Attitudes Towards English and Filipino English Code-switching Amongst High School Students in Ormoc City, Philippines

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Abstract

This study presents findings obtained from 280 fourth year high school students in Ormoc City, Philippines concerning their attitude towards English and towards Fil-English code-switching. It is a partially comparative study that surveys similarities and differences of attitude towards code-switching between 140 public high school students and 140 private high school students.

The survey incorporates both quantitative and qualitative methods. The result shows that participants are generally positive towards English and Fil-English code-switching. However, there are more private school students who have a neutral attitude towards code-switching, compared to public high school students. In addition, the result shows that code-switching amongst the 280 high school students is a marked socio-linguistic activity. Furthermore, the result shows that Fil-English is both subtractive and additive bilingualism from the students’ viewpoint. Finally, findings show that the participants’ attitudes towards English and Fil-English illustrate diglossia in their speech community.

Keywords: Code-switching, Attitude, Bilingualism, Diglossia
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Introduction

After centuries of British colonization, English became a common denominator between 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 dominates in school, work and media. Studies conducted by Filipino linguist Maria Lourdes Bautista of De La Salle University, show that Fil-English code-switching is a feature of the linguistic repertoire of Filipinos (2004).

There are about 110 indigenous languages in the Philippines (McFarland, 1994); most of these languages belong to the Malayo-Polynesian category of the Austronesia language family. These languages are categorized by their mutual intelligibility. Because of this heterogeneity of languages, bilingualism in the Philippines has existed from the very beginning of the Philippine education system. At home, Filipino children are exposed to English words and concepts at a very early age. To further understand bilingualism in the Philippines, linguist Stephen Krashen distinguishes between language acquisition and language learning. He refers to language acquisition as the subconscious assimilation without any awareness of knowing the rules. Thus, Filipino children acquire Filipino simultaneously with English (Bautista, 2004). On the other hand, language learning is a conscious process, achieved particularly through formal study, thus resulting in an explicit knowledge of rules (Krashen, 1987). Therefore, English is both acquired and learned amongst native-born Filipinos. In school, learners’ vernacular is used as a medium of “transitional bilingualism” (Gonzalez, 1996). Moreover, English is not only taught as a curricular subject but is also used as the dominant medium of instruction in History, Science and Mathematics. Thus, code-switching and borrowing is a natural occurrence in the Philippine context. 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.
Aim and Research Question

Code-switching is an interesting linguistic activity which is worth looking at from a pedagogical point of view. It signifies different social and cultural functions in post-colonial territories such as the Philippines. Code-switching is pertinent to different language teaching strategies e.g. the bilingual teaching approach. The centre of attention for this study is the attitudes of fourth year high school students towards English and code-switching in public and private high schools in Ormoc City, Philippines.

The research aims to present insights into the complexities of code-switching. During my teaching practice, I have observed that my pupils code-switch Swedish with other languages in the process of conversing with each other. Since Malmö (where I intend to work) is a multi-cultural area, it is relevant to acquire firsthand experience regarding social and functional issues of code-switching. Furthermore, code-switching is a modern linguistic phenomenon amongst young people (Bautista, 2004). Because of the heterogeneity of languages in a multilingual speech community, I would like to examine the social functions and implications of code-switching in students’ language learning. The Philippines has been code-switching for over 30 years and Fil-English code-switching is now an established lingua franca. Subsequently, the data to be found is of great number.

Most bilingual speech communities suffer from language imbalances. One language may be valued higher than the other. This depends on different factors associated with particular languages. This study may provide essential information and understanding of students’ learning motivation by looking at students’ attitudes towards their languages. The students’ assessment of their languages may also provide teachers with new insights on how specific languages influence the students’ ambition to learn.

This research study collects both quantitative and qualitative data. The research is about attitudes towards English and towards code-switching as a linguistic phenomenon amongst 280 students in Ormoc City, Philippines. This research does not in any way test or measure the proficiency of English amongst Filipino high school students. It merely seeks to find out attitudes towards English and code-switching between Filipino and English.
The research question is:
What is the general attitude among high school students towards English and Fil-English code-switching in private and public schools, in Ormoc City, Philippines?
Background

The Philippines has a long colonial history dating back to the 15th century. The Spaniards occupied the country for 333 years. As a consequence, Filipinos still embody much of the Spanish culture adapted to Southeast Asian culture. However, the Spanish language was never indigenized in any large sector of the native-born Filipino population.

Filipinos resisted the Spanish occupation from the dawn of the 15th century colonization. In 1898, they finally attained their long-awaited freedom from Spanish rule through significant military aid from the United States of America. This led to American settlement in the Philippines.

The Philippines was under U.S. sovereignty between 1898 and 1946. English became the medium of instruction in the Philippines. It was born out of convenience because of widespread illiteracy (Thompson, 2003). The indigenous literacy had long been replaced by illiteracy. As a result, English is still the predominant language in formal education until to this day. It was just in the process of stabilization when the Philippines was granted its national independence. The stabilization process was abruptly interrupted. Consequently, the Philippine national independence created a whole new linguistic scenario.

Independence brought a struggle to establish a national identity. The newly appointed political leaders believed that a one language policy would be a strong unifying factor for the ethically fragmented Philippines. Spanish and English as official languages of the Philippines were of western origin. To satisfy the need for a home-grown official language, Tagalog was proclaimed as the national language in 1937. It was the language choice spoken by the majority of political leaders in the capital regions. It is relevant to mention that the “difference between dialects and languages are more political than linguistic” (Mesthrie, Swann, Deumart & Leap, 2000). As a consequence, none of the other indigenous languages in the Philippines were given the chance to be nominated as official language, even with the fact that the lingua franca of the majority is Bisaya. At least two thirds of Filipinos speak Bisaya as their first language (Thompson, 2003). Therefore, due to political and moral issues associated with Tagalog as the national language, it was later renamed to Filipino in 1987. The alteration is an attempt intended to embrace all other language varieties in the country.
The proclamation of yet another official language, Filipino meant new effort to spread fluency. As a result, a bilingual education scheme i.e. Filipino and English as media of instruction was implemented as a response to the rising demand and rising linguistic trend. It was adapted in favour of “a less dominant language or as a political compromise for language rights” (Gonzalez, 1988). At least four of the seven compulsory subjects in grade schools are taught in Filipino.

The colloquial term for code-switching between Filipino and English is popularly known as Taglish, a portmanteau of Tagalog and English. Let us be reminded, that the initial name of the indigenous official language was Tagalog which was later renamed to Filipino. However, common people as well as linguists argue that Filipino is just another terminology for Tagalog. Thus, Tagalog and Filipino are treated as the same, thus the coining of Taglish as the code-switching variety of Filipino and English. The term is also occasionally used as a generic name for the switching between any Philippine language variety (not necessarily Tagalog) and English (Bautista, 2004). Since code-switching is the lingua franca of urban areas throughout the Philippine Archipelago (Bautista, 2004), Taglish is an inappropriate term to use when referring to code-switching between Filipino language varieties and English because Tagalog is only one of the 110 languages in the Philippines.

In order to make this study more linguistically inclusive, Fil-English is the generic name used throughout this paper as opposed to Taglish. Thus, Fil-English denotes code-switching between any Filipino language variety and English.

Overview of the Philippine Education System

The Philippine education system is moulded after the US educational system, but with a slight alteration. It is divided into three levels. Primary education is from grade one to grade six (age 7 to 12) and is obligatory. Secondary education is a non-compulsory four-year education and also a pre-requisite for college or university. This level also incorporates theoretical and vocational knowledge as part of the national curriculum. At age 16-17, students start tertiary education through college or university and will have finished a baccalaureate degree by the age of approximately 20.
There are two types of schools: public and private schools. It is mostly the socio-economic background of the students that determines the type of school. Public schools are government funded, therefore accessible to all. However, families of the students will have to shoulder other necessary expenses such as school uniform, stationeries and transportation. Textbooks in public schools are lent out to students on a ratio of one book to three students. The ratio could be worse in some areas, particularly in rural areas (Chua, 2008). These schools usually suffer from neglect and insufficient financial support which may have negative effects on students’ and teachers’ performance. Situations can be as bad as one teacher to 50-60 learners in one classroom. In fact, some students have to sit on their classmates’ laps in order to accommodate all students in one classroom (personal communication with I pil national high schools students and teachers 2008 in Ormoc City). The social-economic background of public high school students is usually not as comfortable as those of private high school students. To make ends meet, some students have to work with odd jobs after school. In addition, most parents of public high school students have not gone to school for long in comparison to parents of private high school students (Jiménez & Lockheed, 1995).

Private schools are independently run by private entrepreneurs. These schools finance themselves through tuition fees. Unlike public schools where tuition is for free, students are required to have the prescribed stationeries, books and school uniforms, including shoes. Textbooks are mandated to be “a one to one ratio” may increase the probability of a better education. Private school students’ families generally have relatively good purchasing power. It is a pre-requisite to be able to go to a private school. Moreover, parents of such students have generally gone to school longer than most of the parents of public high school students (Jiménez & Lockheed, 1995).

**Previous Research**

There has been a great deal of research conducted with regard to “New Englishes”. These are mostly studies regarding language trends which have sprouted from former English-speaking colonies. One of these is English in the Philippine context which is presented in the book *Filipino English and Taglish-Language Switching from Multiple Perspectives* by Roger Thompson. He suggests that Filipinos code-switch between English and Filipino because:

- English was indigenized in the Philippines from 1898 to 1946.
When Philippines became an independent commonwealth in 1936, the rise of the Filipino language created a linguistic tension between English and Filipino.

Bilingual Education Scheme was implemented in 1987 which gave way to the officialization of Fil-English (Thompson, 2003).

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

Although there have been many newspaper and magazine articles printed regarding the controversy of code-switching in scholastic setting, there are few socio-linguistics studies in the Philippines concerning attitudes amongst high school students towards code-switching. According to Thompson (2003), “there has been little attention paid to the social functions of [Fil-English] code-switching and the social dynamics that underlie this language switching”.

Definitions

The terminologies used in the study are defined in this segment to serve as a guide to the central concepts of this research.

Filipino refers to nationality. It also refers to the official language based on Tagalog, an indigenous language of the northern parts of the Philippines. The 1987 Constitution mandated that the Filipino language should enrich its vocabulary primarily from other Philippine languages. Throughout this paper, Filipino refers to all languages in the Philippines.

To understand the concept of code-switching some concepts should be ruled out. Code-switching and borrowing are two linguistic concepts which can be confusing and at times used interchangeably. Code-switching can be falsely perceived as mere borrowings and vice versa. Borrowing and code-switching, according to the Greek linguist Dionysos Goutsos, should not be viewed as mutually exclusive, but as “ends of a continuum” (Goutsos, 2001, pg 195). Borrowing is a community-wide systematic phenomenon which does not require great competence in the second language, whereas code-switching is individual, systematic and usually requires a high level of competence in the second language.

Code-Switching

Code-switching is defined as the “switching back and forth of languages or varieties of the same language, sometimes within the same utterance” (Mesthrie, Swann, Deumart & Leap, 2000). According to Gross (2006), code-switching is a complex, skilled linguistic strategy used by bilingual speakers to convey important social meanings above and beyond the referential content of an utterance. This occurs in order to conform to the interlocutor or deviate from him/her. The interlocutor usually determines the speaker’s choice of language variety i.e. either to gain a sense of belonging or to create a clear boundary between the parties involved. In other words, code-switching is a result of language adaptation in different situations. Code-switching is predominant in most bilingual societies such as the Philippines due to the close relationship between languages. Fil-English “goes beyond the borrowing of words or ready-made phrases; it involves switching between languages. . . . [it] is standard English placed side by side with
Filipino. It is the alternation of Filipino and English in the same discourse or conversation” (Gumperz, 1982). Further, Fil-English is the use of Filipino words, phrases, clauses and sentences in English discourse or vice versa. Some linguists claim, like Bautista, that code-switching is a mode of discourse and the language of informality among middle-upper class, college-educated, urbanized Filipinos (Bautista, 2004).

An example of Fil-English:

Fil-English - Gusto na ko mo-eat mommy. I’m gutom now.

(I want to eat, mommy. I’m hungry now.)

Code-switching comes in different forms and may or may not occur as a necessity, the example above is just one form. Normally, sentences like this can be expressed purely in Filipino.

For Example:

Filipino - Gusto na ko mokaon, Nanay. Gutom na ko.

This warning sign presents a rough idea of the extent of bilingualism in the Philippines.

However, according to Bautista (2004), there are two contrasting types of code-switching in the Philippines namely proficiency-driven code-switching and deficiency-driven code-switching. Proficiency driven code-switching is when the speaker is competent in both Filipino and English and can easily switch from one to the other, for maximum effect. Proficiency-driven code-switchers switch codes “for precision, for transition, for comic effect, for atmosphere, for bridging or creating social distance, for snob appeal and for secrecy” (Goulet, 1971). Deficiency-driven code-switching is when the speaker is not fully competent in the use of one language and therefore has to utilize both languages.
Bilingualism in the Philippines

Students are in contact with English on a daily basis. Although English is mostly associated with education, there is much more English outside school premises. Means of communication such as street signs, election posters and hazard warnings are written in English. From the day of birth, Filipinos’ medical documents are printed and expressed in English. Moreover, government and legal documents i.e. birth and baptismal certificates are archived in English, not to mention, job interviews and hiring which are mostly carried out in English. Numbers, most importantly, are normally expressed in English, for instance calendars, prices, times and dates. In addition, most highly regarded and well respected daily papers such as *The Philippine Daily Inquirer* and the *Manila Times* are printed in English. The photographs below help us further understand the extensiveness of English and Fil-English in the Philippines.

This is a school motto painted on one of the classroom buildings in one of the participating high schools. It shows the amount of Fil-English in the Philippines.
Some linguists argue that Fil-English code-switching is evidence of additive bilingualism which refers to acquiring the second language without it interfering in the acquiring of a first language. This is to explicitly say that both languages are developed simultaneously. According to Bautista (2004), Fil-English is a linguistic resource in the bilingual’s repertoire. Others believe that Fil-English is evidence of subtractive bilingualism which refers to the acquiring of a second language that interferes with the acquiring of a first language. Subtractive bilingualism is also believed to be evidence of transitional bilingualism where Filipino is still incompletely acquired amongst learners and is inevitably replaced or interfered with English, the “societally dominant language” (Lambert, 1978) in the Philippines. In addition, Fil-English is perceived by most Filipino linguists as subtractive bilingualism. It is mocked and said to be a sign of deterioration of English in the Philippines (Gonzalez & Sibayan, 1988).

Markedness Model

According to C. Myers-Scotton’s (1993), code-switching has a social function which attempts to define and redefine “the relationship between speakers” in a bilingual speech community. Myers-Scotton’s Markedness Model theory, suggests that code-switching is a marked or unmarked language choice. Unmarked code-switching denotes that the language used is one “that would be expected in that context” (18) while marked code-switching refers to the language choice which “would not be expected in that context” (30). For instance, English and Fil-English are a very acceptable repertoire in government and school offices. This is an unmarked language choice because it is the expected variety in this particular context. However, English and Fil-English code-switching is mostly a marked choice in bus terminals, wet markets and so forth to show authority or anger and the likes. However, according to Smedley (2006), code-switching in Philippine context, is an unmarked linguistic activity for many Filipinos.

Attitude

Another theory which is relevant in this study is “attitude” which is defined by Eagly and Chaiken as a “psychological tendency that is expressed by evaluating a particular entity with some degree of favour or disfavour” (Eagly & Chaiken, 1993). Furthermore, attitude is the result of judgments experienced collectively. Consequently, each individual’s judgment is intrinsic and is affected by peripheral factors such as behaviour, culture and belief.
The attitudes of the students in Ormoc City, Philippines towards English and Fil-English code-switching is an outcome of several external factors i.e. historical background, social implications of Filipino and English, bilingual education and such. According to Nolasco (2008), Fil-English code-switching is more accepted amongst the younger generation and is now the lingua franca in urban areas.

**Diglossic Situation in the Philippines**

In most post colonial countries, schools have downplayed the significance of local languages which unintentionally creates a hierarchy of languages. According to Ferguson (1959), diglossia denotes a situation “where two varieties of a language exist side by side throughout a speech community, with each being assigned a definite role”. However, the definition of diglossia was then modified and expanded by Fishman in 1967. He argues that most bilingual speech communities show that the roles of superior and subordinate varieties were “played by different languages, rather than two specially related forms of the same language”. In other words, Diglossia denotes dichotomized languages, where one language is high and the other low. In the Philippines, English is the “high-language” and is mostly associated with upward mobility, white collar jobs, and education and the likes while local languages are associated with “local based activities and relationships” (Mesthrie et al 2000) i.e. home, family and friends.

English is mostly associated with the ethnic group who brought the language to the Philippines, the Americans. The association of English to Americans may trigger an underlying colonial mentality which encompasses Filipinos’ “subservient attitudes towards the colonial ruler as well as our predisposition towards aping Western ways” (Constantino, 1978). Colonial mentality corresponds to what Fanon (1967) referred to as “the internalization or ‘epidermalization’ of inferiority among peoples subjected to colonization”. Diglossia may be viewed as an offspring of colonial mentality amongst Filipinos. As English is the language of the colonizers and Filipino is the language of the colonized, diglossia has been bred through the colonial history of the Philippines. Consequently, the history of English in the Philippines has inevitably placed the English language superior in comparison to local vernaculars.
As claimed earlier, schools have downplayed the significance of local languages. This is exemplified through the photographs below, taken from a principal’s office of one of the participating schools.

The sign suggests that everyone who comes close to the principal’s office premises is advised to speak English, regardless of the errands that brought them to the office. With all these reminders and unofficial mandates, a hierarchy of languages is inevitably created. Diglossia sets in. English gains more respect, while Filipino and other indigenous languages fall into subordination (Sibayan, 1989).
As a summary to this segment, this study explores Filipino students’ attitudes towards English and Fil-English. The languages involved are in a diglossic situation. This language imbalance, is directly connected to colonial mentality theory, evident in the Philippines. English and Fil-English have social and professional implications. Moreover, the study examines evidence of code-switching i.e. Fil-English as a social marker through Myers-Scotton’s Markedness Model. In addition, this research explores perceptions of Fil-English as additive and subtractive bilingualism and as proficiency-driven or deficiency-driven code-switching. These established linguistic theories are significant concepts in order to understand the findings. These concepts will reappear and be further elaborated in the discussion segment.
Methodology

Data gathered for this study is mainly acquired through a ten-item questionnaire. The questionnaire was filled-in by 280 fourth-year high school students in Ormoc City, Philippines. 140 public high school students and 140 private high school students respectively participated in the survey.

Questionnaire: Quantitative and Qualitative Data

The questionnaire is divided into two parts. The first five questions consist of background questions, age, and type of school. It also incorporates questions that provide reliable information to establish the respondents’ bilingualism. The second part consists of the main survey questions itself. The questionnaire provides both quantitative and qualitative data.

The questionnaire per se is in Bisaya-based Filipino. Pursuing the survey in the indigenous language will create a more relaxed atmosphere in tackling the questions regarding participants bilingualism. This notion is supported by the fact that, the local vernacular is the predominant language used in informal contexts (Myers-Scotton, 1990) i.e. conversations with friends and family, thus minimizing the tension level between the researcher and participants.

Using questionnaires as the main research technique is suitable for research that requires several types of information (Wray & Bloomer, 2006). However, questionnaires as a qualitative method, may be inferior in terms of providing a more extensive and in-depth description of the subject matter due to the permanency of printed data (Johansson & Svedner, 2006).

The questionnaire I prepared has two designated functions, in order to gather maximum quantitative and qualitative data. Students were asked to answer close-ended and open-ended questions regarding their general attitudes towards English and Fil-English. Close-ended questions, such as yes-no questions, requires a short answer with no direct opportunity to expand. This is a good way to collect “several precise information” (Wray & Bloomer, 2006). The open-ended questions, in the form of why-questions, were also included in the questionnaire to gather more comprehensive information regarding the attitudes of fourth-year high schools students’ towards English and Fil-English code-switching. It also aids the collection of helpful insights in
understanding ambiguity regarding issues surrounding the concept of attitude (Wallén, 1996). The explanations obtained through the why-questions supplied adequate qualitative data in order to successfully analyze attitudes towards English and Fil-English.

The answers obtained through the close-ended questions comprise the quantitative survey results and the answers to open-ended questions comprise the qualitative survey results.

*Image source: Encyclopaedia Britannica*

**Participants**

Participants are the ultimate gatekeepers. According to Hatch (2002), they determine whether and to what extent the researcher will have access to the information desired. This is to further explain that the data collected through this questionnaire are merely information I (as the researcher) was permitted to access by the participants. Their responses will be inevitably influenced by who I am and who they believe I represent for.

The target area was Ormoc City in the province of Leyte. It is situated in the most archipelagic part of the Philippines, the central Visayas. The lingua franca of this region is Bisaya. This also means that Tagalog-based Filipino is perceived as a second language (L2). Moreover, the rivalry between English and Filipino is more evident amongst non-Tagalog speakers (Gonzalez 1996) and manifests strongly in Ormoc City.

I visited two public high schools and three private high schools. These schools were strategically chosen due to their accessibility in terms of transportation and communication i.e. phone and internet access. As mentioned earlier, code-switching is used as a mode of discourse amongst urbanized areas in the Philippines, this makes Ormoc City a qualified area to investigate code-switching activities.
Two hundred eighty fourth-year high school students participated in the survey. They were asked to complete a ten-item questionnaire. The ages of the fourth-year high school students range from 15 to 18 years old. 140 students from private high schools and 140 students from public high schools participated in the survey.

**Procedure**

The first meeting with the principals of the different high schools was one of the crucial components of this study, since not many school leaders would be willing to cooperate in studies such as this. External research studies can be perceived as added work load to their teachers and students. Without prior notice, I randomly visited five schools. I presented my study to the principals as thoroughly as possible and expressed my desire to administer the survey myself. This was to ensure I could observe and acquire direct reactions from the participants regarding the questionnaire.

I personally administered the survey and the questionnaires were evenly distributed amongst 280 fourth-year high schools students i.e. 140 students from private high schools and respectively 140 students from public high schools. The questionnaire was written in the indigenous language, Bisaya-based Filipino, which is very seldom seen in print.

**Ethics**

I sought permission from school principals and teachers and most importantly students to voluntarily answer the questionnaires. The participants are entirely anonymous. According to the head teachers, parents’ permission was unnecessary, since the study itself is conducted in the school. It demonstrates that school leaders confirmed the ethical issues attached to the study. Normally, parents are confident about teachers’ judgements. However, I still took the risk of crossing the ethical borders by not seeking parents’ permission. According to Hatch (2002), students are a vulnerable group for research exploitation.

I was personally accompanied by the head teachers to different classes of approximately 50 high school students. I was granted authorization to conduct the study on the students on such a short notice. In some cases teachers even failed to initially ask the students’ consent to participate in
the survey. This situation makes it difficult for students to refuse. There is no way for the students to say no when their superiors already said yes. Moreover, I was aware of my superior position as an adult and as a researcher. As a compromise, when the teachers had left the classroom and handed the classes to me, I apologized for the short notice and encouraged the students to refuse to participate if they wish so. However, as expected, everyone participated.

Validity and Reliability

The research measured what it intended to measure i.e. attitudes towards English and Fil-English. The study successfully obtained adequate and reliable quantitative data sufficient to formulate a conclusion. There was enough information regarding students’ attitudes towards English and Fil-English. The survey questions explicitly investigate participants’ attitudes towards English and Fil-English. However, I failed to incorporate in the survey questions regarding participants’ attitude towardsFilipino. This poses weakness to the survey. A direct investigative question regarding their attitudes towards Filipino would have provided stronger analyses to the theoretical framework particularly the concept of diglossia. This could be improved and developed. However, this weak link does not detract from the aim of the study to extract, discover and present students’ attitudes towards English and Fil-English.

The survey questions regarding code-switching were posed from different perspectives. It was an attempt to present transparency in students’ attitudes towardsFil-English.

In terms of reliability, this study can be replicated but may or may not yield the same results, because the research investigates attitudes of high school students’ towards English and Fil-English, participants’ attitudes may vary through time. However, the research will yield the same results given the exact same method, participants, time and place, and under the same conditions.
Results and Analyses

The findings of this study are categorized in terms of their level of relevance to the research question i.e. the attitudes of 280 high school students towards English and code-switching. In addition, the results present similarities and differences of attitudes towards English and code-switching between 140 private high school students and 140 public high school students. Thus this section presents two parts of the study namely, qualitative results and quantitative results.

Quantitative Results

The quantitative results presented here show similarities and differences of attitudes towards English and Fil-English between public high school students and private high school students. The questionnaire (see appendix) is composed of ten questions where the first five questions are background questions to establish the 280 participants’ bilingualism. The first five questions show that 100% of the participants are bilinguals and are active practitioners of code-switching in their speech community. The second half investigates the 280 participants’ attitudes towards English and code-switching.

Participants’ Attitudes Towards English

*Figure 1: Is English Important?*

Students were questioned about their opinion towards the significance of English in their lives. The results obtained from the survey question demonstrate that 99% of the 280 participants perceive English as generally important. The survey question intended for this graph has three choices i.e. yes, no and neutral. The graph shows that both public and private high school students’ attitudes towards English are generally positive.
Participants’ Attitudes Towards Code-switching

This section presents the overall findings of the 280 Ormoc City fourth-year high school students’ attitudes towards code-switching. It also shows statistics regarding the participants’ attitudes towards code-switchers. Participants were also asked about their assumptions of other people’s perception of themselves as code switchers. The diagram below serves as a map in understanding the following analysed data.

*Figure 2:*

All three questions regarding attitudes towards all three components presented above offered three choices i.e. positive, negative and neutral. Moreover, there were follow-up questions in the form of why-questions after survey question to gather qualitative data.
Out of 280 respondents, 61% claim to have a positive attitude towards Fil-English code-switching. The result shows that participants’ attitude towards code-switching is predominantly positive.

**Participants’ Attitudes Towards Code-switching - Public Schools vs. Private Schools**

The figures gathered for this graph are statistics provided by the 280 participants through closed-ended questions. The graph below shows varying answers from 140 public high school students and 140 private high school students. Both divisions demonstrate that participants primarily have a positive attitude towards code-switching. However, a higher number of private high school students have a neutral stand towards code-switching.
However, when students were asked regarding their attitudes towards code-switchers, 97% claimed to have a positive attitude towards Filipino-English code-switchers. Only 61% of respondents are positive towards code-switching as a linguistic phenomenon but 97% of participants have a positive attitude towards code-switchers.
Interestingly, only 64% of participants claim to have a positive assumption regarding people’s perception towards themselves as code-switchers. Although participants have primarily positive assumptions, over one third assume a negative attitude. Surprisingly, their attitude towards themselves as code-switchers is not as strongly positive as their attitudes towards others as code-switchers.

Figure 8:

Students’ Assumptions of People’s Perception Towards Themselves as Code-switchers

140 Public School Students vs 140 Private School Students

- **Positive**
  - Public Schools: 64%
  - Private Schools: 64%

- **Negative**
  - Public Schools: 36%
  - Private Schools: 36%

- **Neutral**
  - Public Schools: 0%
  - Private Schools: 0%
Quantitative Results Analyses

The purpose of this study is to acquire a general idea of the attitudes of high school students in private and public schools, in Ormoc City, Philippines towards English and Fil-English. Below is the summary of the quantitative study.

Findings show that all 280 participants have a unanimously positive attitude towards English. Moreover, the survey does not show any difference of attitudes towards English between private high-school students and public high school students.

Regarding participants’ attitudes towards Fil-English code-switching, all 280 participants are predominantly non-negative. One out of every ten participants has a neutral stand towards code-switching. However, one out of every four participants has a negative attitude towards code-switching, a considerable number.

Ninety-seven percent of the 280 participants have a positive attitude towards code-switchers. Public and private school students are equally positive towards code-switchers. Fil-English code-switching is generally perceived as a good learning technique in their English communication skills. The unanimously positive results towards Fil-English are congruent with the results found regarding participants attitudes towards English. As claimed, earlier, most participants treat English and Fil-English synonymously. Most students do not distinguish any negative impacts of English or Fil-English.

However, the results also show that students are divided into halves regarding their attitudes towards Fil-English code-switching as a linguistic phenomenon. A total of 39% of the 280 participants have a non-positive attitude towards Fil-English code-switching. This result harmoniously matches the finding (revealed in Figure 8) which suggests that participants are not entirely optimistic towards themselves as code-switchers.

Participants’ attitude towards Fil-English code-switching is not equally positive compared to their attitudes towards the English language. Findings show that between Fil-English and English, the latter is regarded higher. However, participants’ attitudes towards Fil-English code-
switchers are equally positive to their attitudes towards the English language (compare Figure 5 & Figure 1). While participants’ attitude towards Fil-English is congruent to the participants’ perception towards themselves as Fil-English code-switchers (compare Figure 3 & Figure 7).

In other words, participants equally fancy English and code-switchers but equally sceptical towards Fil-English as a language and towards themselves as code-switchers.

There is also a difference of pattern in the answers given by private and public students. Figure 4 and Figure 8 show that there are more private school students who have a neutral stand towards code-switching than those of public high school students. 10% of 140 public students have a neutral stand towards code-switching while 20% of 140 private students have a neutral stand towards code-switching. Moreover, private school students’ attitudes towards themselves as code-switchers are divided in halves. The survey shows that private students have a higher number of negative attitudes towards themselves as code-switchers than that of public high school students.

Further studies are encouraged to investigate the nuances of the results found in this survey.
Qualitative Results

The following information presents a summary of the most frequent answers provided by the 280 high school students who took part in this study. The original answers were mostly in Bisaya-Bisaya-based Filipino (or code-switched version) and I have translated them into English. Some participants chose to answer in English even though the questionnaire was in the indigenous language. Most participants were surprised and even mockingly laughed to encounter their indigenous language in written form.

The qualitative results presented in this segment are grouped into categories that reflect the most common responses to the survey questions.

Reasons for Positive Attitude Towards English

All 280 participants are positive towards English. Participants state that English has positive professional and social implications. English is significant for academic and professional success. It also aids effortless international communication.

Reasons for Positive Attitudes Towards Code-switching

Education, Employment & Socio-Economy

Code-switching signifies education and professional success. According to participants, frequent code-switchers are intelligent and educated people. Some participants also claim that code-switching makes, “people think they come from privileged families”. They added that Fil-English also denotes that they are”well-educated”.They believe that Fil-English shows competence in both Filipino and English. They also believe that code-switching signifies level of education and level of “competence”. They consider code-switching as a positive linguistic activity and a good learning technique because according to them “it is a good way to practice and master the English language”. Participants’ added that code-switching “enhances their English speaking
skills”. They also consider Fil-English a helpful language learning activity because being familiar with English helps an individual to “find work easily”. Most students pointed out that “English is a necessity especially during job interviews”.

**Communication**

Students argue that code-switching is a good communicative practice which aids communication both in local and international domains. Code-switching also helps to attain information transparency “because the individual can express himself/herself better if he/she code-switches”. Furthermore, students maintain that Fil-English aids comprehension between speakers, specifically “because some people [Filipinos] do not particularly understand the uncommon words in Bisaya-based Filipino”. They added that, “there are words in Filipino which are very difficult to explain and to understand”. Code-switching is a way to practice the English language “because English helps us communicate with people who are speakers of other languages other than Filipino”.

**Culture**

Students’ attitudes towards code-switching are favorable because they claim that Fil-English is a part of the Philippine language culture. Respondents maintain that it is part of who they are and what makes them a “Filipino”. In addition, they claim that it is difficult to totally disconnect English from Filipino because “English is their second language”. Some added, that “code-switching is what they are accustomed to” as part of their daily communication.

**Impression**

Students are in favor of code-switching because it apparently elicits a good impression. It is favorable because “it is nice to listen to”. They added that “the more language they know the more they will make a good impression to other people”. However, some students claim that “impression” depends on how speakers assess the type of code-switching. One student claims
that impressions depend on “how they [code-switchers] deliver and use their communication skills.” Participants added that they value the significance of language correctness and the code-switchers proficiency in the English language. These are some of the influential factors that contribute to successfully attain positive impression on to others and amongst themselves. Finally, Fil-English is a social technique to “gain respect.”

**Reasons for Negative Attitudes Towards Code-switching**

**Ethno-linguistic Threat**

Students say that code-switching poses a threat to their ethno-linguistic identity. They claim that code-switching is unfavourable “because their children in the future will be confused with their languages”. Some students claim that Fil-English code-switching will just add difficulties in communication. They argue that “they have enough languages to deal with in the country.” Moreover, some students’ have an unfavourable experience of Fil-English. They claim that too much use of English in Fil-English triggers scrutinizing questions such as “Why do you frequently code-switch to English? We are not Americans!” Apparently, some participants argue that Fil-English is a way to demonstratively show that their indigenous language is insufficient. Some participants assume that code-switching is perceived as rude and an insult to the Filipino language. Consequently, “because they are Filipinos, they should only speak Filipino” and “code-switchers are challenged to stop acting like an American”.

**Communication Breakdown**

Participants believe that code-switching contributes to communication breakdown. It makes the conversation “hard to understand”. Some participants also argue that English in code-switching impedes communication They also added that code-switching will most likely “increase the probability of misunderstanding” due to incorrect pronunciation, erroneous use of words as well as a lack of language consistency. The participants believe that people around them think that code-switching is an unnatural medium of communication. Therefore people think that code-switching deters communication because their interlocutors are not accustomed to the English language. Thus, code-switching could signify waste of time and effort.
Boastful Assertion

Participants claim that Fil-English is a social technique which is used to boastfully assert an individual’s education and socio-economic background. One student stated that as a code-switcher people “will think of him/her as a show-off”. Moreover, code-switching is a way to gain respect because it signifies socio-economic background i.e. wealth, education, intellectual competence and social class. Some participants believe that as code-switchers, people around them perceive them as individuals coming from a socially and economically privileged social class. One student put it this way, as code-switchers, “people will think we come from privileged families”, and that they are “rich”. Their attitude towards code-switching and particularly their attitude towards the involvement of English in their daily repertoire are believed to play an important role to gain respect and to make a positive impression on their interlocutors. Again, marked code-switching refers to language choice in domains where language switching is an unexpected pattern. Based on the findings, code-switching amongst respondents could be further explained through speech accommodation theory where participants as bilinguals converge or diverge their language depending on their interlocutors.

Reasons for Neutral Attitudes Towards Code-switching

Culture and Habit

Students believe that code-switching is a part of their culture and it is a habitual language trend. One student claim, “Filipinos nowadays do not speak pure Filipino, they mix English all the time”. Participants also claim that “code-switching is ok, because participants are just following the trend”. They added that code-switching “is just a matter of adapting to the society”. Further, they claim that Fil-English is a necessity since “they can not just stick to one language because they need English” for better communication. Fil-English is also just “adding another language”. Furthermore, participants are neutral towards code-switching because they believe that code-switching is a learning technique to improve their knowledge in English. They claim that involvement of English in code-switching is “particularly important for international travel”. Again, many participants have their emphasis on English in Fil-English because it means upward
mobility. Many participants argue that code-switching is acceptable as long as it does not hinder the communication between speakers.

Qualitative Results Analyses

This segment discusses the connection between the result, background and theoretical framework sections. It discusses the positive, negative and neutral attitudes towards English and Fil-English through concepts such as diglossia, language proficiency, Markedness-model and Bilingualism.

When students were asked about their bilingualism and their attitudes towards code-switching, it was clear that English is valued higher than the indigenous language. Further, their answers show patterns of unconscious emphasis on their predilection or special liking for English. Moreover, their statements reveal that English is the focus of code-switching as opposed to giving equal values to the languages involved. They perceive code-switching as a good way to practice and to master the English language for future academic and employment success.

Fil-English as Proficiency-Driven or Deficiency-Driven Code-switching

Fil-English code-switching is both perceived by students as proficiency-driven and deficiency-driven code-switching. Some participants claim that Fil-English signifies competence in English. They take for granted the fact that there are two languages involved in Fil-English. They take Filipino for granted probably because they believe that every native-born Filipino has “enough” proficiency in their native language, or perhaps because they do not perceive Filipino as equally important as English. On the other hand, Fil-English is also perceived as deficiency-driven code-switching because as some students claim “[we] they can not stick to one language”. The statement shows participants’ own assessment of themselves. They recognize their incapability to use one language or as they say “stick to one language” in their daily communication. This shows evidence of deficiency-driven code-switching.
Fil-English: Evidence of Additive or Subtractive Bilingualism

Fil-English as proficiency-driven (i.e. high competence in both Filipino and English) and deficiency-driven code-switching (low competence in both Filipino and English) are perceived as evidence of additive and subtractive bilingualism. Findings show that some participants perceive proficiency-driven Fil-English as evidence of additive bilingualism. They believe that code-switching is just adding “another language”. Moreover, they claim that English as the added “other language” is just an added aspect in what Bautista refers to as the Filipinos’ “repertory of skills” (2004). Some students do not distinguish Fil-English as evidence of corruption in their languages but instead a resource in their daily repertoire. Finally, some participants believe that English does not interfere in their first language competence thus supporting the additive bilingualism theory.

A number of participants perceive Fil-English as deficiency-driven code-switching. Therefore, Fil-English is perceived as evidence of subtractive bilingualism. The participants’ claim that code-switchers “can not stick to one language” is a proof of deficiency-driven code-switching. This shows that some participants believe that code-switchers are not fully competent in the use of English or Filipino and therefore have to switch between languages. Thus, Fil-English shows low competence in English and Filipino and vice-versa. It is perceived as subtractive bilingualism because the second language impedes proficiency in both first and second languages.

English, Filipino and Diglossia

Diglossia means two varieties of a language that exist side by side throughout a speech community, with each being assigned a definite role. Findings show that Fil-English is a sufficient communicative tool in formal and informal settings. However, English is the preferred language in formal domains such as classroom discussions and formal written reports. Students have certain expectations and established notions regarding appropriate languages in school. Because the questionnaire was strategically chosen to be in Bisaya-based Filipino, participants’ initial reaction was to laugh at the questionnaire. It was peculiar for participants to see their indigenous language in written form. Normally, Bisaya-based Filipino is not a part of their daily
literacy activity. Being confronted with a Bisaya-based questionnaire in school is extremely uncommon. This incident shows that Filipino and English are assigned with definite roles.

Filipino is utilized in informal domains and intimate social relations while English is mostly appropriate in formal domains, particularly in academic domains. Thus, Fil-English is a mode of discourse to bridge the individual’s connection to their social environment. It is a juxtaposition of their private, official and public identity.

**Social Motivations of Fil-English Code-switching and Markedness Model**

Code-switching as a way to make a social impression could be analyzed through Myers Scotton’s *Markedness Model*. Fil-English has social implications amongst code-switchers. Findings show that code-switching is used as a social technique to increase or decrease social distance, to conform or resist, to show authority between speakers, to define and redefine “the relationship between speakers” (1993). According to students, Fil-English is a way to gain respect because it signifies socio-economic background i.e. wealth, education, intellectual competence and social class. Their attitude towards code-switching and particularly their attitude towards the involvement of English in their daily repertoire are believed to play an important role in their social status.

Moreover, because code-switching shows knowledge in the English language, participants believe that code-switching is used as a social technique which some perceive as a boastful assertion of one’s intellectual competence. It is also considered as a way to brag about one’s level of education. Code-switchers may be perceived as proud and arrogant: as one student points out “people will think of me as a show-off”. Code-switching is linguistic activity to gain respect and honor, a social technique “to impress” the interlocutors.

In addition, Fil-English is a marked language choice when the code-switchers want to diverge or converge from their interlocutors. Minimizing English in Fil-English or minimizing Filipino in Fil-English shows willingness to accommodate their interlocutors’ language preferences. Their choice of language to be minimized depends on their interlocutors ease to the “High and low Languages” in their daily repertoire. Students accommodate the extent of code-switching
depending on the expectation of the context. Even if the students believe that they can express themselves better through code-switching and therefore communication is more efficient, they still recognize the significance of accommodating their language to their interlocutors. Therefore, Fil-English is then a marked choice for most participants.

However, many participants argue that Fil-English code-switching is an ordinary linguistic activity in their speech community. Participants and everyone around normally switch codes. Therefore, code-switching is an unmarked sociolinguistic activity.

Colonial Mentality and Fil-English as Linguistic Resistance Against Western Power

Participants’ attitudes towards code-switching could be analyzed by looking at the history of English in the Philippines and the social implications associated with English. English is the language of power and Filipinos have a subservient attitude towards anything that has of foreign origin. On the other hand, Filipino is the language of national patriotism. Fil-English may be a modernistic approach against western power. It is a form of linguistic resistance that shows evidence of mixed emotions towards Fil-English.

English is highly regarded because it used to signify colonial power. As a result, Filipinos still suffer much from a colonial mentality, evident through statements that suggest “Filipinos should only speak Filipino and not English. English is for Americans”. The long colonial history of the Philippines is still deeply rooted even amongst the young generations. However, aside from being the language of the colonizers, English also denotes education and a good socio-economic background. Most participants recognize the necessity of English in their lives. Moreover, Filipinos’ ability to speak English increases the possibility of finding jobs abroad. Consequently, there is a high demand of Filipino workers in the international job market because they are able to communicate in the international language. In addition, because Filipinos are subservient as well as conscientious to foreigners thus increases the desirability of Filipinos as ideal workers. Therefore, participants perceive that their competence in English is born out of necessity due to economic opportunities that English offers and the strong influence of English in their daily lives.

Fil-English is keeping and maintaining a good balance of English as the language of colonial power and Filipino as a symbol of Filipinos’ love of their country. While English may be more
beneficial to their professional aspirations, Filipino is still the language of home and family. Thus, Fil-English may be proof of linguistic resistance towards western power.
Conclusion and Discussion

This thesis sets out to investigate attitudes towards English and Fil-English code-switching amongst 280 public and private students. The study has two separate but related aims. Firstly, it aims to find out general attitudes of the said participants towards English and Fil-English as part of a quantitative study. Secondly, it aims to gather explanations from students’ points of view regarding their attitudes towards English and Fil-English.

Findings show that participants are unanimously positive towards English. English is consciously and unconsciously preferred in all formal activities. It is also perceived as a necessity for future success. English is highly valued and perceived to be the very key to a better future.

According to the respondents, Filipinos code-switch because English is the language used in school. Therefore, English is the expected language in that context. Since English is the language most often used in writing and the very medium of instruction, code-switching was born out of necessity amongst students which eventually became the lingua franca of Filipinos daily repertoire especially in urban areas. Since this survey was held in school, the respondents expect that the language in the questionnaire is English. They inquisitively and mockingly question why the questionnaire is in Bisaya-based Filipino.

When students were questioned regarding Fil-English code-switching, noticeably, Filipino is taken for granted. Students put more emphasis on the English language. For instance, when students were asked about “why people code-switch”, they directly pick out English from Fil-English. Fil-English is perceived as a great way to practice and master the English language while Filipino is somewhat ignored. However, it may be unfair to claim that most participants take their indigenous language for granted. Perhaps the lack of emphasis on Filipino shows some participants belief that they have successfully mastered their indigenous language. Therefore, Filipino in Fil-English is of less importance. They probably would most likely aim to have the same level of competence in English. Thus, code-switching is a good language learning strategy.

Findings show that public and private high school students are equally positive towards English. However, the result shows a remarkable difference of attitudes amongst public school students
and private school students towards Fil-English. Looking back to what Bautista’s (2004) claim that Fil-English is the language of the educated middle and upper class Filipinos. This claim may have some implications but not enough bases for generalization. Nonetheless, I have observed that there are differences of students attitudes towards code-switching depending on whom the code-switcher is. This difference is worth investigating in the future.

**Teaching implications**

The concept of attitudes encompasses a “psychological tendency that is expressed by evaluating a particular entity with some degree of favour or disfavour” (Eagly & Chaiken, 1993). Therefore looking at students’ attitudes towards English and Filipino and the hybrid version Fil-English, provides us insights useful in teaching. Students are overwhelmingly positive towards English; consequently, they strive harder to reach certain language competence and proficiency in the said language. Moreover, they perceive English as a significant means for professional and academic success. Unfortunately, the psychological drive to improve their English communication skills inevitably suppresses their indigenous language. As a result, they lack motivation to enrich and develop their competence in their native language.

Other studies show that children learn most efficiently if the medium of instruction is the language used at home (Gonzalez, 1996). Since learning is primarily mediated by language, evidently, learners learn more when they do not have to struggle with the language used in learning. Hence, necessity-born Fil-English is a good teaching strategy to attain maximum learning effects. Although many students recognize that English is synonymous to education, of which further down the road will bring economic success, reality proves otherwise. For some, English could be a struggle. Consequently, teaching students in subject areas such as Mathematics and Science through English may prevent students’ from learning as much as they could. Thus, students may end up struggling with English and the learning will be diverged from the supposed subject areas to language learning.

However, this study shows the contrary. Students do not perceive English as an element of obstruction in learning. Therefore, English and Fil-English is accepted and actively used whole
heartedly in classroom settings. Code-switching should not be discouraged in classrooms but should be encouraged as an effective and transitional language learning strategy.
References


**World Wide Web**


Appendix

Questionnaire

Age: Gender:
Year Level: Type of school: Public/Private
City / Municipality:

1. Para sa imo importante ba ang English? Ngano?
   In your opinion, is English vital? Explain why?
   Yes:_____ No:_____

2. Kabalo ka ba mag-aininglis?
   Do you speak English?
   Yes:_____ No:_____

3. Makaistorya ka ug ininglis nga tuhay?
   Can you speak the English language fluently?
   Yes:_____ No:_____

4. Asa man ka kanunay gagamit ug English?
   Sa balay? Sa Eskwelahan?

   Where do you speak English most frequently?
   At home?_____ At school?_____

5. Sa imong pang-adlaw alaw nga pinulongan, bisaya ra imong gamit o sagol English?

   On a daily basis, do you speak your own vernacular or do you mix/switch to English from time to time?

   Vernacular:_____ Mixed: _________
6. Sa imong paminaw, ngano man magsagol-sagol ang imong pinulungan?

Why do you think people mix English and their vernacular (code-switch)?


If you talk to someone who frequently code-switches to English, is there any difference to how you perceive that person? Is it positive_____ or negative_____ 
Neutral:_____? And why?__________________________________________________________.

8. Sa imong paminaw, unsa man ang mga huna-huna sa mga tawo kung mag-ininglis ka?

What do you think regarding people’s perception when you speak English?
Is it positive_____ or negative_____ Neutral:_____? And why?______________________.

9. Unsa man imong tan-aw sa tawo nga kusog mag-ininglis?

Maayo:_____ Dili:_____ Wala lang:_____

How do you perceive a person when he or she speaks English frequently?
Positive:_____ Negative:_____ Neutral:_____ and why?__________________________.

10. Unsa imong panan-aw sa pagsagul-sagul sa pinulungan?

Maayo?_____ Di-maayo?_______ ug Nganu?

What is your perception of Code-switching as a linguistic phenomenon?
Positive?_____ Negative?_____ Neutral:_____ Why?