contextual depth of the findings (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Saunders et al., 2019).

The researcher conducted the survey within the Division of Camiguin, specifically, the Mahinog Districts 1 and 2, and Mambajao Districts 1, 2, and 3. For having utilized code-switching in the delivery of the lesson, thirty-nine (39) senior high school teachers handling English, Science, and Mathematics agreed to act as respondents of the study. These respondents were chosen purposively since there were limited number of teachers handling the core learning areas, and the filtering requirement of at least one year of teaching experience. Accordingly, this approach is suitable when the population size is small and manageable, as it eliminates sampling error and provides a complete representation of the target group (Israel, 2013).

Data were collected using an adapted survey questionnaire divided into two segments: demographic profiling and the assessment of code-switching utilization among the respondents. Content validity of the research instrument was conducted using five (5) expert validators. Furthermore, the instrument's reliability was established through a pilot test, yielding a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.80. According to Taber (2018), an alpha of 0.80 is considered "good" or "robust," indicating that the Likert scale items are internally consistent and reliable for academic research.

Prior to the implementation of this inquiry, the researcher secured the approval of the Office of the Schools Division Superintendent. When the request was granted, the approved

letter request was relayed to the District Supervisors and School Principals for their guidance and cooperation. The researcher adhered to the ethical protocols in accordance with the Data Privacy Act of 2012 (RA 10173). All participants were provided informed consent, and their identities were masked using numerical coding to ensure anonymity. Participation was purely voluntary, with respondents retaining the right to withdraw at any stage without prejudice.

The extent of code-switching was measured using a 5-point Likert scale (Likert, 1932). This is shown in Table 1, in which the numerical and descriptive equivalents are also provided for easy understanding.

Table 1. Scoring Values Using Likert Scale on Utilization of Code Switching in Academic Performance among Students

Arbitrary Value	Range	Qualitative Description	Interpretation
5	4.21 - 5.00	Very High Extent	The teacher consistently uses code-switching as a deliberate instructional tool in teaching English, Science, and Mathematics, the core learning areas.
4	3.41 - 4.20	High Extent	Code-switching is frequently employed by the teacher, though not in every structural lesson phase.
3	2.61 - 3.40	Moderate Extent	The teacher occasionally uses code-switching to clarify challenging segments but relies mostly on English.
2	1.81 - 2.60	Less Extent	The teacher seldom uses code-switching, prioritizing English-only delivery with minor native supports.
1	1.00 - 1.80	No Extent	The teacher refrains from code-switching in teaching the core learning areas.

Similarly, DepEd Order No. 8, s. 2015, which provides the standard classroom assessment guidelines for the K-12 Basic Education Program, was used to describe the academic performance of the students. The ratings of the respondents' students in the third quarter of

school year 2025-2026 served as the outcome variable of the inquiry. In using the Order, the average of the ratings of the students per respondent in the core learning area (Science, English, and Mathematics) was utilized in the study.

Table 2. Guide in Appreciating the Academic Performance of the Students

Description	Rating Interval
Outstanding	90-100
Very Satisfactory	85-89
Satisfactory	80-84

Description	Rating Interval
Fairly Satisfactory	75-79
Not Meet Expectation	Below 75

Jamovi statistical software was utilized in analyzing the quantitative data. For descriptive statistics, counts and percentages were used in profiling the respondents, while means and standard deviations were utilized in determining the academic performance of the senior high school students and the extent of code-switching utilization in the classroom. For a significant relationship, the Spearman rho correlation coefficient was applied due to the non-normality of distributions in one variable. While one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was employed to test significant differences for the groupings of respondents in terms of age and years of teaching experience, the Kruskal-Wallis test was applied to test significant differences of the respondents' groupings in terms of sex and highest educational attainment. The

normality of the distribution of data was given due consideration in choosing the appropriate statistical tool (Field, 2013).

Results and Discussions

To have a deeper understanding of the inquiry, the results of the analysis, and their corresponding interpretation are shown for comprehensive understanding to all interested parties.

Demographic Profile of the Respondents

Thirty-nine (39) teachers from the Mahinog and Mambajao districts served as respondents of the study. The respondents provided information about their sex, age, highest educational attainment, field of specialization, and years of teaching experience, as shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Demographic Profile of the Respondents

Variables	Counts	Percentage
Sex		
Female	26	66.67
Male	13	33.33
Total	39	100.00
Age		
18-35 (Young Adult)	12	30.77
36-45 (Early Middle-Aged Adult)	15	38.46
46-60 (Late Middle-Age Adult)	12	30.77
Total	39	100.00
Highest Educational Attainment		
Bachelor's Degree	12	30.77
With Units in Master's Degree	14	35.90
Master's Degree Grad	7	17.95
With Doctorate Units	6	15.38
Total	39	100.00
Field of Specialization		
English	15	38.46
Math	9	23.08
Science	15	38.46
Total	39	100.00
Years of Teaching Experience		
1 year	8	20.51
2 to 5 years	8	20.51
6 to 10 years	9	23.08

Variables	Counts	Percentage
11 to 15 years	6	15.38
16 years and above	8	20.51
Total	39	100.00

As to Sex

Table 3 revealed that 26 (66.67%) of the respondents were females, and only 13 (33.33%) were males. This distribution agreed to the so-called long-standing “feminization” of the teaching profession in the Philippines. This is consistent with the reports provided by the Department of Education (DepEd) Statistics. Accordingly, the majority of the teaching force in both elementary and secondary public schools is dominated by women. Barredo (2022) confirmed that female teachers are more likely to exhibit a more “nurturing” linguistic approach to the point of using code-switching to help students learn. Through the linguistic approach, students’ “affective filter” is reduced during difficult English lessons.

As to the Age

The age groups of the respondents suggested that there is a balanced representation across the professional lifespan. As shown, 15 (38.46%) of the respondents belonged to the middle-aged group (36-45 years old), followed by the equal distribution of 12 (30.77%) respondents from the young adults (18-35 years old) and middle-aged adults (46-60 years old).

This distribution suggested a healthy mix of “Digital Natives” and “Veteran Educators.” **Madrunio (2023)**, younger teachers can spontaneously use “Taglish” or “Bislish” in the classroom due to their exposure to social media linguistics. However, older teachers tend to use code-switching as a formal scaffolding tool to ensure conceptual accuracy in Science and Math.

As to Highest Educational Attainment

The respondents exhibited strong commitment to professional growth, with 27 (69.23%) of the respondents already earned at least a Master’s degree. Of this count, 6 (15.38%) got units in the Doctorate program. However, 12 (30.77%) of them remain at the Bachelor’s degree level. This indicates that the respondents have the inclination to learn more and achieve

professional growth. This is supported in the study of Vergara (2025), which found that teachers who pursue advanced academic training showed more linguistic awareness in the medium of instruction, meaning they seldom code-switch out of a lack of English proficiency, but as a deliberate move to ensure inclusive learning.

As to the Field of Specialization

The distribution of the respondents was evenly split between English and Science, with 15 (38.46%) in each group. While Mathematics got only 9 (23.08%) respondents. This distribution showed that more teachers handled English and Science subjects in the schools. It is also a known fact that there is high utilization of code-switching in these learning areas. However, this code-switching has become a necessity in Science and Mathematics in bridging towards understanding complex concepts. The study of Lumabi and Castillo (2021) confirmed that Science teachers in the Philippine public schools heavily rely on code-switching to translate “jargon-heavy” concepts into the learners’ mother tongue to make sure students’ engagement in the subject matter.

As to Years of Teaching Experience

The distribution of the respondents in terms of the number of years of teaching experience seems is equal. There was equal number of 8 (20.51% respondents of those with one year of teaching experience (novice), 2 to 5 years of teaching experience, and 16 or more years of teaching experience. The remaining 15 (38.46%) were distributed in a span of 6 to 15 years of teaching experience. This indicates that the respondents, as a whole, composed a normal distribution in terms of teaching experience. This can help explain the extent of the utilization of code-switching in the delivery of the lessons in the class. Rillera et al. (2024) discovered in their study that novice teachers used code-switching for classroom management and survival. While those experienced or

veteran teachers used code-switching to bridge the gap between the curriculum English requirements and the students' sociocultural realities.

Extent of the Utilization of Code-Switching Among Teachers

Eleven indicators were used to measure the extent of code-switching among the respondents in teaching Science, English, and Mathematics subjects, the core learning areas in the Philippine basic education. Table 4 shows that

the respondents had a "Very High Extent" of utilization of code-switching with an overall mean of 4.41. The standard deviation (SD=0.76) also suggested that the respondents had a similar perception of using this pedagogical linguistic approach (code-switching) in the management and delivery of the lessons to the class. In other words, code-switching was deliberately utilized as a strategic instructional tool to navigate the linguistic complexities of the learning areas.

Table 4. Extent of the Utilization of Code Switching Among Teachers

Indicators	Mean	SD	Descriptor
I switch to the mother tongue when students struggle with key concepts.	4.64	0.67	Very High Extent
I adjust my use of code switching based on students' language ability and comprehension.	4.64	0.49	Very High Extent
I use code switching to clarify instructions and support student understanding.	4.56	0.72	Very High Extent
Code switching fosters an inclusive and supportive environment for diverse learners.	4.54	0.68	Very High Extent
I plan and use code switching strategically to support learning and smooth classroom transitions.	4.46	0.68	Very High Extent
I respond to student requests for clarification in their native language via code switching.	4.44	0.75	Very High Extent
Students show better academic performance through enhanced participation and understanding when code switching is used.	4.41	0.75	Very High Extent
Code switching reduces anxiety and boosts confidence, especially for learners struggling with English.	4.38	0.78	Very High Extent
Code switching scaffolds students' gradual development of English proficiency.	4.31	0.77	Very High Extent
It connects prior knowledge to new content, improving comprehension and retention.	4.23	0.87	Very High Extent
I encourage students to use code switching to express ideas and participate actively.	3.95	0.89	High Extent
Overall Mean	4.41	0.76	Very High Extent

On top of the indicators, teachers used code-switching when students struggled ($M = 4.64$), and adjusted outright based on the students' ability ($M = 4.64$) thereby highlighting the teachers' role as linguistic mediators. This implies that the teacher deviated from the "English-only" policy in the classroom due to the intent of making the students feel-valued and become active participants in the discussion. Madrid et al. (2024) supported this

finding in their study, which found that teachers should always be observant about the learning struggles of the students for outright adjustments in making sure they understand the lesson. This makes the learning process a learner-centered instruction through code-switching or translanguaging.

Moreover, code-switching helps to clarify instructions ($M = 4.56$) and thereby ensures that students can follow or perform classroom

tasks without the added cognitive burden of decoding complex English directives. Torres (2023) agreed that the code-switching strategy is necessary in content-heavy subjects like Science and Math, in which the failure to understand a single instruction can lead to misunderstanding the entire concept.

Respondents showed a “Very High” utilization of code-switching to foster an inclusive environment ($M = 4.54$) and reduce anxiety ($M = 4.38$) among the students. In the basic education of the Philippines, students feared participating in class discussions due to the anxiety of committing grammatical errors. For this, the teachers should have an idea about the linguistic background of the students to lower the students’ “Affective filter.” This was validated in the study of Rosario (2023), which argued that linguistic validation is important in fostering inclusivity in multilingual classrooms. While Peralta (2020) confirmed that students’ motivation and confidence likely increase if their native language is respected by others.

Understandably, the respondents rated the indicator about encouraging students to use code-switching ($M = 3.95$) with a “High Extent” rating. This implies that the teachers used code-switching, not because of a lack of English proficiency, but to bridge the comprehension gap and provide students to clearly understand the context. Sanchez et al. (2024) considered this as the “Balanced Bilingualism” theory. This requires that code-switching serves as a scaffolding in learning English.

Finally, the second indicator from the bottom rated at “Very High” utilization ($M = 4.23$) confirmed that respondents used code-switching to connect prior knowledge to new contents, a confirmation that the linguistic

approach serves as a cognitive tool. By translating English terms to Bisaya or the vernacular language of the students, this helps students easily remember the meaning, thereby improving memory retention. This finding is aligned with the study of Borlongan (2018), which posited that the unlocking of difficulties through the common language of the students is effective in connecting new ideas and information.

Level of Academic Performance of the Students

This study used the ratings of the respondents’ students in school year 2024-2025 as a measure of academic performance, the outcome variable of the study. DepEd Order No. 8, s. 2015 (the updated reference for the K-12 grading system) was utilized to categorize the achievement levels of the students.

Table 5 shows that the majority of the students (30, 77%) achieved “Very Satisfactory” performance, while the rest reached the “Outstanding” performance. The students’ ratings were converging at the top-two performing levels. It followed then that the overall mean of 88.2 (SD = 2.39) places the general academic performance at a “Very Satisfactory” level. Moreover, the low standard deviation (SD = 2.39) suggested that the majority of the ratings were concentrated between 85 to 91, covering the top-two performance levels. This indicates no achievement gap among the students of the respondents. This further suggested that the students were a homogeneous, high-achieving cohort for having reached beyond the passing threshold. They may not need immediate intervention, or the very high extent of code-switching utilization.

Table 5. Academic Performance of the Students of the Respondents

Grading Scale	Counts	Percentage	Descriptor
90 - 100	9	23	Outstanding
85 - 89	30	77	Very Satisfactory
Mean = 88.2, SD = 2.39			Very Satisfactory

Pending further analysis, this achievement might have been the effect of the code-switching employed by the teachers in the class. Lumabi and Castillo (2021) revealed that Filipino students in rural areas tend to perform

better than their counterparts in urban areas when teachers have very high utilization of translanguaging or code-switching. This pedagogical linguistic approach as a scaffold-

ing, helps the students to maximize their cognitive resources for problem-solving and critical thinking rather than exhausting it in language translation.

Madrurnio (2023) posited that the high achievements of students in classroom-based assessments mirror a "psychologically safe" learning environment. Meaning, students were encouraged to speak their ideas after having comprehended the context through translanguaging, thereby leading to higher participation and better grades.

However, these local findings contradicted the results of international large-scale assessments. While the students of the respondents achieved a mean of 88.2, the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) 2022 and subsequent reports from DepEd (2024) indicate that Filipino students generally struggle

to meet proficiency levels in Reading, Science, and Mathematics on a global scale.

Metila et al. (2021) regarded this as the "grade inflation vs. global proficiency gap" among students at the global level. They suggested that classroom-based achievements naturally happened since teachers cater to the linguistic needs of the students. Besides, the medium of examination is strictly implemented during the test, unlike in the local setting, where a bilingual approach may potentially happen to facilitate the test-takers.

Relationship Between the Utilization of Code-Switching and Academic Performance

The association of the variables was noted in order to find out the effectiveness of the intervention to improve the academic performance of the students.

Table 6. Relationship Between the Extent of Utilization of Code Switching Among Respondents and the Academic Performance of the Student

Variables	r_s	df	p-value	Decision
Utilization of Code-Switching vs Academic Performance	-0.144	37	.381	Failed to Reject H_0

Note. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

Since the data were found not to be normally distributed using the Shapiro-Wilk test, the Spearman rho correlation coefficient was used to determine the association of the variables involved in the inquiry. Table 6 portrays that there was no significant relationship between the extent of code-switching utilization and students' academic performance ($r_s(37) = -0.144, p = .381$). In addition, there is a very weak relationship with a negative direction. This implies the failure to reject the null hypothesis at a 0.05 significance level. The negative sign of the directional coefficient formally indicates that higher frequencies of language swapping do not automatically translate to upward linear shifts in student grades; instead, it hints that excessive or unstructured reliance on code-switching might show a slight downward trend in numerical marks.

This finding is consistent with the local study of Villarazo and Nemenzo (2024) in Eastern Samar, which noted that while code-switching enhances classroom participation

and comprehension, it does not significantly predict academic achievement. Similarly, Lacay and Abamo (2025) observed in Ozamiz City that despite student appreciation for bilingual support in Mathematics, the correlation with actual grades remained insignificant. These results, supported by Amparo and Samson (2022), also imply that code-switching functions as a process-oriented tool for scaffolding and reducing anxiety, but final academic outcomes are more heavily influenced by other variables such as instructional quality, student motivation, and the nature of standardized assessments, which are typically conducted in English.

Significant Differences in the Utilization of Code-Switching by Demographic Profile

This study also determined the possibility that the utilization of code-switching may vary as influenced by some of the demographic variables of the respondents, as shown in Table 7.

As to Age and Years in Teaching Experience

Table 7. Test of Significant Difference in the Extent of Code-Switching Utilization by Age and Years of Teaching Experience of the Respondents

Variables	F	df1	df2	p
Age	2.62	2	36	.087
Years in Teaching Experience	1.47	4	34	.232

The respondents' age and years of teaching experience were found to be normally distributed, as shown by the Shapiro-Wilk test using Jamovi. Therefore, a one-way ANOVA was employed to determine if there were significant differences in responses. The results indicate no significant difference in code-switching utilization based on age or teaching experience. This suggests that code-switching practices were consistent across all groups, supporting the finding of a "Very High Extent" of code-switching utilization among respondents.

Consistent with the very high utilization of code-switching among the respondents, the study of Abad et al. (2020) supported the present finding that most of the teachers employed translanguaging as a tool lessen the anxiety of the students. Similarly, Limos et al. (2021) also observed that teachers from different schools and cohorts utilized the vernacular language to bridge learning gaps and improve the participation of the students in the class discussion.

Additionally, Bernardo (2018) reasoned that the use of code-switching cannot be avoided since learners need to understand the ideas and concepts relevant to them through a medium friendly to them. Thus, the age and experience of the teachers do not count in the utilization of code-switching, particularly in the delivery of the lessons to the students.

As to Sex and Highest Educational Attainment

Since the groupings of responses according to sex and highest educational attainment deviated from a normal distribution ($p < .01$), as confirmed by the Shapiro-Wilk test via Jamovi software, the non-parametric Kruskal-Wallis H test was employed. This Kruskal-Wallis test ensures statistical validity even in the absence of normality, as it relies on the ranking of data rather than mean distributions.

Table 8 displays that there was no significant difference in the utilization of code-switching among the respondents grouped according to sex ($H(1) = 0.927, p < .336$) and the highest educational attainment ($H(3) = 1.640, p < .650$). This is evident in the very high utilization of code-switching among the respondents. This implies that sex and the highest educational attainment did not influence the extent of code-switching utilization in the delivery of the lessons. This lack of variance suggests that code-switching has reached a state of professional normalization within the Philippine educational system, functioning as a universal response to the linguistic needs of the classroom rather than a choice driven by personal or professional backgrounds.

Table 8. Test of Significant Difference in the Extent of Utilization of Code Switching by Sex and Highest Educational Attainment of the Respondents

Variables	H	df	p	Decision
Sex	0.927	1	.336	Failed to Reject H_0
Highest Educational Attainment	1.640	3	.650	Failed to Reject H_0

Saquing (2023) supported the present finding that the acceptance of code-switching is widespread in secondary schools as well as in elementary schools. Likewise, Alcoba (2021) and Capadosa (2021) reported that educators' gender and educational attainment do not

significantly influence the extent of code-switching among teachers since understanding the linguistic needs of the students bridges the learning gaps. Amarille (2022) also agreed that code-switching serves as a tool to create an inclusive environment. This is the reason that the

respondents do not have a significant difference in the utilization of code-switching, as evidenced also in their very high utilization of translanguaging to create a friendly learning environment.

Conclusion

This study concluded that the respondents from the select schools of DepEd-Camiguin have a very high utilization of code-switching as a tool to bridge learning barriers and gaps. Regardless of the respondents' sex, age, highest level of educational attainment, field of specialization, and number of years of teaching experience, the utilization of code-switching did not significantly differ among them. The pedagogical approach, that is, the utilization of code-switching, may have an effect on the academic achievements of the students, but it does not provide enough evidence as a direct predictor of improving the ratings of the students. The very high utilization of code-switching probably mediated the academic performance of the students, in which this study did not include. Hence, it is recommended that future researchers consider the mediation effect of breaking the learning barriers and gaps through code-switching, a widely used cognitive tool to ensure active learning among students in the classroom.

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