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### CODE-SWITCHING HABITS, ENGLISH LANGUAGE USE AND LANGUAGE EXPOSURE AMONG STUDENTS WHO STUDY THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE

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#### ABSTRACT

This study aimed to find out the code-switching habits, English language use and language exposure among students who study the English language. The first set of respondents composed of forty-five (45) graduating Bachelor of Arts in English Language (AB-EL) students at the Visayas State University (VSU) answered a survey questionnaire adopted from Rios and Campos' study (2013). It focused on the the students' code-switching habits and some topics or fields where they tend to code-switch. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, reliability measures, and correlation coefficient. Results showed that majority of the respondents had a habit to introduce isolated words from another language into a sentence as they code-switch. This implies that the respondents knew more than two languages since they could not code-switch if they only knew one (1) language or dialect. The fields or topics they tend to code-switch were more on words concerning technology. This is understandable since every technology introduces new terminologies which are better quoted than translated. The Pearson chi-square of 65.3011 probability value of 0 indicated that the respondents' code-switching habits do not influence their choice of topics presented. Findings also revealed that code-switching is useful to minimize language barriers and that as of present, code-switching is popular since people nowadays are either bilingual or multilingual. The second set of respondents composed of forty (40) AB-EL students at VSU answered two survey questionnaires, one for language use adopted from Latu (1994) and the other one for language exposure from Magno and Carvalho (2009). Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and Spearman's Rho correlation analysis was used to determine the relationship between English language use and language exposure among the respondents. Results revealed that majority of the students are moderately exposed to English language and some are frequent users of the English language. The study further revealed that the more frequent the students are exposed to the English language, the higher is their frequency use, and the seldom they are exposed, the lower is their language use. Thus, there is a significant relationship between English language use and language exposure of the respondents.

**KEYWORDS:** code-switching, language use, language exposure

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#### INTRODUCTION

A code refers to language or a variety of language or any kind of system employed for communication (Whardaugh, 2006). A particular code (a particular language, dialect, style, register, or variety) must be chosen when people want to speak. More than one code can be used in speaking, especially for people who have knowledge or skills in more than one language or dialect. People can and will shift, as the need arises, from one code to another. This phenomenon is considered as code-switching. Furthermore, speakers have the ability to use language varieties in their language repertoire (Schendi and Wright, 2011). This means different things depending on speaker and

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context. For instance, bilingual speakers often use two languages within the same setting when they code-switch, whereas, monolingual speakers code-switch within their language repertoire which can be example of the use of dialects and separate words from other languages. Primarily, code-switching is not a result of lack of knowledge or ability in one or both languages (Bond, 2001). Based on the current understanding of this phenomenon, it requires of some level of grammatical competence. Interestingly, code-switching has been reported when bilinguals are dealing with topic that causes anxiety or is too embarrassing to discuss in their first language such as sexual attitudes or embarrassing experience. On the other hand, English language use in and outside the classroom has been a controversial topic of discussion in the field of teaching English as a second language for many years (Shvidko, 2012). To date, there has been little agreement with regard to what proportion of English and students' first language should be considered ideal to promote more successful acquisition of the target language. This phenomenon also has something to do with language exposure. Magno and Carvalho (2009) refer to language exposure as any contact which occurs between a language and an individual. According to this definition, any kind of language contact can be considered as exposure whether it is through verbal or written communication, books, songs, and so on. Thus, a language learner may not only get exposure in the class through formal learning, but also from random contacts with media such as the internet, newspapers, brochures, and any other forms of the target language. The graduating AB-EL students have been practicing code-switching in their daily conversations. They encounter students who speak two or more languages at the same time. Usually, people speak with same language and switch from one to another, either it is done consciously or subconsciously. It still contains certain purposes, and this is a good topic of study. Moreso, only few studies explored on the students' English language use with regard to their language exposure. So, it is high time to determine the code-switching, language use and language exposure among students who study the English language.

### OBJECTIVES

This study aimed to determine the code-switching habits, English language use and language exposure among students who study the English language. Specifically, the study aimed to:

1. Distinguish the students' code-switching habits;
2. Evaluate the fields or topics where students tend to code-switch;
3. Determine the relationship between the students' code-switching habits and the fields or topics they tend to code-switch;
4. Determine the students' English language use and language exposure; and
5. Determine the relationship between the students' English language use and language exposure.

### METHODOLOGY

This study followed a descriptive survey method research design. The first set of respondents composed of forty-five (45) graduating AB-EL students at VSU answered a survey questionnaire adopted from Rios and Campos' study (2013). The second set of respondents composed of forty (40) also graduating AB-EL students at VSU answered two survey questionnaires adopted from Latu's study (1994) on language use and Magno and Carvalho's study (2009) on language exposure. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, reliability measures, and correlation coefficient. Pearson chi-square and Spearman's Rho were employed for correlation analyses.

### RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the findings, it was revealed that the respondents' code-switching habits to introduce "Isolated Words" (e.g., "Gawin mo na ang research") is high, "In-between Utterances" (e. g., "Gawin natin ito like this ba") is moderate, and "Within The Same Utterance" (Nag-research ka ba para ma-maintain ang ganda mo?) is low. This matches what Boztepe (2000) stated that there is general tendency among students to introduce isolated words from another language into a sentence. Example is the utterance "Please come and let us tanan" in which the isolated Filipino word "tanan" (elope) is introduced. This insertion of lexical items from vernacular to English, or vice versa is preferred over the alternation of codes between several utterances, or code-switching within the same utterance. More than half of the respondents reported that they always code-switch in the fields of texting followed by calling

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then in sports. They often tend to code-switch with topics or ideas related to technology having extremely high frequency in it. However, in the the Pearson chi-square correlation analysis, result revealed that the students' code switching habits do not influence their choice of topics or ideas or fields they tend to code-switch. This means that there is no significant relationship between the two variables. Pertaining to English language use, results showed that there was a less frequent use ("sometimes") of English for communication at home, with brothers or sisters, with parents and relatives, neighbors and friends, and in non-English classes. Inside English classes, it was evident that the respondents were more likely to use the English language ("most times"). When it comes to respondents' frequency distribution on how well they speak, understand, read, and write in English language, all of them basically ended to "fairly well". This implies that they have a good command of the English language. For the respondents' language exposure, findings revealed that they were "always" exposed in school and with the media, but "sometimes" only at home and with friends. The study further revealed that the more frequent the respondents are exposed to the English language, the higher is their frequency use, and the seldom they are exposed, the lower is their frequency use. Therefore, there is a significant relationship between the respondents' language use and exposure 0.01 level of significance (2-tailed).

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### CONCLUSION

This study has come to conclude that the students' use of code-switching in instructions and interactions is highly independent. Thus, their code-switching habits do not influence their choice of topics or ideas and as to where they do code-switching. This study suggests that resorting to code-switching at the key moments during a conversation may help students continue participating and interacting, and in the end might regain them confidence and learn faster. Furthermore, the respondents' perception to their English language use which was then "Fairly well" can help them develop their language skills. With the result, it is highly recommended for the teachers to develop necessary developments and devise teaching strategies on how to integrate learning content with the students' current code-switching habits, English language use and language exposure.

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