Code-Switching: The Use of "Gay Lingo" Among Educators in the Classroom

Ceasar Ian P. Sabillo, MAEd.

University of the Visayas Colon Street, Cebu, City Philippines

ABSTRACT: This study investigates "gay lingo" as a form of code-switching among educators in junior high school classrooms in the Philippines. Using a qualitative phenomenological approach, it explores the experiences of six educators at the Tangan Integrated School in Barangay Datalbukay, Glan, Sarangani Province, Philippines. Through interviews, the study examined how educators use this linguistic strategy to enhance student engagement, facilitate communication, and promote a positive learning environment. Findings showed that "gay lingo" fosters collaboration, leadership, and conflict resolution among students, resonating with their social dynamics and cultural contexts. Educators reported that flamboyant language captures students' attention and makes lessons more relatable and enjoyable. This study highlights the complexities of language use in educational settings, emphasizing the need for teachers to navigate cultural sensitivities while addressing language barriers. The research contributes to understanding code-switching as a pedagogical tool, advocating for its thoughtful application to improve academic outcomes and student interactions in diverse classrooms. The findings suggest a re-evaluation of language policies in education to embrace inclusive linguistic practices.

KEYWORDS: Code-switching, gay lingo, educators, student engagement, qualitative research, classroom dynamics, inclusive education, language policy, Philippines.

INTRODUCTION

Code-switching (alternating languages or dialects during discourse) is common in multilingual educational settings. Research on language proficiency, topic complexity, and classroom interactions has aimed to clarify how this practice affects student participation and academic performance. Understanding code-switching's educational implications requires examining both educators' and students' perspectives and experiences.

The use of code-switching in foreign language instruction is contentious. Amiri and Abdollahi Saryazdi (2024) contended that incorporating their perspectives into EFL classrooms can empower students. Instructors have employed it to enhance their comprehension of English's pragmatic and sociocultural aspects. Inter-sentential code-switching was the most prevalent among students, followed by intra-sentential and tag switching.

Abdulla and Abbas (2024) identified challenges in language learning that may cause significant issues. For some, acquiring a second language can be traumatic and fueled by anxiety and tension, particularly during conversations. Many language education researchers advocate for code-switching in foreign-language classrooms to enhance learning. However, considerable evidence suggests that this impedes learning and reduces students' exposure to the second language.

Strategic code-switching is a crucial teaching tool in multilingual classrooms, in which instructors switch between languages to improve student comprehension and engagement. By explaining complex concepts in a student's native language, teachers can make the material more accessible and relevant. This technique addresses language barriers, respects diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds, and creates inclusive educational environments. Additionally, code-switching enhances language proficiency by offering authentic contexts for language use, thereby improving the comprehension and retention of academic content.

The use of code-switching in English language instruction is contentious. Critics argue that educators should exclusively use the target language in classrooms (Rohmah 2023), believing that authentic language use should mirror that of native speakers. Additionally, code-switching is often viewed as improper and inferior, stemming from inadequate language skills rather than a deliberate teaching strategy.

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As classrooms become more linguistically diverse, urgent research on code-switching, particularly with informal or emerging languages like "Gay Lingo," is needed. This research is essential for identifying the optimal methods to use code-switching to enhance educational outcomes. Educators can develop more adaptable and inclusive teaching strategies by studying their impact on various student populations and learning environments. Additionally, understanding the challenges and benefits of code-switching will equip teachers to manage complex linguistic settings and support students' academic success. In an interconnected world, ongoing research on code-switching is crucial for evolving educational practices to meet the needs of all students.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

This study entitled Code-Switching: The Use of "Gay Lingo" Among Educators in the Classroom, Specifically, it answers the following questions.

1.) How do teachers perceive the influence of incorporating "gay lingo"?
1.1 Student Engagement and
1.2 Understanding?
2.) How does the use of "gay lingo" by teachers influence peer interactions among students?

SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS:

The study "Code-Switching: The Use of 'Gay Lingo' Among Educators in the Classroom" focused on six (6) junior high school instructors at Tangan Integrated School, Barangay Datalbukay, Glan, Sarangani Province, Philippines

The participants included one (1) Grade 7 teachers, two (2) Grade 8 teachers, one (1) Grade 9 teachers, and two (2) Grade 10 teachers. This research examined how teachers incorporate "gay linggo" in their classroom instruction as a pedagogical approach to deliver the Department of Education's basic education curriculum. The investigation centered on educators' experiences using this linguistic strategy within the classroom setting.

METHODOLOGY

This study employed a qualitative phenomenological approach and narrative descriptive method to investigate the personal experiences of six (6) junior high school educators at Tangan Integrated School in Barangay Datalbukay, Glan, Sarangani Province. The investigation centered on instructors' implementation of this language strategy within their classroom settings.

The study subjects underwent extensive interviews lasting approximately two hours to gain a thorough insight into their experiences. This study sought to explore the experiences of middle school educators in the Philippines' Department of Education using a descriptive approach. This methodology involves a comprehensive assessment of the methods and processes, including documentation, transcription, data analysis, and interpretation.

The results of the phenomenological investigation are presented using the conventional APA format. Themes were identified and described, accompanied by excerpts from participants' transcribed accounts. Direct quotations were incorporated to substantiate this analysis.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

This research aimed to explore Code-Switching: The Use of "Gay Lingo" Among Educators in the Classroom. To bolster the examination of the collected data, researchers referred to relevant authorities and utilized citations to strengthen the evidence.

Teachers' perception in the use of "Gay Lingo"

Student engagement is vital in education, as it affects both academic and personal growth. Parsons and Taylor (2021) found that highly engaged students are more involved in class activities, better retain information, and achieve higher results.

A2:   Lisud kayo kuhaon ang attention sa mga bata karon kay dali ra kayo sila mawad.an ug   interes. *(It's very difficult to capture the attention of children nowadays because they easily lose interest.)*

IN: Kung mawad-an silag interes unsay pinakadabest nga ginabuhat nimo Sir? *(What's the best thing you do, Sir, when they lose interest?)*

A2:   Sagulan nakog binayot nga storya ang explanation usahay, especially kanang makita Nakong wala na sa attention ang bata. *(Sometimes, I mix in some humorous or flamboyant stories into my explanations, especially when I notice that the students are losing attention.)*

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IN: Makasabot pud ang mga bata Sir? (Do the students understand as well, Sir?)

A2:   Actually oo, tungod kay ang mga bata karon naa naman guy barkadang bayot both lalake ug babae maong kung binayuton nimo ug call ang attention usahay maka gets dayon. *(Actually, yes, because nowadays, kids have gay friends, both male and female, so when you use flamboyant language to get their attention, they get it right away.)*

Promoting student involvement is essential for creating an effective educational environment, enhancing learning outcomes, and preparing students for future challenges. Actively engaged students take responsibility for their learning, contribute to discussions, and seek knowledge beyond the school. Ignoring engagement overlooks its significant impact on academic performance, making it a priority for educators and institutions (Groccia 2018).

IN: Minimal ra ang class attention panahon nga nagklase ka sir? *(Is class attention minimal when you're teaching, Sir?)*

Y4:   Depende sa lesson usahay minimal usahay taas pud biya. Naa rajuy time nga lutang ang bata labi nag di nimo dayon makuha ang attention pagsugod sa lesson. *(It depends on the lesson; sometimes it's minimal, sometimes it's quite high. There are just times whenstudents lose focus, especially if you don't capture their attention at the start of the lesson.)*

IN: Unya pag-ingun ana sir, unsay maayong ginabuhat nimo? *(So, when that happens, Sir, what do you usually do?)*

Y4:   Sa akong klase daghan pud biya mga bayot nga studyante, 5 sila kabuok maong yagaw jud pirme pero kung akoang gamitag binayot nga storya labi na sa discussion makagets jud dayon sila. Labi na sa part nga naga hatag kag example, usahay kung binayuton nimo naa silay retention pati na mga classmate's kay expose man sa "gay linggo" *(In my class, there are quite a few students who are part of the LGBTQ+ community, five of them to be exact, which means the atmosphere is always lively. But if I use flamboyant or humorous language during discussions, they immediately get it. Especially when giving examples, if you use 'gay lingo,' they retain the information better, and their classmates do too since they are also exposed to it.)*

Engaged learners are responsible for their education, actively participate in classes, and seek knowledge beyond traditional environments. Overlooking engagement undermines its impact on academic success; hence, it is vital for teachers and educational institutions. Using Gay Lingo in teaching enhances cultural awareness.

Almario (2021) observed that it fosters appreciation for linguistic diversity and addresses issues of gender and sexuality. Educators using this method enhance inclusivity, mirror societal changes, and promote respect for all.

IN: Always ba nimo ginagamit ang "gay linggo" maam as a part of your medium of instruction panahon nga nagklase ka? *(Do you always use 'gay lingo' as part of your medium of instruction when teaching?)*

B3:   Actually, dili bya Maam, kay not everyone in my class makasabot ug storying binayot, kanang sa activities lang hinoon kung mag differentiated instructions kay magamit jud sya, labi nag ikaw teacher kabalo kang bayot ug batasan ang estudyante. *(Actually, no, Ma'am, because not everyone in my class understands flamboyant language. I mainly use it during activities with differentiated instructions, especially when I know that the student is comfortable with it.)*

According to Abulog et al. (n.d.), gay lingo, a form of communication used by LGBTQ++ groups, articulates their aspirations and dynamic lifestyles, originating from their encounters with prejudice and marginalization. This unique dialect empowers their presence within a broader community and is derived from diverse origins.

VX: In my case, isa raman sab kabuok ang akoang studyante nga bayot Maam, maong dili jud nako siya magamit as a part of the medium of instructions that I normally use inside the classroom kung mag klase ko. *(In my case, I only have one student who is gay, Ma'am, so I don't really use it as part of the medium of instruction that I normally use in the classroom when I teach.)*

IN: In terms sa normal nga classroom instructions maam or conversation pano nimo magamit? *(In terms of normal classroom instructions or conversation, Ma'am, how do you use it?)*

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VX: Kana hinoon Maam, kay ako aware man ko nga expose naman jud ni ang mga bata sa diverse nga gamit sa language, kung gusto nako personalon ug storya, labi nag naay sala ug mureprimand ko ug studyante kay nakasala or muremind ko magamit siya nga dili kayo mahurt, mura syag idiomatic expression ang dating usahay. *(Well, Maam, I am aware that students are now exposed to diverse language use, so when I want to speak to them personally, especially if I need to reprimand a student for something they did wrong or remind them of something, I use language that won't hurt them too much. Sometimes it comes across like an idiomatic expression.)*

IN: Unya sir unsay dating sa bata, makasabot dayon o dili? *(And how do the students respond, Maam? Do they understand right away or not?)*

VX: Usahay makagets dayon, usahay pud dili depende rajud maam kung siya mismo nakagets sa kung unsa may iyahang gibuhat. *(Sometimes they get it right away, but sometimes they don't. It really depends on whether the student understands what they did.)*

Teachers use "gay lingo" thoughtfully, as Salvador et al. (2024) note that not all students may be familiar or comfortable with it. Assessing classroom dynamics and student responses is therefore crucial. Appropriately used, "gay lingo" can foster connections and enhance communication. The key is to balance its use with sensitivity to students' diverse backgrounds, ensuring an inclusive and respectful classroom environment.

Teachers experiences on the use of "Gay Lingo" inside the classroom

Weinmann et al. (2023) examined the needs of educators and students during the move to remote learning and its impact on student engagement. This shift to online and hybrid learning has produced new instructional and learning methods for both teachers and students, potentially influencing the future of language education and teaching practices. Consider the following extracts.

IN: Sa imuhang pag gamit ug "Gay Lingo" sa klase maam, paano siya nakaapekto sa entire duration sa imuhang klase? *(In your use of 'Gay Lingo' in class, ma'am, how does it affect the entire duration of your class?)*

Y4:   If imuhang students pareho sa akoa sir na expose sa mga taong naga gamit ug "gay lingo" kay naa silay mag kailan nga often nagagamit, relatable jud para nila. *(If your students, like me sir, are exposed to people who use 'gay lingo' because they have friends who often use it, it is relatable for them.)*

IN: In what way maam? *(In what way, maam?)*

Y4:   Dali ang processing sa information especially feedback ug recall kay the conversation would mean personal and mas direct sa bata. *(Processing information, especially feedback and recall, is easier because the conversation feels personal and more direct to the student.)*

In language classes, the relationships between educators and learners as well as interactions among students are crucial. A supportive teacher-student dynamic fosters an environment conducive to language acquisition. Instructors must effectively involve students in their learning environment to create a productive classroom atmosphere and deliver valuable linguistic inputs. Members of an academic community should have access to effective instructional techniques.

IN: Teaching language maam, unsa may mga impact Nakita nimo in using "gay lingo" inside the classroom, especially sa klase? *(Teaching language, ma'am, what impacts do you see from using 'gay lingo' inside the classroom, especially on the class?)*

J1:   Actually, maam naa syay negative impact labi nag not everyone is exposed to the use of it. Makacause ra syag confusion ug samot sa panghuna-huna sa bata. *(Actually, ma'am, it has a negative impact, especially if not everyone is exposed to it. It can cause confusion and further complicate the students' understanding.)*

IN: In what way maam?

J1:   Di nila dayon masabtan ang instructions or di sila makaconnect nimo, mahulog nga mawater ang discussions or mahimong irrelevant na hinoon. Maong mas mayo pang native language sa bata kay mas direct ang learning process. *(They may not immediately understand the instructions or connect with you, which can dilute the discussions or make them irrelevant. That's why it's better to use the students' native language as it's more direct for the learning process.)*

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According to Tujuba et al. (2014), multiple factors contribute to the students' inadequate English proficiency. These include limited access to language schools, English instructors reverting to their native language during instruction, ineffective or uninspiring teaching methodologies, and students' negative perceptions of English itself. These elements were identified as the primary causes of insufficient English language competence. Conversely, Simpson (2018) explored the complexities surrounding profanity in academic exercises and real-world communication. Cultural expectations shape what is considered polite or impolite, and influence native speakers to refrain from using certain words. In contrast, non-native speakers struggle to understand taboo languages, often learning through trial and error. This situation prompts inquiries into students' perceptions of taboo words and their appropriate places within educational settings.

IN: In what way nakatabang ang "gay linggo" sa peer dynamics sa mga bata maam? *(In what way does using 'gay lingo' help with the peer dynamics among the students, ma'am?)*

G8: There is leadership and collaboration maam especially on atsk nga murequire jud ug presence sa mga bata pareho anang mag pa role play ka or any presentation, kay ilaha jung pillion tong makamotivate nila nga mupresent sab ug tarong. *(There is leadership and collaboration, ma'am, especially in tasks that really require the presence of the students, like when you have them role-play or do any presentation, because they choose*
those who can motivate them to present properly.)

IN: Aside ana maam naa pabay lain nga way? *(Aside from that, ma'am, are there other ways?)*

G8: Conflict resolution sab maam, usahay magamit ang "gay linggo" aron mapagaan ang mga gibati sa mga batang nag away labi nag naay mga bikil kay makacrack man kag jokes easily ug makarelate jud dayon sila. *(For conflict resolution, ma'am, sometimes*
'gay lingo' is used to lighten the mood of students who are arguing, especially if there are disagreements, because you can easily crack jokes, and they can relate right away.)

Peer relations significantly impact children's development, school engagement, and academic success (Muñoz-Hurtado 2018). However, the role of teachers in these relationships remains underexplored. Peer relationships in schools: examining homogeneity, engagement, friendship, status, and centrality. Teachers' influence on peer relations, considering their roles as protectors, 'architects, social referents, and involvement in performance or cooperative teaching. It concludes that teachers should be attentive to children's informal relationships, as they influence them intentionally or not. By fostering positive relationships, teachers can enhance children's development and academic performance.

CONCLUSIONS

The utilization of LGBTQ+ terminology, such as "gay lingo," by educators in academic settings fosters an inclusive environment among students, enhancing their sense of belonging and engagement, which is crucial for their academic and social development. Furthermore, it renders lessons more relatable for all students, introduces diverse perspectives, encourages open-mindedness, and promotes a tolerant educational community. However, not all students are familiar with this terminology, potentially leading to confusion and misunderstanding, which may impede communication and alienate certain students, thereby hindering their participation.

Furthermore, such a language may be deemed unprofessional or inappropriate in certain educational settings, potentially conflicting with the expectations of parents, administrators, or stakeholders, resulting in disputes or grievances, disrupting the learning environment and imposing additional stress on educators. Consequently, it is imperative for instructors to be cognizant of these potential drawbacks and endeavor to establish a balanced and supportive classroom atmosphere that respects and values the diversity of all students.
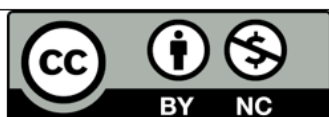
IMPLICATIONS FOR EDUCATIONAL PRACTICE

The incorporation of LGBTQ+ terminology, including colloquial expressions such as "gay lingo," into educational settings promotes an inclusive classroom environment, fostering appreciation for diversity, mitigating bullying, and cultivating empathy. The judicious utilization of such a language by educators serves to model these values, thereby establishing a harmonious atmosphere in which all students experience a sense of validation. Nevertheless, a nuanced approach is necessary to prevent potential alienation or confusion of students unfamiliar with this terminology.

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Professional development initiatives are essential to equip educators with the requisite skills for the appropriate implementation of the LGBTQ+ language, while engagement with parents and the broader community facilitates support for such initiatives. Addressing these challenges contributes to the creation of a supportive learning environment, which yields benefits for all students and enhances both academic and social outcomes.

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