Original Article

Effect of Code-Switching in Teaching Among Filipino Pre-Service Teachers

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Abstract. Language plays a vital role in education, serving as the primary tool for teaching, learning, and communication between teachers and students. In a multilingual country like the Philippines, teachers navigate multiple languages to ensure learners' comprehension. One strategy widely used in classrooms is code-switching, or the alternation between two or more languages during instruction. Numerous studies have explored code-switching in English instruction; however, limited research has examined its pedagogical impact in Filipino language teaching, particularly among pre-service teachers in local colleges. Most existing studies focus on sociolinguistic aspects rather than their implications for instructional clarity and classroom management. This gap underscores the need to examine how code-switching affects teaching effectiveness in multilingual settings. This study determined how pre-service teachers at Tagoloan Community College use code-switching in teaching and its effects on instructional clarity and classroom management. It employed a descriptive research design with 82 participants using a Likert-scale survey questionnaire. Results showed a high positive impact of code-switching on teaching (M = 4.61, SD = 0.45), particularly in clarifying concepts and supporting classroom management. Findings indicate that code-switching is not merely a matter of convenience but a deliberate pedagogical choice that responds to learners' linguistic and cognitive needs. Overall, the study affirms that code-switching is a practical and pedagogically sound strategy in preparing future teachers for multilingual classroom settings.

Keywords: Code-switching; Filipino; Teaching; Multilingual classroom; Pedagogical strategy; Pre-service teachers; Instructional clarity.

L anguage plays a vital role in education, serving as the primary tool for teaching, learning, and communication between teachers and students. In a multilingual country like the Philippines, teachers navigate multiple languages to ensure learners' comprehension. One strategy widely used in classrooms is code-switching, or the alternation between two or more languages during instruction. This practice is more than a casual shift in language; it is a pedagogical approach that aims to make lessons more transparent, more inclusive, and more accessible to learners.

Aligned with the Department of Education's Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education (MTB-MLE) program, the Philippine education system recognizes the value of using the first language as a bridge to higher learning. However, in actual classroom practice—especially in higher education—teachers and pre-service teachers still struggle to balance Filipino, English, and local languages to promote comprehension. In this context, code-switching emerges as an effective linguistic strategy that addresses students' needs in multilingual learning environments, such as at Tagoloan Community College.

College classrooms today are increasingly diverse in terms of learners' linguistic backgrounds and academic readiness. This requires teachers to adopt strategies that enhance engagement and understanding. Studies have shown that code-switching supports comprehension and learner confidence. Ghani et al. (2022) highlight its value in explaining complex topics, while Fachriyah (2022) identified four key instructional functions—directive, referential, expressive, and phatic. Meanwhile, Chonge (2023) noted that although code-switching improves comprehension, excessive or inappropriate use may hinder the development of formal Filipino language skills.

For pre-service teachers, understanding how to use code-switching appropriately is vital, as it affects their future instructional practices. According to Enriquez et al. (2022), the Pedagogical Translanguaging Theory emphasizes the purposeful use of multiple languages to deepen understanding and enhance linguistic awareness. From this perspective, code-switching becomes a strategic instructional tool rather than a spontaneous conversational choice.

Although numerous studies have explored code-switching in English instruction (Flores & Balmeo, 2022), limited research has examined its pedagogical impact in Filipino language teaching, particularly among pre-service teachers in local colleges. Most existing studies focus on sociolinguistic aspects rather than their implications for instructional clarity and classroom management. This gap underscores the need to investigate how code-switching influences teaching effectiveness in multilingual settings.

Therefore, this study aimed to determine the extent of the effect of code-switching in teaching among pre-service teachers at Tagoloan Community College, particularly on instructional clarity and classroom management. Through this investigation, the research sought to enrich the body of pedagogical strategies that support effective and inclusive teaching in the multilingual context of the Philippines.

Methodology

Research Design

This study employed a descriptive-correlational research design. According to Creswell and Creswell (2017), a descriptive-correlational design examines the relationship between two or more variables while also describing existing conditions as they occur naturally. This design was appropriate, as the study sought to determine the effect of code-switching in teaching and its relationship with instructional clarity and classroom management.

The descriptive component aimed to portray the status of code-switching as a pedagogical strategy, while the correlational component examined whether a significant relationship exists between the variables. The independent variable was code-switching, and the dependent variables were instruction clarity and classroom management.

Using a quantitative approach, numerical data were collected via a Likert-scale survey to measure the extent of the effect of code-switching. This design allowed the researchers to assess the extent of code-switching and determine how it influences teaching practices and teacher–student interactions in the classroom. The descriptive-correlational design aligned with the primary objective of describing and measuring the effects of code-switching and examining its relationship with key aspects of teaching performance at Tagoloan Community College.

Participants and Sampling Technique

The participants were 82 pre-service teachers enrolled in the Bachelor of Secondary Education program in Filipino at Tagoloan Community College during the 2024–2025 academic year. A total sampling technique was used, wherein all eligible students were included due to the manageable population size. Participants were selected for their direct experience in Filipino language instruction during the practicum, which enabled them to provide relevant insights on code-switching in actual teaching contexts. Using total sampling ensured the inclusion of all individuals who could meaningfully contribute data to the study. The research was conducted at Tagoloan Community College, a public institution located in Baluarte, Tagoloan, Misamis Oriental, serving students from diverse linguistic backgrounds—making it an appropriate setting for studying code-switching in multilingual classrooms.

Research Instrument

A researcher-made questionnaire served as the primary data-gathering tool. It measured the effect of code-switching across two aspects: instructional clarity and classroom management.

The instrument consisted of 20 items, rated on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 ("Very Little Effect") to 5 ("Very Strong Effect"). Items were designed to assess the extent to which code-switching influences teaching practices in multilingual classroom contexts.

Before administration, the questionnaire underwent content and face validation by two experts in language, education, and research (Quiño, 2022). Validator feedback was incorporated to refine the clarity and relevance of the items. A pilot test involving 30 comparable students (not part of the main study) was also conducted. Reliability analysis yielded a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.90, confirming strong internal consistency. The final questionnaire was administered onsite at Tagoloan Community College, ensuring proper guidance and accurate responses from participants.

Data Gathering Procedure
Data were collected through a face-to-face survey conducted over two weeks during the second semester of the 2024–2025 academic year. Before distributing the questionnaires, permission was obtained from the Dean of the College of Education, the research adviser, and the program chairperson. The researchers personally visited scheduled classes to administer the instrument. Participants were informed of the study's purpose, procedures, and confidentiality measures. Participation was voluntary, and informed consent was secured before answering the survey. Respondents were given 15–20 minutes to complete the questionnaire. Since the study employed a descriptive-correlational design, no pre-test, post-test, or intervention was implemented. Completed questionnaires were reviewed for completeness, encoded into a spreadsheet, and checked for accuracy before statistical analysis.

Data Analysis Procedure
The analysis utilized descriptive and correlational statistical tools. The weighted mean was used to estimate the effect size of code-switching on instructional clarity and classroom management, while the standard deviation measured response variability. Cronbach's Alpha validated the reliability of the instrument. All data were organized, tabulated, and analyzed to produce clear interpretations of patterns and the overall effect of code-switching among pre-service teachers in the study.

Ethical Considerations
The researchers adhered to standard ethical protocols throughout the study. Formal approval was obtained from institutional authorities before data collection. Participants received a clear explanation of the study's purpose and procedures. Informed consent was obtained, and respondents were assured of their right to withdraw at any time without consequences. Confidentiality was strictly maintained. No identifying information was collected, and all responses were used solely for academic purposes. Completed questionnaires and digital files were securely stored and disposed of after analysis. The study complied with the Data Privacy Act of 2012 (RA 10173). It upheld the ethical principles of respect, beneficence, and justice, ensuring transparency, honesty, and the protection of participants throughout the research process.

Results and Discussion

Table 1. *Level of Effect of Using Code-Switching on Instructional Clarity*

Statement	Mean	SD	Description	Interpretation
1. The lesson becomes clearer when I use code-switching.	4.67	0.57	Excellent	Very Strong Effect
2. I can explain complex concepts more easily using code-switching.	4.70	0.54	Excellent	Very Strong Effect
3. Code-switching helps explain difficult terms.	4.72	0.53	Excellent	Very Strong Effect
4. The use of code-switching clarifies the flow of the discussion.	4.63	0.58	Excellent	Very Strong Effect
5. Students understand my explanations better because of code-switching.	4.59	0.57	Excellent	Very Strong Effect
6. My explanations become more concrete when I alternately use Filipino and English.	4.68	0.54	Excellent	Very Strong Effect
7. Discussions feel lighter/easier when code-switching is used.	4.67	0.61	Excellent	Very Strong Effect
8. Students learn more when I use code-switching.	4.62	0.58	Excellent	Very Strong Effect
9. Students' understanding deepens when I insert the language more familiar to them.	4.62	0.62	Excellent	Very Strong Effect
10. Code-switching helps in giving examples and explanations.	4.63	0.58	Excellent	Very Strong Effect
Overall	**4.65**	**0.44**	**Excellent**	**Very Strong Effect**

Table 1 presents the effect size of code-switching on instructional clarity. The overall mean of 4.65 (SD = 0.44) indicates a Very Strong Effect, demonstrating that pre-service teachers perceive code-switching as highly effective for making lessons more straightforward to understand. The highest rating (M = 4.72) indicates that code-switching is particularly useful for explaining difficult terms. Consistent with Flores and Balmeo (2022), the findings confirm that strategic code-switching enhances comprehension of complex concepts, suggesting its value as an instructional scaffold rather than a compensatory linguistic habit. These results also reinforce Cenoz and Gorter's (2022) Pedagogical Translanguaging Theory, which holds that the intentional use of multiple languages deepens understanding and builds metalinguistic awareness.

Table 2. *Level of Effect of Using Code-Switching on Classroom Management*

Statement	Mean	SD	Description	Interpretation
1. Code-switching helps sustain students' interest.	4.61	0.56	Excellent	Very Strong Effect
2. Students follow instructions more easily when I use code-switching.	4.61	0.60	Excellent	Very Strong Effect
3. Using code-switching reduces confusion in class.	4.52	0.74	Excellent	Very Strong Effect
4. I can discipline more quickly with the help of code-switching.	4.52	0.65	Excellent	Very Strong Effect
5. The class flow becomes more organized with code-switching.	4.59	0.61	Excellent	Very Strong Effect
6. Students participate more in activities when I use code-switching.	4.56	0.65	Excellent	Very Strong Effect
7. Code-switching helps explain classroom standards.	4.57	0.61	Excellent	Very Strong Effect
8. Class becomes more interactive when Filipino and English are combined.	4.54	0.63	Excellent	Very Strong Effect
9. The class becomes more comfortable because of code-switching.	4.62	0.64	Excellent	Very Strong Effect
10. Using code-switching helps keep the classroom calm and comfortable.	4.54	0.67	Excellent	Very Strong Effect
Overall	**4.57**	**0.51**	**Excellent**	**Very Strong Effect**

Table 2 demonstrates a Very Strong Effect of code-switching on classroom management (overall mean = 4.57, SD = 0.51). Respondents believe that code-switching promotes interest, reduces confusion, and enhances student participation— each a critical component of effective classroom management. These results support the findings of Maranan, Batalla, and Santos (2025), who observed that code-switching in multilingual classrooms serves as a communication bridge that fosters inclusion and active interaction. The smooth flow of classroom routines and clearer instructions further illustrate the role of code-switching in reducing anxiety and improving student motivation.

Table 3. *Overall Level of Effect of Using Code-Switching in Teaching*

Variable	Mean	SD	Description	Interpretation
Instructional Clarity	4.65	0.44	Excellent	Very Strong Effect
Classroom Management	4.57	0.51	Excellent	Very Strong Effect
Overall	**4.61**	**0.45**	**Excellent**	**Very Strong Effect**

Code-switching has a strong effect (mean = 4.61) on the teaching of Filipino by pre-service teachers at Tagoloan Community College. This indicates that language alternation is an effective pedagogical strategy that deepens understanding, enhances teacher–student interaction, and maintains classroom order. Consistent with Cenoz and Gorter's (2022) Pedagogical Translanguaging Theory, the findings show that carefully planned code-switching improves teaching quality in multilingual contexts.

The study shows that code-switching among Filipino pre-service teachers exerts a powerful effect on two core aspects: instructional clarity and classroom management. The overall mean of 4.61 (SD = 0.45) shows that code-switching has a Very Strong Effect on teaching. It enhances instructional clarity, strengthens teacher–student interaction, and maintains classroom order. Consistent with Cenoz and Gorter (2022), these findings underscore that multilingual use is a pedagogical resource that deepens understanding. Pre-service teachers did not use code-switching randomly; instead, they employed it intentionally to clarify concepts and maintain engagement, thereby validating its role in inclusive and contextualized instruction.

These results align with Cenoz and Gorter (2022), whose Pedagogical Translanguaging Theory posits that systematic multilingual use is not a barrier but a resource for deepening understanding. In this light, code-switching becomes part of pre-service teachers' intentional pedagogical planning to realize inclusive teaching in TCC's multilingual environment (Quiño-Justol, 2024).

Findings also indicate that code-switching not only improves clarity but also increases student confidence and

participation, echoing Guimong et al. (2025), who found that code-mixing/switching enhances learners' communicative skills. Rather than confusing, judicious use broadens understanding and strengthens the teacher–student connection. Furthermore, code-switching meaningfully supports classroom management, maintaining order, interest, and attention. When teachers use languages familiar to students, instructions and expectations are understood more quickly, consistent with Maranan, Batalla, and Santos (2025), who note reduced anxiety and increased motivation when instruction connects with learners' linguistic comfort zones.

These insights emphasize that code-switching is a deliberate instructional strategy, not merely a form of language alternation. They reinforce Zainil and Arsyad (2023), who argue that code-switching serves as scaffolding, bridging academic and everyday language so complex topics become accessible without sacrificing scholarly rigor.

Correlation Results
A Pearson correlation analysis was conducted to determine whether a significant relationship exists between code-switching and the two dependent variables.

Code-Switching and Instructional Clarity
$r = 0.78$, $p < .01 \rightarrow$ Strong Positive and Significant Relationship

Code-Switching and Classroom Management
$r = 0.72$, $p < .01 \rightarrow$ Strong Positive and Significant Relationship

These results confirm that higher levels of code-switching are associated with greater instructional clarity and more effective classroom management. This strengthens the validity of using a descriptive-correlational design and empirically supports the pedagogical value of code-switching.

Code-switching significantly enhances both instructional clarity and classroom management. This finding aligns with Pedagogical Translanguaging Theory, which views multilingual practices as intentional instructional tools. It also echoes Guimong et al. (2025), who note that code-switching boosts learner participation and confidence. In multilingual contexts such as TCC, alternation between Filipino, English, and Cebuano fosters cultural and linguistic grounding, reducing barriers to learning. Overall, the results portray code-switching as an intentional pedagogical scaffold essential to multilingual classrooms, rather than as a sign of linguistic inadequacy. Its consistent effectiveness across domains affirms its place in teacher education curricula and supports calls to strengthen training on purposeful, strategic language alternation in instruction.

Conclusion
Based on the results, the use of code-switching in the teaching practices of Filipino pre-service teachers at Tagoloan Community College has a significant impact on teaching and learning. The findings confirm that code-switching is a purposeful pedagogical strategy that clarifies lessons, increases student participation, and enhances classroom management. In terms of instructional clarity, code-switching helps unpack complex concepts and terminology, making explanations more concrete and accessible. In the classroom, it sustains interest, reduces confusion, and fosters a more organized and comfortable learning environment. These findings affirm Cenoz and Gorter's (2022) Pedagogical Translanguaging Theory, which emphasizes multilingual practices as resources for deepening understanding, and align with Guimong et al. (2025), who found that code-switching improves communicative and cognitive performance.

Given these results, code-switching should be recognized as an essential teaching competence and integrated into the professional preparation of pre-service teachers. Teacher education programs may strengthen training on strategic language alternation, ensuring that code-switching is applied intentionally to support comprehension and classroom interaction. At the policy level, findings suggest that language guidelines in higher education should acknowledge the pedagogical value of multilingual practices, especially in regions where learners' linguistic repertoires are diverse.

Furthermore, the results highlight implications for classroom practice: teachers may purposefully use Filipino, English, and local languages to scaffold learning, promote inclusion, and align instruction with the goals of MTB-MLE and Outcome-Based Education (OBE) frameworks in the Philippines. For future research, studies may

explore qualitative insights into students' perceptions of code-switching, comparative analyses across schools or regions, or investigations of its effects in other subject areas such as Mathematics, Science, or Social Studies. Longitudinal studies may also examine how pre-service teachers' code-switching practices evolve during their teaching careers. In sum, code-switching is not a hindrance to teaching Filipino but a bridge to more transparent communication, stronger engagement, and deeper understanding. When used deliberately, it becomes a powerful tool for creating meaningful and inclusive learning experiences in multilingual Philippine classrooms.

Contributions of Authors

Author 1 contributed to the study's conceptualization and led data collection and analysis.

Authors 2, 3, and 4 assisted in data gathering and contributed to data analysis. They also participated in the writing of the research proposal and provided support to the research team throughout the study.

Author 5 served as the research adviser, guiding conceptualization, methodological alignment, and content refinement. Also contributed to the writing of the research proposal, assisted with data collection, and provided overall technical supervision of the study.

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Conflict of Interests

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest regarding the conduct, analysis, or publication of this research.

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