

Code-Switching in Language Classrooms of Key Stage 2 Learners: Basis for Designing an Intervention Program

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Abstract. It is common for learners to have difficulty comprehending lessons taught in English, leaving them unable to fully participate in class activities and express themselves. Teachers respond to this problem by resorting to code-switching as an instructional approach. Although code-switching is widely used in classrooms, researchers still know comparatively little about its scope, patterns, and roles in classroom interaction. This study explored the use of code-switching as a pedagogical approach in Key Stage 2 classrooms at Bayombong Central School among twenty-two sections and their teachers, using a descriptive-qualitative design with content and thematic analysis. Data were gathered through classroom observations using a data card based on Poplack's typology and through focus group discussions with selected teachers, using purposive sampling. Findings showed that code-switching was used throughout all stages of classroom instruction, with intra-sentential switching the most frequent type (68%), followed by inter-sentential switching (17%) and tag-switching (15%). Code-switching helped establish positive teacher-learner relationships by reducing learners' language anxiety and increasing their self-confidence, and reinforced learning through clarification, vocabulary decoding, and scaffolding of higher-order tasks. These findings informed the development of CODE-BRIDGE, a strategic, year-long intervention program for the relational and instructional use of code-switching in Key Stage 2 English classrooms. Overall, the study establishes that code-switching is a functional and effective pedagogical strategy that supports comprehension, interaction, and learning in multilingual classroom.

Introduction

In alignment with the 4th Sustainable Development Goal, which calls for inclusive, equitable, and quality education for all, multilingualism has become a defining feature of the contemporary classroom. The continuing movement of people, cultures, and languages has created learning settings where students bring diverse linguistic backgrounds into the classroom, presenting both opportunities and challenges for teachers seeking to keep instruction inclusive and meaningful. Code-switching - the use of two or more languages within a single discourse (Poplack, 1980) - has emerged as one adaptive response to this diversity. Once examined mainly as a linguistic phenomenon, it is increasingly understood as a functional and purposeful teaching tool (Garcia & Wei, 2014; Li, 2020).

A growing body of research points to the pedagogical benefits of code-switching in multilingual education. It has been observed to aid comprehension of novel vocabulary and complex ideas, allowing teachers to draw on students' first language to fill comprehension gaps (Macaro, 2020; Rose & Galloway, 2019), and to support engagement, as students feel freer to participate once language barriers are lowered. More recent research has also highlighted its value as a scaffolding method that helps students move from their first language toward the target language (Lin, 2022; Turnbull, 2023). Despite these benefits, its implementation in the classroom has tended to remain informal, and its longer-term effects remain poorly understood.

In the Philippines, the linguistic landscape adds further complexity, with more than 180 languages used as mediums of communication across the country. The Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education (MTB-MLE) policy under DepEd

Order No. 74, s. 2009, allows learners' first language to serve as the primary medium of instruction in the early years, supporting literacy development in a language learners fully understand. As learners progress through basic education, instruction gradually shifts toward Filipino and English, requiring students to move from familiar linguistic systems to more formal academic languages in a relatively short span of time. This shift becomes especially consequential at Key Stage 2 (Grades 4 to 6), when English becomes a primary medium of instruction for subjects such as Science and Mathematics that demand command of technical vocabulary, even as many learners continue to rely on their first language for comprehension in cognitively demanding situations - a gap that naturally gives rise to code-switching by both teachers and learners.

The urgency of addressing these linguistic and literacy gaps is underscored by national data. DepEd Memorandum No. 034, s. 2025, reporting results from the End-of-School-Year Comprehensive Rapid Literacy Assessment (CRLA) for School Year 2024-2025, noted a significant number of Grade 3 students identified as Low Emerging Readers in English, with documented difficulties in letter-sound knowledge, decoding, and reading grade-level texts. As these students advance to Grade 4, where English becomes the primary medium of instruction, they enter a precarious position in which limited literacy skills constrain full participation in learning unless addressed appropriately and promptly. In linguistically diverse regions such as Nueva Vizcaya, teachers commonly encounter learners who do not fully comprehend lessons taught in English, leading to reluctance to participate, difficulty articulating ideas, and disengagement. Many teachers have found a practical, if unsystematic, solution in code-switching between English and Filipino. This observed gap between code-switching's evident usefulness and the absence of a systematic approach to it prompted this study, which explored Key Stage 2 classrooms' code-switching experiences as a basis for designing an intervention program toward improved teaching and learning and longer-term language competence.

Theoretical Framework

This study drew on an integrative set of sociolinguistic and pedagogical theories. Gumperz's (1982) interactional sociolinguistics frames code-switching as a resource for providing contextualization cues that help speakers deliver meaning, clarify intentions, and manage social relations - in classrooms, this implies that teachers code-switch with specific instructional intentions, such as clarifying concepts, emphasizing key points, checking comprehension, and building rapport. This perspective was combined with Poplack's (1980) structural typology, which classifies code-switching into tag-switching (the insertion of tags or short expressions from one language into another), intra-sentential switching (occurring within a sentence), and inter-sentential switching (occurring between sentences).

Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) further informed the study by treating interaction as the essence of language learning (Richards & Rodgers, 2014); in multilingual settings, code-switching helps facilitate that interaction and supports language learning through purposeful, comprehension-focused language use, particularly for difficult subjects such as Mathematics and Science. Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education (MTB-MLE) provided a further theoretical anchor, emphasizing the use of learners' first language (L1) as a vehicle for learning other languages and enhancing cognition (Garcia, 2017); in this light, code-switching becomes a practical technique that helps students connect prior knowledge with academic content taught in English or Filipino. Finally, Vygotsky's (1978) Social Constructivism frames learning as a socially interactive process mediated by language, with code-switching serving as a mediation tool that helps learners work within their zone of proximal development and supports positive teacher-student relationships. Together, these theories - Poplack's structural classification guiding the analysis of code-switching types, and Gumperz's interactional theory explaining their communicative functions - offered a coherent basis for analyzing code-switching as an effective pedagogical tool.

Conceptual Framework

Following this theoretical grounding, the study proceeded along the process flow shown in Figure 1, which traces a systematic progression from how data were gathered, to how they were analyzed and validated, to how they were converted into an intervention program. Data gathering, the first phase, combined classroom observation with focus group discussions: observations documented the practical use of code-switching during actual instruction, particularly its frequency, context, and the strategies teachers employed, while the discussions offered a deeper look at teachers' experiences and perceptions of code-switching. Data processing, the second phase, applied content analysis to classify occurrences of code-switching according to Poplack's typology, and thematic analysis to surface recurring patterns of meaning in the data set.



Figure 1. Process Flow of the Study

The third phase, findings, summarized the extent of code-switching utilization and its functions - in terms of patterns and how it supported relationship-building and learning - with results validated through an interrater/intercoder reliability test using Cohen's Kappa and percentage agreement. In the final phase, outcome, a program aimed at maximizing the effective use of code-switching was developed based on the study's findings, along with a structured implementation plan to guide teachers in applying the intervention in the classroom. In sum, the conceptual framework shows how the research process moves logically from data gathering, through systematic analysis and validation, to the development of an evidence-based intervention program.

Statement of the Problem

The primary objective of this study was to examine the role of code-switching in language classrooms among Key Stage 2 learners and to develop an intervention program that optimized its strategic use in instruction. Specifically, the study aimed to: (1) determine the extent of code-switching utilization in language teaching as observed across classroom instruction; (2) identify the patterns of code-switching used in classroom instruction in terms of tag-switching, inter-sentential switching, and intra-sentential switching; (3) describe how code-switching promoted relationship-building between teachers and learners and reinforced learning in terms of understanding, participation, and motivation; and (4) develop an intervention program to optimize the strategic use of code-switching for improving language instruction and student learning outcomes.

Significance of the Study

The findings were intended to benefit several groups. Students may communicate more effectively with teachers and peers, understand lessons and vocabulary more fully, and participate more comfortably in class. Teachers may develop appropriate strategies for building relationships and understanding with students, becoming more effective in their use of code-switching as an instructional tool. School heads may gain a better basis for monitoring teaching strategies and informing school policy on language use. Curriculum planners may draw on the findings to design more inclusive, context-responsive curricula and instructional materials that reflect learners' linguistic diversity and needs. Future researchers

may use the study as a reference point for further work examining code-switching and its role in language instruction, including additional variables or contexts that could deepen understanding of the phenomenon.

Scope and Delimitation

This study examined the role of code-switching in Key Stage 2 classrooms and its relationship to language instruction and learning outcomes, focusing on the extent and frequency of code-switching, its patterns based on established classifications, and how it promoted relationship-building and reinforced learning. It also developed an intervention program to optimize the strategic use of code-switching in classroom instruction. The study was conducted during August, School Year 2025-2026, at Bayombong Central School in Brgy. Don Mariano, Marcos, Bayombong, Nueva Vizcaya, and involved Key Stage 2 teachers handling Grades 4 to 6 across 22 sections with a total of 830 students (419 male and 411 female), selected through purposive sampling. The scope was limited to classroom observations and focus group discussions with selected teachers and learners; the researcher's own class was excluded to avoid bias, and language experts served as validators to ensure the reliability and credibility of the classification of code-switching instances. The study did not extend to other grade levels, subjects, or school levels, nor did it consider factors beyond language teaching itself; its conclusions are therefore applicable primarily to the context examined.

Methodology

Research Design

This study used a descriptive-qualitative research design, a naturalistic approach well suited to observing and analyzing code-switching practices as they occur in real classroom settings, and both pragmatic and discourse-analytic in nature. The qualitative approach was chosen because it foregrounds a vivid description of the process of code-switching, its influence on social relations, and its effectiveness in reinforcing learning. Data were gathered through in-depth classroom observation and semi-structured focus group interviews with teachers, with some flexibility retained in how interviews were conducted so long as the study's main purpose was served.

Research Environment

The study was conducted at Bayombong Central School, a public elementary school in Brgy. Don Mariano, Marcos, Bayombong, Nueva Vizcaya, in the Cagayan Valley. The school serves a linguistically and socio-culturally diverse learner population, making it a suitable venue for studying language-related classroom behavior such as code-switching. The study focused on Key Stage 2 learners (Grades 4 to 6), a stage at which learners begin relying on English and Filipino as formal academic languages and largely set aside their mother tongue for academic purposes - a transition that increases the classroom relevance of code-switching as a bridging strategy.

Respondents of the Study

Respondents were the teachers and learners of the twenty-two (22) Key Stage 2 sections (Grades 4 to 6) of Bayombong Central School, comprising a total of eight hundred thirty (830) students - four hundred nineteen (419) male and four hundred eleven (411) female - and their assigned teachers. Teacher respondents were central to the study as the ones responsible for classroom instruction and the implementation of code-switching strategies, offering insight into how code-switching was used in discussing topics and interacting with students. Learner respondents participated in classroom observations and focus group discussions, providing data on how code-switching affected their learning.

Sampling Procedure

The study employed purposive sampling, a non-probability technique involving the deliberate selection of participants based on characteristics relevant to the research objectives; according to Campbell et al. (2020), this approach enhances the rigor of qualitative investigations by ensuring selected participants possess the knowledge and experience aligned with the research problem. All teachers assigned to the 22 Key Stage 2 sections were included on the basis of their active role in instruction and their direct involvement in code-switching during teaching. Learner participants were selected from the 830 enrolled students on the criteria of current enrollment in Grades 4 to 6, presence during classroom observations, and willingness to participate in focus group discussions. All 22 sections were purposively included to capture a wide range of classroom contexts in which code-switching naturally occurs, yielding data that were rich, relevant, and contextually grounded.

Category	Population	Sampling Technique	Criteria for Selection	Sample Size	Description
Teachers	Teachers handling Key Stage 2 (Grades 4-6) at Bayombong Central School	Purposive sampling	Currently teaching Grades 4-6; actively implementing or exposed to code-switching strategies	All teachers assigned to Key Stage 2	Selected for direct involvement in instructional delivery and classroom language practices
Learners	830 students from Key Stage 2 (Grades 4-6)	Purposive sampling	Enrolled in Grades 4-6; present during observations; willing to participate in FGDs	Selected participants from the total population	Chosen based on exposure to code-switching and ability to provide relevant insights
Sections	22 Key Stage 2 sections	Purposive sampling	Sections where code-switching occurs during classroom instruction	22 sections	Included to represent diverse classroom contexts and instructional environments

Table 1. Sampling Procedure of the Study

Research Instrument

Three instruments were used to systematically capture both the observable patterns and functional use of code-switching in classroom instruction. The Data Card for Code-Switching Analysis, adapted from Arrizki et al. (2020) and drawing its typology from Poplack (1980), provided guidelines for distinguishing tag-switching, intra-sentential switching, and inter-sentential switching as observed in the classroom. The Classroom Observation Guide, used together with the data card, allowed the researcher to observe code-switching as it actually occurred between teachers and students, following Nurhidayah's (2015) view that this permits observation of authentic classroom settings, and Kothari's (2004) point that systematic observation reduces subjectivity and increases accuracy. Finally, the Interview Guide for the Focus Group Discussion (FGD), administered to seven English teachers handling Key Stage 2, used open-ended questions to gather deeper insight into teachers' experience of code-switching, serving also as a source of triangulation for the observational data.

Data Gathering Procedure

Consent was secured from school administrators before data collection, with arrangements made with the school head and teacher-respondents to ensure smooth implementation. The researcher served as a participant observer during classroom observations - consistent with Bogdan and Biklen's (1982) view of the researcher as the primary instrument in qualitative research, and Kawulich's (2005) observation that participant observation supports a holistic grasp of the research process - systematically recording each identified code-switching occurrence on the data card according to Poplack's classification, along with its apparent purpose (understanding, engagement, relationship-building, or learning reinforcement). Focus group discussions with selected teacher-respondents followed the observations, using open-ended questions to explore classroom environment, teaching challenges, and the effectiveness of code-switching techniques.

To ensure validity and reliability, interrater/intercoder validation was performed with two independent language specialists experienced in English teaching and assessment, oriented beforehand on the rubric and criteria and instructed not to confer during initial rating. Interrater reliability, computed using Cohen's Kappa, yielded a value of 100%, indicating strong agreement and confirming that the classification instrument produced consistent, reliable results. Validators' comments, focused mainly on item clarity, wording, and alignment with learning objectives, supported the quantitative findings and pointed to opportunities for minor refinement of the instrument.

Treatment of Data

Data were analyzed using content analysis and thematic analysis. Content analysis, following Poplack's (1980) three-category framework, enabled systematic identification, classification, and interpretation of code-switching occurrences - including their context of use, such as explaining or questioning - and the tabulation of frequencies for each type across classroom sessions. Thematic analysis, following the procedure outlined by Creswell (2014) as cited in Magday and Pramoolsook (2021) and guided by Braun and Clarke (2006), was applied to the FGD transcripts through six steps: familiarization with the data, generation of initial codes, theme search, review of themes, defining and naming themes, and

reporting of findings. Used together, these two methods provided a holistic account of both what teachers did and what they thought about code-switching as an instructional technique.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical standards were observed throughout the study to protect the integrity, respect, and welfare of all respondents. Permission was secured from institutional officials before data gathering, and all respondents provided informed consent; because student participants were minors, parental or guardian consent was obtained in addition to student assent, and all participants were informed that participation was voluntary and could be withdrawn at any time. Confidentiality and anonymity were maintained through the use of pseudonyms, and observation records, transcriptions, and recordings were kept in strict confidence, accessed only by the researcher and authorized validators, in accordance with relevant data protection and privacy rules. The study was carried out without disrupting normal classroom activities or the cultural and linguistic backgrounds of participants, and the researcher maintained honesty and objectivity throughout data collection, analysis, and reporting.

Results and Discussion

Extent of Code-Switching Utilization in Language Teaching

To document the consistency and variation of code-switching practices, classroom observations were conducted in two phases - pre-observation and final observation - with results presented separately before being combined (Tables 2, 3, and 4).

Type of Code-Switching	f	Percentage
Tag-Switching (TS)	8	14.00%
Inter-Sentential (IS)	10	18.00%
Intra-Sentential (INS)	39	68.00%
Total	57	100.00%

Table 2. Frequency of Code-Switching Types During the Pre-Observation Phase

Intra-sentential code-switching was the dominant type during pre-observation, accounting for 39 of 57 instances (68%), showing that mixing Filipino lexical items and expressions within English sentences had already become the most common way of alternating languages during lesson delivery. Inter-sentential switching followed at 10 instances (18%), and tag-switching was least frequent at 8 instances (14%), though its brief Filipino particles - such as "po" and "ha" - played a meaningful role in softening instructions, gaining attention, and expressing politeness, as in classroom utterances such as "Only pupil A ha?" and "This is in a positive degree, naintindihan?" Rose (2021) similarly explained that code-switching is often used for reiteration and to ensure sufficient transfer of meaning, consistent with these pre-observation results.

Type of Code-Switching	f	Percentage
Tag-Switching (TS)	7	13.00%
Inter-Sentential (IS)	7	14.00%
Intra-Sentential (INS)	38	73.00%
Total	52	100.00%

Table 3. Frequency of Code-Switching Types During the Final-Observation Phase

Intra-sentential switching remained dominant during final observation, rising slightly to 73% (38 of 52 instances), indicating that code-switching remained embedded in the natural conduct of instruction rather than declining over time. Tag-switching (7 instances, 13%) and inter-sentential switching (7 instances, 14%) appeared in more selective, situation-specific ways; expressions such as "You can do it, okay po?" and "Only pupil A ha?" showed that tags continued to soften commands and sustain a respectful classroom tone even as their frequency dipped slightly. Yunus (2023) emphasized that code-switching promotes access to and clarity of subject matter through rephrasing, while Villarin (2023) stressed its role in stimulating participation and proper classroom conduct - both consistent with the persistence of code-switching observed here.

Type of Code-Switching	f	Percentage
Tag-Switching (TS)	15	15.00%
Inter-Sentential (IS)	17	17.00%
Intra-Sentential (INS)	77	68.00%
Total	109	100.00%

Table 4. Total Frequency of Code-Switching Types Across All Sections

Combined across both observation phases, intra-sentential switching remained the most frequent type at 68% (77 of 109 instances), confirming that the integration of Filipino and English within a single sentence was the dominant mode of code-switching in the Grade 4 English classes examined - a pattern reflecting not confusion, but a flexible and functional use of bilingual resources, consistent with Muthusamy and Muniandy's (2022) view that code-switching occurs inherently in multilingual interaction. Inter-sentential switching accounted for 17% and tag-switching for 15% of cases; the consistent presence of tag-switching across sections underscored its role not only in explaining concepts or checking comprehension, but in maintaining politeness, warmth, and culturally appropriate teacher-student interaction (Villarin, 2023; Shah et al., 2019). The consistency of these percentages across the pre-observation and final-observation phases, and across class sections rather than any single teacher or lesson, indicated that code-switching functioned as a normal and systematic part of English instruction rather than an isolated occurrence, serving a wide range of pedagogical and relational purposes: explaining complex content, translating unfamiliar words, scaffolding higher-order thinking, maintaining lesson flow, monitoring comprehension, and encouraging learner participation.

Patterns of Code-Switching in Classroom Interactions

Across the twelve observed classroom sessions, each of Poplack's (1980) three code-switching types appeared at different rates and served distinct functions. Tag-switching involved brief Filipino particles - *ha, po, nga, noh, na, and lang* - typically used to soften instructions or build rapport, as in "Sit like a king and queen, tingnan ko nga." Though the rarest type at 15% of cases, its significance lay less in frequency than in its consistent presence across class sections, reflecting what Suryaningsi (2023) describes as interjection and personalization functions that shape a classroom's social and emotional atmosphere, and what Shah, Furqan, and Zaman (2019) attribute to the norms and interpersonal expectations of a speech community.

Inter-sentential switching - full clauses or sentences alternating between English and Filipino - occurred consistently at moments requiring comprehension checks, as in "Naintindihan. Do you understand?" Accounting for 17% of cases, its consistency across lesson dates suggested intentional use at high-stakes points in instruction rather than habitual or arbitrary switching, aligning with Suryaningsi's (2023) identification of repetition and message-qualification functions and with Hamdam's (2023) and Reyes's (2024) account of switches occurring when teachers gauge comprehension or adjust questioning strategies.

Intra-sentential switching, occurring within a single sentence, was by far the most common pattern at 68% of cases, as in "Count nouns kasi nabibilang natin ang mga puno." Its prevalence reflected the bilingual competence of both teachers and students in integrating the grammar and vocabulary of two languages within a single utterance, functioning not as competing codes but as complementary linguistic resources, consistent with Narayana and Jogulu's (2024) and Yunus's (2023) findings that such switching enhances reasoning, elaboration, and word retrieval, and with Bairmani et al.'s (2022) account of code-switching as a compensatory strategy that lets students participate despite limited vocabulary. Taken together, each type carried a distinct function: tag-switching served emotional and relational purposes, inter-sentential switching supported clarification and comprehension checks at critical points, and intra-sentential switching - the most frequent - allowed learners to reason, elaborate, and express themselves naturally while moving fluidly between languages.

Summary of Instructional Functions of Code-Switching

Beyond frequency and type, classroom data revealed five recurring instructional functions of code-switching, summarized in Table 5.

Instructional Function	Description
Clarifying complex or unfamiliar content	Teachers switch to Filipino to simplify and restate ideas when learners struggle with comprehension (e.g., "Ano ang singular?"; "T- What is an event? P- What is an event? T- Pangyayari").
Vocabulary decoding and conceptual elaboration	Unfamiliar vocabulary and concepts are translated and elaborated using both languages (e.g., "Action word is salitang kilos in Tagalog").
Scaffolding higher-order tasks	Filipino prompts guide analysis, interpretation, and reasoning during more cognitively demanding tasks (e.g., "Identify the tone used by the author, noh?").

Maintaining lesson flow through intra-sentential switching	Brief Filipino insertions sustain instructional continuity without interrupting the lesson (e.g., "Bring out your copy, yung nadistribute kanina").
Strategic planning and monitoring	Teachers use bilingual prompts to check understanding and regulate pacing and participation (e.g., "Naintindihan po? Any question about the lesson?").

Table 5. Summary of Instructional Functions of Code-Switching

These functions show code-switching operating as a flexible cognitive and pedagogical mechanism that helps learners process academic content by anchoring new knowledge in familiar language structures, consistent with Muthusamy and Muniandy's (2022) description of code-switching as a natural cognitive process for transferring meaning across languages. The findings, echoed by Rose (2021), Hamdam (2023), and Yunus (2023), point to a need for professional development that treats code-switching as a deliberate instructional strategy - identifying strategic points for language switching during concept introduction, guided practice, and independent application - rather than as habitual, unplanned practice.

Code-Switching as a Relationship-Building Tool

Focus group discussions with teacher-respondents surfaced consistent patterns in how code-switching affected learners' confidence, engagement, sense of belonging, and collaboration. Teachers reported that code-switching helped students feel more comfortable answering questions and participating in class - as one respondent put it, it "helps bridge comprehension gaps and fosters a more inclusive learning environment" - reducing the fear of making mistakes that often accompanies second-language learning and encouraging more attentive, expressive engagement with lessons. Respondents also observed that code-switching increased student-initiated interaction, with learners approaching teachers more readily to ask questions or seek clarification once permitted to draw on their first language.

Teachers further noted that code-switching gave students room to share personal and cultural experiences and validated their linguistic identity, fostering a stronger sense of belonging - particularly for learners who struggled with English and might otherwise disengage. In collaborative settings, code-switching supported peer interaction during group work, comprehension checks, and discussion, with teachers describing improved cooperation and idea-sharing once learners could draw on both languages. Finally, teachers stressed that these relational benefits depended on thoughtful, intentional use of code-switching - planning when and why to switch, scaffolding messages for comprehension, and reflecting on whether students were interpreting the message as intended - rather than habitual or unreflective practice.

These findings are consistent with a substantial body of sociolinguistic and pedagogical literature. Suryaningsi (2023) and Muthusamy and Muniandy (2022) describe code-switching's interjection and personalization functions as sources of comfort and rapport; Villarin (2023) and Altun (2023) similarly link strategic code-switching to increased participation and positive classroom dynamics; and Coristine (2022), Dai (2024), and Kaufman (2024) connect positive teacher-student relationships more broadly to motivation, engagement, and student wellbeing. Reyes (2024) and Yunus (2023) further argue that bilingual interaction strengthens both learners' expressive capacity and their comprehension of lesson content - together suggesting that code-switching lowers emotional barriers to participation while reaffirming learner identity, supporting sustained engagement and collaboration in a multilingual classroom.

Code-Switching for Learning Reinforcement and Instructional Support

Teachers uniformly reported that code-switching helped students understand difficult material, fill gaps in comprehension, and keep pace with instruction, particularly "when students could not answer the questions, even if the item was rephrased." Specific instructional moments where code-switching proved most effective included translating unfamiliar words, explaining complex ideas, and supporting higher-level tasks, typically by unpacking a new term, connecting it to something familiar through Filipino, and then reincorporating it into English through example sentences. Teachers also described a deliberate scaffolding approach - bilingual narratives and translation activities early on, with a gradual reduction in Filipino support as learners' independent and guided performance improved - suggesting that reinforcement through code-switching was intended as a bridge toward greater English proficiency rather than a permanent substitute for it.

The CODE-BRIDGE Intervention Program

The findings supported the case for a programmatic intervention that would institutionalize code-switching as a deliberate feature of teaching and learning, rather than leave its use to individual teachers' intuition or habit. In response, the researcher developed CODE-BRIDGE: A Strategic Code-Switching Intervention Program for Relationship-Building and Learning Reinforcement in Key Stage 2 English Classrooms. The program's name reflects its purpose: "code" refers to the basic skills and competencies students need to develop, and "bridge" refers to the structured support connecting students

from their current performance level to expected learning outcomes. Designed to run for a full school year, CODE-BRIDGE integrates sociolinguistic theory, bilingual scaffolding, and relational pedagogy around five components: (1) Relational Code-Switching, using tag-switching and Filipino expressions to build rapport, motivation, and emotional safety; (2) Instructional Code-Switching, using inter-sentential switching for clear explanations, grammar instruction, and comprehension checks; (3) Cognitive and Linguistic Scaffolding, using intra-sentential switching to connect prior knowledge with new English content; (4) Learning Reinforcement, using bilingual drills, translation tasks, and guided recitation to strengthen retention; and (5) Teacher Capacity-Building and Monitoring, sustaining the program through training, peer observation, mentoring, and reflective practice.

Implementation follows a four-phase cyclical model across the school year (Table 6): orientation and teacher preparation in the first two months, guided classroom implementation from months three through seven, monitoring and reflective adjustment in months eight and nine, and institutionalization and final evaluation in the last quarter.

Phase	Time Frame	Key Activities	Persons Involved	Expected Outputs
Phase 1: Program Orientation and Teacher Preparation	Months 1-2	Program launch and orientation; in-service training on strategic code-switching; workshop on integrating code-switching into Daily Lesson Logs; development of monitoring tools	School head, English teachers, academic coordinators	Teachers oriented on the BRIDGE framework; revised DLLs; standardized monitoring and observation instruments
Phase 2: Guided Classroom Implementation	Months 3-7	Systematic application of relational, instructional, and cognitive code-switching strategies; bilingual scaffolding; learning reinforcement activities; regular observation and post-observation conferences	English teachers, learners, school heads, subject coordinators	Consistent implementation of strategic code-switching; improved learner participation and comprehension; observation records and coaching feedback
Phase 3: Monitoring, Feedback, and Reflective Adjustment	Months 8-9	Collection and analysis of learner performance data; peer observation and reflective teaching conferences; sharing of best practices; modification of strategies	English teachers, school heads, research team	Midyear evaluation report; reflective journals and peer feedback documentation; refined instructional strategies
Phase 4: Program Institutionalization and Final Evaluation	Months 10-12	End-of-year program evaluation; comparison of baseline and post-intervention learner performance; documentation of best practices; adoption as a regular instructional framework	School administrators, teachers, research team	Final program evaluation report; institutionalized BRIDGE intervention framework; sustainability plan

Table 6. Implementation Process of the CODE-BRIDGE Intervention Program

The program's rationale is grounded directly in the study's findings: code-switching functions both as a relational tool that lowers anxiety and builds trust, and as an instructional scaffold that supports comprehension and higher-order thinking, but its current use in the classroom is largely intuitive rather than systematic. CODE-BRIDGE is designed to close that gap - legitimizing, refining, and institutionalizing code-switching as a deliberate teaching and relational strategy embedded in regular English instructional time, without displacing existing curricular content, while accounting for the reality that Filipino learners naturally move between English, Filipino, and their own languages from childhood.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The findings indicate that code-switching is not an incidental feature of Key Stage 2 English instruction but a consistent, purposeful practice embedded across the stages of teaching - introduction, explanation, recitation, clarification, and classroom management alike. Its three forms serve distinct functions: intra-sentential switching, the most frequent pattern, supports reasoning, elaboration, and natural bilingual expression; inter-sentential switching supports clarification and comprehension checks at critical instructional moments; and tag-switching, though least frequent, carries outsized relational weight in sustaining a warm, respectful classroom climate. Code-switching further functions as a relationship-building tool that reduces learners' anxiety, affirms their linguistic identity, and encourages fuller participation, while also reinforcing learning through translation, vocabulary decoding, and scaffolded higher-order tasks.

These conclusions carry direct implications for how code-switching is treated in teacher preparation and school policy. Because its current use is largely intuitive rather than planned, there is a clear opportunity - realized in this study through the CODE-BRIDGE program - to help teachers move from habitual switching toward strategic, reflective use tied explicitly to lesson objectives, comprehension monitoring, and relationship-building. Students may benefit from consciously recognizing the purpose behind their own code-switching, whether to access new vocabulary or to ensure understanding.

Teachers may treat bilingual scaffolding as a standard component of lesson planning, incorporating translation, bilingual storytelling, vocabulary decoding, and interactive discussion while continuing to use Filipino expressions that support classroom management and motivation. School heads and curriculum planners may use professional development structures to build teachers' capacity for comprehension-focused and relational code-switching and may consider adopting the CODE-BRIDGE framework as a school-wide resource. Future researchers are encouraged to pursue longitudinal studies examining the longer-term impact of code-switching on language ability, learner autonomy, and classroom discourse, and to expand research-based support for bilingual education programs more broadly.

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Competing Interests Statement

The author declares that she has no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this article.

Data Availability Statement

The classroom observation and focus group discussion data supporting the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request, subject to the confidentiality and parental consent assurances given to the minor student-respondents and teacher-respondents of Bayombong Central School.

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Appendices

No appendices are attached to this study.