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The Practice of Code-Switching in English Language Class Recitation: Experiences of Grade 11 and 12 Senior High School Students at Vigan National High School East

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Abstract: This paper presents a thematic review of related literature and studies examining code-switching in multilingual classrooms to establish a conceptual foundation for investigating the experiences of Grade 11 and Grade 12 senior high school students at Vigan National High School East during English language class recitation. Drawing on foundational sociolinguistic and sociocultural perspectives alongside recent Philippine studies, the review synthesizes existing scholarship across five areas: code-switching as a communicative resource, comprehension and idea expression, confidence and classroom participation, challenges and limitations in English language learning, and social, cultural, and interpersonal influences on language choice. Existing literature indicates that code-switching can clarify instructions, support comprehension, ease expression, and foster social connection or confidence for some learners, yet positive attitudes or perceived comprehension gains do not automatically translate into stronger English academic performance or resolve foreign-language anxiety, while heavy reliance may limit extended target-language practice and vocabulary growth. Furthermore, much of the prior research focuses on university learners, teacher observations, correlational outcomes, or general Taglish classroom use rather than senior high school students' lived experiences with English, Filipino, and Ilocano specifically during oral English recitation. This review highlights the need to examine learners' reasons for switching, perceived benefits, challenges, and views on participation during recitation within a local multilingual setting.

Keywords: *Code-Switching; English Language Class Recitation; Multilingual Classrooms; Senior High School; Ilocano; Filipino.*

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I. INTRODUCTION

Spoken participation in an English classroom asks students to think quickly, organize ideas, and respond aloud in a language that may not be their strongest or most comfortable medium. In multilingual settings like the Philippines, learners routinely move across languages—such as English, Filipino, and regional tongues like Ilocano—as they navigate lessons, clarify unfamiliar terms, and keep interactions moving. Rather than treating every language shift as a sign of weak ability, scholarship in sociolinguistics and second-language education views code-switching as a contextual and communicative practice shaped by speakers' relationships, tasks, and linguistic repertoires.

Recent studies in Philippine classrooms show how nuanced this practice can be. Code-switching can help students follow directions, grasp concepts, express thoughts more naturally, and build social comfort or confidence. At the same time, research indicates that favorable views of switching or short-term comprehension support do not automatically lead to stronger English grades or eliminate speaking anxiety, while heavy reliance on familiar languages may limit extended English speaking practice and vocabulary growth. Furthermore, much of the existing work examines university students, relies on teacher reports or quantitative correlations, or looks at Taglish in general classroom talk rather than senior high school students' lived experiences with English, Filipino, and Ilocano during oral English recitation.

To address this gap, this paper examines the literature surrounding code-switching in multilingual classrooms as a foundation for studying Grade 11 and Grade 12 senior high school students at Vigan National High School East. It focuses on why learners switch languages during English

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recitation, what advantages and difficulties they experience, and how they view the practice in relation to expressing ideas and taking part in spoken class interaction.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

This section presents literature related to code-switching in classroom communication, students' experiences, language choices, and the use of multiple languages in Philippine educational settings.

➢ *Related Literature*

- *Code-Switching as a Communicative Resource in Multilingual Classrooms*

Code-switching refers to the use of more than one language or language variety within the same interaction or communicative event. Bilingual and multilingual speakers use their linguistic resources to communicate meaning and sustain interaction. Gumperz (1982) emphasized the social and contextual meanings conveyed through conversational language choices, while Poplack (1980) examined the linguistic patterns that occur when bilingual speakers shift from one language to another. Together, these perspectives frame code-switching as a meaningful communicative practice shaped by language structure, social relationships, and the context of interaction.

In classroom discussions, learners may start an explanation in the language of instruction and then use a more familiar language to clarify a concept, search for a suitable expression, explain an unfamiliar idea, or keep the exchange moving. This practice is particularly evident in multilingual classrooms, where learners differ in their language backgrounds and command of the instructional language. Code-switching should not automatically be interpreted as a sign of limited language ability; its function should be considered in light of the communicative purpose and classroom context.

Research conducted in the Philippines also highlights the role of code-switching in classroom communication. Villanueva and Gamiao (2022) examined language alternation among Filipino college instructors and students using classroom discourse analysis and interviews. They found that switching languages could clarify instructions, reduce language-related barriers, support comprehension, and allow learners to confirm or explain prior knowledge. These findings suggest that code-switching can facilitate classroom communication, particularly when students have trouble understanding or articulating academic ideas.

Maranan et al. (2025) studied the practices and views of 205 students from three Philippine universities. Although participants reported using code-switching infrequently, they generally regarded it as an acceptable part of classroom interaction. Situational switching was the form most often identified. This finding distinguishes students' reported frequency of code-switching from their attitudes toward the practice, with acceptance potentially shaped by the context of communication and the expectations of the institution.

Taken together, these studies demonstrate that code-switching is part of communication in multilingual learning environments. However, because much of this research involved college students, further inquiry is needed into the experiences of younger learners and the ways they use language alternation in particular activities, such as oral recitation in English classes.

- *Code-Switching, Comprehension, and the Expression of Ideas*

One recurring theme in the literature is the potential role of code-switching in supporting comprehension and the expression of ideas. Students in multilingual classrooms may face unfamiliar terms, complicated explanations, or difficulty expressing an idea in the language expected by the teacher. Using a more familiar language may help learners clarify their intended meaning and communicate more effectively.

Villanueva and Gamiao (2022) found that language alternation supported students in following classroom instructions and explaining their ideas in Philippine college settings. Drawing on familiar languages may help learners interpret academic content and participate more actively in classroom exchanges. This can be especially useful during oral tasks, when students must prepare an answer quickly and express their understanding immediately.

Monteza et al. (2025) examined the experiences of four Filipino senior high school students who used Taglish in classroom communication. Using a phenomenological approach, they identified themes related to flexibility in language use, self-awareness, relationships, social connection, and the emotional significance of language preference. Participants linked code-switching with clearer communication, convenience, personal expression, confidence, and involvement in academic activities. These accounts suggest that language alternation may help learners express themselves more naturally and make their responses clearer.

However, perceived support for lesson comprehension should not be equated with improvement in English proficiency or academic grades. Caridad and Chico (2026), who studied 30 Grade 11 General Academic Strand learners, reported that students viewed code-switching as useful for understanding English lessons. Yet the association between code-switching and English academic performance was weak and not statistically significant. Their results also pointed to a possible negative relationship between frequent or excessive switching and final English grades. This distinction underscores the need to separate immediate comprehension support from measurable academic outcomes.

Overall, the literature presents code-switching as a resource learners may draw on to understand and express ideas, although its value can vary according to its purpose, frequency, and setting. In the context of English recitation, it is important to explore how students themselves perceive

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the role of language alternation when preparing and delivering oral answers.

- *Code-Switching, Confidence, and Classroom Participation*

Classroom participation involves more than providing a correct answer. Learners also need to explain their thinking, answer questions, share viewpoints, and interact with both teachers and peers. Students who are developing their English skills may experience pressure when they are expected to respond only in English, especially if they are unsure of the words, grammar, pronunciation, or sentence patterns they need.

Aquino (2022) explored the views of 124 Grade 11 students about code-switching in an English as a Second Language classroom. The correlational study considered students' opinions about language alternation and its connection with their English academic results. The participants generally viewed code-switching positively as a teaching and learning practice. However, their attitudes were not significantly associated with their English academic performance. This finding indicates that positive attitudes toward code-switching do not necessarily correspond to higher academic achievement.

Aparece and Bacasmot (2023) examined foreign-language classroom anxiety, code-switching, and difficulties in English among 300 senior high school students attending three private schools in Davao City. Their analysis found significant positive associations among the three factors. Code-switching, however, did not serve as a mediator between anxiety in the foreign-language classroom and problems with English. The findings suggest that students may use code-switching while continuing to experience anxiety or difficulties in English communication. Language alternation, therefore, cannot be assumed to resolve all communication-related difficulties.

Monteza et al. (2025) also drew attention to the emotional and social aspects of students' language preferences. Their participants connected code-switching with greater confidence, ease, self-expression, and closer relationships with classmates. These accounts suggest that language alternation may make classroom communication more comfortable for some learners. At the same time, the limited number of participants and the study's emphasis on Taglish point to the need to explore other language combinations and more specific learning situations.

For oral recitation, students' language choices may relate to their confidence, their assessment of their own English ability, their concern about making errors, and their intention to communicate successfully. A fuller understanding of these experiences should consider both the words learners produce and the feelings or motivations that influence their responses to English questions.

- *Challenges and Limitations of Code-Switching in English Language Learning*

Although code-switching may support communication, frequent reliance on it raises questions about learners' opportunities to develop and demonstrate proficiency in the target language. If students regularly rely on a familiar language to complete answers in English, they may spend less time practicing English vocabulary, forming sentences, and speaking at length with fluency. Its classroom value should therefore be considered together with the goals of English-language development.

Abang and Aringay (2024) explored how code-switching relates to communicative ability in junior high school through a phenomenological investigation involving ten Filipino teachers. The teachers reported that students often shifted languages to express their opinions and ideas more easily. They also observed that some learners found it difficult to expand their answers and turned to another language when they could not readily express their thoughts. Vocabulary development was another concern. Because the participants were teachers, these findings represent educators' perspectives rather than students' direct accounts.

Caridad and Chico (2026) similarly called attention to the difference between the perceived usefulness of code-switching and its possible academic limitations. While students acknowledged that it helped them understand lessons, the relationship between language alternation and English performance was weak and statistically nonsignificant. The study also indicated that more extensive switching might be linked to lower English grades. These results make it relevant to consider how often students change languages and whether they can still develop complete, meaningful answers in English.

These findings do not establish that code-switching harms English learning. Instead, they suggest that its effects depend on how learners use it and what the classroom task requires. A purposeful shift to another language may help a student communicate an idea, whereas relying on it too heavily may reduce practice in English. English instruction consequently needs to acknowledge learners' multilingual resources while continuing to create opportunities for sustained and meaningful use of the target language.

These concerns are especially relevant to recitation, where students are expected to show their understanding through spoken responses. Switching languages may help them begin or convey an answer, but it may also make it harder to explain details or maintain an extended response in English. Listening to students' own accounts can clarify how they manage these demands during recitation.

- *Social, Cultural, and Interpersonal Influences on Language Choice*

Language alternation is influenced by the social and cultural setting in which people communicate. Students' decisions about which language to use may be affected by their home language, their relationships with teachers and

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classmates, the expressions they know well, and the norms they associate with classroom participation.

Gumperz (1982) noted that the language selected during conversation can convey information about the situation and the relationship between speakers. Giles et al. (1991), through Communication Accommodation Theory, discussed how people modify their communication styles in response to the interaction and its possible outcomes. These ideas help explain why learners may change their language according to whom they are addressing, the classroom circumstances, and the purpose of their response.

During an English recitation, a learner might use English when speaking formally to a teacher, then move to Filipino or a home language to explain a point more easily. Such choices may help maintain the exchange, meet perceived expectations, or create a more familiar connection with the listener. Still, every language shift should not be treated as a deliberate effort to accommodate another person. A switch may also happen when a learner cannot recall a word, has limited vocabulary, or needs to explain an idea immediately.

Sociocultural perspectives on learning likewise emphasize the role of language and interaction. Vygotsky (1978) considered language a cultural and psychological resource that supports the development of understanding and participation in social activity. Poehner and Lantolf (2024) likewise discuss the relevance of sociocultural theory to second-language learning and educational practice. From this standpoint, students' language use can be interpreted in connection with their backgrounds, interactions, and learning contexts.

In the Philippines, students often use English, Filipino, and regional languages in everyday life, and these multilingual experiences are carried into school. For the present inquiry, English, Filipino, and Ilocano form a meaningful context for studying how learners use their linguistic resources during English recitation. Their choices may reflect language practices at home, familiarity with particular words, peer relationships, and the language expectations communicated by teachers.

These perspectives support an understanding of code-switching as a practice shaped by its social context. To understand students' experiences, the study must consider the cultural and interactional circumstances that may affect when and why they move between languages.

III. METHODOLOGY

- *Research Design*

Because the inquiry centers on how learners make sense of their own classroom experiences, a qualitative research design—such as a phenomenological or qualitative descriptive approach—is well suited to capturing students' perspectives, motivations, and lived accounts during English class recitation. The intended setting is Vigan National High School East, a multilingual school context where Grade 11 and Grade 12 senior high school learners interact using English, Filipino, and Ilocano.

- *Participants and Sampling*

Participants would be Grade 11 and Grade 12 senior high school students at Vigan National High School East who engage in code-switching during oral recitation in English classes. Purposive sampling can be used to select learners across grade levels who have direct experience shifting between languages when answering questions, explaining ideas, or participating in spoken classroom exchanges, ensuring varied perspectives on both helpful and challenging moments.

- *Data Collection and Thematic Analysis*

Data collection in a study built on this review would rely primarily on semi-structured individual interviews (and, where appropriate, brief focus group discussions or classroom observation notes to contextualize spoken exchanges) asking students about their reasons for code-switching, perceived benefits, difficulties in sustaining or expanding English responses, and views on classroom participation. Audio recordings can be transcribed verbatim—preserving original English, Filipino, and Ilocano expressions—and analyzed using thematic analysis. Coding can be organized around core dimensions identified in the literature, including communicative functions, comprehension and idea expression, confidence and anxiety, challenges to target-language development, and social or interpersonal influences, while remaining open to emergent themes from students' accounts.

- *Ethical Considerations and Trustworthiness*

Before collecting data from senior high school students, appropriate permissions would be secured from school leadership, along with informed consent from participants and assent/parental consent where required for minors. Participation would remain voluntary, identities and responses would be kept confidential through pseudonyms, and trustworthiness would be supported through careful transcription, audit trails, and checking interpretations against participant accounts.

IV. CONCLUSION

Summarizing existing scholarship shows that code-switching during English class recitation is neither a simple cure-all nor an automatic barrier to learning. For many multilingual learners, shifting between English, Filipino, and regional languages serves practical cognitive, emotional, and social purposes—helping clarify meaning, ease immediate expression, and support participation—while frequent or unmonitored reliance can constrain opportunities to build vocabulary and deliver sustained responses in English.

Crucially, the literature points to a need to listen directly to senior high school learners in specific oral tasks rather than relying solely on broader classroom generalizations or academic metrics. Investigating Grade 11 and Grade 12 students at Vigan National High School East

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offers a grounded way to understand how learners balance comprehension, confidence, social norms, and English language development when speaking up in class. Future research that pairs students' lived accounts with actual recitation patterns and instructional practices can help educators support both clear communication and steady growth in spoken English.

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➢ *Conflict of Interest Statement*

The author declares no conflicts of interest.

➢ *Ethical Statement*

This article is based solely on a qualitative narrative review and thematic synthesis of existing academic literature and relevant institutional publications. No primary data were collected from human participants, and ethical approval was therefore not required.

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