

Code-Switching Patterns of Ilocano Discourse in Facebook

Marvin C. Sermonia, Jr.*

For affiliations and correspondence, see the last page.

Abstract

Multilingual speakers make use of two or three languages while conversing as it makes the conversation fluid and smooth. This mixing of languages in sentences is called code-switching which is observed in communicative contexts such as on Facebook. In this study, the descriptive method of research was used. 25 Facebook posts, comments, and memes were coded according to the type of code-switching patterns. These patterns were also analyzed morphologically to determine the word-formation used. The findings reveal that among the four code-switching patterns, intra-sentential code-switching was mostly used with an average of 47.6%. It is followed by inter-sentential code-switching with an average of 32.5%, intra-word code-switching with 14.71%, and extrasentential code-switching with 5.19%. This implies that the speakers use two or three languages in order to express easily and conveniently the thoughts or message that they want to convey online.

Keywords: Code-switching Patterns, Language, Multilingual, Facebook, Ilocano Discourse

Introduction

In today's technologically advanced world, communication has become more convenient. With the use of social media networks, people with different linguistic backgrounds can efficiently converse with other people all around the world. This makes languages mix or comes to contact. Merzougui (2018) explained that technology has expanded the exposure to other dialects and languages, specifically through code-switching, code-mixing, and migration of languages. According to Ocampo and Belarde (2021), code-switching is the use of two languages within a sentence or discourse which naturally occurs between or among multilingual speakers who share two or more languages in common.

There are four code-switching patterns based on their structural types as discussed by Mangiba (2018). The first is inter-sentential code-switching which takes place between sentences. This occurs at a clause or sentence boundary where each clause or sentence is in a different language. Second is the intra-sentential code-switching in which the shift is done in the middle of a sentence, with no interruptions, hesitations or pauses indicating a shift. The third is the intra-word code-switching which occurs within a word itself like at a morpheme boundary. Fourth is the extrasentential code-switching (tag) which involves inserting a tag in one language to an utterance that is otherwise in another language.

These code-switching patterns can be observed in computer-mediated communications. In the study of Merzougui (2018), he found out that Algerians in the

UK mix and shift Arabic with other dialects and languages using social media sites. Moreover, Al-Emran (2017) determined that most Omani college learners and educators code-switch on social media networks. It is important to analyze the code-switching patterns used in social media in order to provide empirical evidence of the changes in the structure of a certain language.

In the Philippines, code-switching is mostly observed among communicators. It is no surprise because the Philippines is a multilingual country, having more than 170 different languages (Nolasco, 2018). This permits the use of several languages in conversation, allowing them to mix their languages to accommodate understanding. In the study of Abastillas (2015), he found out that Cebuano speech communities code-switch from Cebuano to English and vice-versa. This use of "Ceblish" Cebuano English is also observed among pre-service teachers when they accommodate less proficient students.

Many students favored the use of code-switching because they can express themselves better when they use their mother tongue and target language (Castillejo et al, 2018). Valero (2015) also noted that the use of English Filipino in the classroom could hasten students' learning.

One of the major languages in the Philippines is the Ilocano language. Ilocano is a member of the Malayo-Polynesian branch of the Austronesian language family. It is mostly spoken in Northern Luzon provinces such as Ilocos Norte, Ilocos Sur, La Union, Pangasinan, Cagayan, Benguet, etc. Although Ilocano is a major language, it is mostly spoken alongside

other languages such as Filipino, the national language of the country, and English, the country's second language. This makes the mixing of Ilocano, Filipino, and English possible in face-to-face conversations and computer-mediated communication.

Thus, this study aims to determine the patterns of code-switching in Ilocano and other languages such as Filipino and English as reflected in Facebook posts and comments. This will shed light on the structural changes in Ilocano as it mixes with other languages.

Since the Department of Education (DepEd) offers the teaching of Mother-Tongue-Based Multilingual Education, this study is significant as it provides a thorough analysis of the structure of the Ilocano language which can be presented to pupils. Further, it is significant to the teachers of MTB-MLE as the education sector still lacks relevant materials for the teaching of this subject. Lastly, this study is significant to other researchers who are interested in the study of Ilocano languages as this will serve as their basis for further research.

Methodology

The researcher made use of the descriptive analysis method of research. Facebook posts and comments which show the code-switching of Ilocano to Filipino and English were saved for the purpose of coding and analysis. The researcher searched for the different Facebook pages and Ilocano Facebook users to gather sufficient data for the study. There were a total of 25 posts, comments, and memes gathered which were analyzed into four code-switching patterns based on their structural types namely: inter-sentential code-switching, intra-sentential code-switching, and intra-word code-switching, and extra-sentential code-switching (tag). Furthermore, the code mixed words and word formation patterns were morphologically analyzed.

Results and Discussion

The results of this study were extracted from 25 Facebook posts, comments, and memes that used a mixture of Ilocano, English, and Filipino. The data

were coded and categorized to analyze the patterns. It was found that among the four types of code-switching, intra-sentential code-switching was mostly used with an average of 47.6%. It is followed by inter-sentential code-switching with an average of 32.5%, Intra-word code-switching with 14.71%, and Extrasentential with an average of 5.19%. Although the total number of

Facebook posts, comments, and memes are only 25, and the total frequency of codeswitching is 34 because, in one post, comment, or meme, two or three code-switching patterns can be extracted.

Table 1. *Frequency of Code-Switching Patterns*

| <i>Code-switching Types</i> | <i>F</i> | <i>%</i> |
|-----------------------------|----------|----------|
| Intra-sentential | 16 | 47.6 |
| Inter-sentential | 11 | 32.5 |
| Intra-word | 5 | 14.71 |
| Extrasentential | 2 | 5.19 |
| Total | 34 | 100% |

The intra-sentential, being the mostly used code-switching pattern, only shows the fluidity of both Ilocano and English languages as used in online conversations. In this type of code-switching, the shift from one language to another is made without interruptions, hesitations and pauses. This means that the users have achieved a certain level of fluency in both languages and that these languages complement each other as the users convey their message in social media platforms. For multi-lingual speakers, the use of inter-sentential code-switching becomes natural in conversation in such a way that they sometimes do not even notice the shift.

Madi nagsanget basang ko, all throughout the ceremony nagpintas ti isem ta balong ko

Translation: (He) did not cry my little girl, all throughout the ceremony, my little boy has a beautiful smile.

This comment was extracted from a wedding ceremony post clearly shows the use of enter-sentential code-switching. The English phrase “all throughout the ceremony” was used before and after Ilocano clauses.

Another example of this type of code-switching is this:

Naglamina niya? Kasla dyay coNVO yu ken crush mo

Translation: It is cold, right? Just like your conversation with your crush.

This data was extracted from a meme. In this statement, the user mixed the English terms convo---blended term for conversation, and crush. This is apparent to some Ilocano speakers as it is sometimes easier for them to describe their thought and feeling using terms in English or Filipino rather than making their statement in pure Ilocano.

This is the result of the exposure of Ilocano speakers to the English language. In the Philippines, English is taught in school from elementary to college. It is also the medium of instruction and the language of business and law. A lot of T.V. programs also use English as their medium. This enhances the English vocabulary of the Ilocano speakers, which are then used in conversation.

Instead of bashing her why don't u be proud of her people come on Many of u r so judgemental we don't care if she's just pretending or not...*isu nga haan umasasenso ti kadwam ti Pilipinas ta kasta ti ugali tattao. Haan na kayo met nga inaan-ano at least she's trying her best to speak Tagalog/Ilocano fluently, so let's just be happy for her kasdiay Wen Manong Manang ah*

Translation: Instead of bashing her, why don't you be proud of her? People, come on! Many of you are so judgmental. We don't care if she's just pretending or not. That is the reason why your countrymen can't progress because your attitude is just like that. She did not even do something against you; at least she's trying her best to speak Tagalog/Ilocano fluently. So let's just be happy for her; just like that, right, big brother and sister?

The incorrect use of grammar, spelling and punctuation is evident in the statement. This is completely normal in Facebook posts, comments and memes as informal register is mostly used in this context.

This statement is an example of an inter-sentential code-switching. Obviously, the statement is too lengthy. With this, three inter-sentential code-switching patterns were coded. The first one is the first sentence "Instead of bashing her why don't u be proud of her people come on Many of u r so judgemental we don't care if she's just pretending or not [English]...*isu nga haan umasasenso ti kadwam ti Pilipinas ta kasta ti ugali tattao [Ilocano].*

The second inter-sentential code-switching is the second sentence: *Haan na kayo met nga inaan-ano at least [Ilocano] she's trying her best to speak Tagalog/Ilocano fluently [English].* The third inter-sentential code-switching is the last sentence: *So let's just be happy for her [English] kasdiay Wen Manong Manang ah [Ilocano]*

In another Facebook post, it shows the statements:

Agdenggeg iti aldaw nga Lunes angiggat Sabado, Alas Dose iti tengat aldaw aginggana alas-dos iti aldaw. PLEASE LIKE AND FOLLOW! Thank you!

Translation: Listen every Monday to Saturday, twelve noon to two PM. Please like and follow! Thank you!

Both the extracted comment and post show the use of Ilocano in one clause and English in another clause.

Adda talagan agpasamgyup nga frenny tan

Translation: There will truly be a friend who will treat us with samgyup [blended form of samgyupsal].

In this particular Facebook comment, it shows the use of Ilocano, Filipino and English terms. First, the Filipino term "talaga" has an added suffix -n which means "na" in Filipino. Thus, if this will be translated in Filipino, it will be "Meron na talaga(ng) magpapasamgyup na kaibigan natin". In this translation, the -ng was added to the word talaga because the word that comes after it starts with a consonant sound. The use of -n in Ilocano terms can also be observed in the words "adayo+n" (malayo na; too far), "madi+n" (hindi na; not anymore), agsala+n (sasayaw na; about to dance) and etc. If the Ilocano word ends with a consonant sound, what is added is the affix -en like in the words "agdigos+en" (maliligo na; going to take a bath), "mangan+en", (kakain na; going to eat), "napudot+en" (mainit na; already hot), and etc. This is also observed in a Facebook comment which states:

25 years olden

Translation: 25 years old already.

It is apparent that this inflection is used in adjectives and verbs.

Another intra-word code-switching in this statement is the word "agpasamgyup". Samgyup is a blended form of the word Samgyupsal. Oftentimes, people in the Philippines shorten words, especially when they are chatting, texting, commenting, and posting.

The term “samgyupsal” is a loan word since there is no direct translation of this Korean food in Ilocano language. The prefix -agpa was added to this word which makes it into a verb that indicates future tense. The prefix -agpa is the equivalent term for the Filipino prefix - magpa. This prefix is used in the Ilocano terms such as “agpa+aramid” (magapagawa; will ask somebody to do something), “agpa+kasar” (magpapakasal; will get marry), and agpa+luto (magpapeluto; will ask somebody to cook).

Lastly, this statement made use of the term frenny which is a colloquial term of the English term friend.

Another Facebook comment that shows intra-word code-switching is the statement:

Pakiss man

Translation: May I kiss (you)?

This statement is in an imperative mood which asks someone to be kissed by the speaker. There is an imaginary “you” in the statement which refers to the speaker’s interlocutor. The word man in the statement is an equivalent term of the word “nga” in Filipino. Thus, if this will be translated into Filipino, it will be “Pahalik nga”. The word kiss has a prefix

-pa which is used to ask a favor politely. This is used in other Ilocano terms such as “pa+awat” (pakiabot; please give me), “pa+awit” (pakidala; please carry), “pa+surat” (pakisulat; please write), and etc. The prefix -pa therefore is the equivalent of the Filipino prefix -paki.

The English term “kiss” is used although there is a direct translation of this in Ilocano which is “unggo”. However, some Ilocano speakers often use the word kiss over the Ilocano term unngo.

This Facebook post also used intra-word code-switching:

No sika nga ilocano ket mahilig iti drama. iLike ken Follow mo detuy nga page sen kabsat.

Translation: When you, an Ilocano, are fond of drama, like and follow this page brother/sister.

The intra-word code-switching in this statement is the term “i+Like” which means asking others to hit the like button in the Facebook post. In this context, the term like has no equivalent term in Ilocano. Thus, this

term is often borrowed. Furthermore, the word used the prefix -i which indicates an imperative mood in a form of command. Other ilocano words which used the prefix -i include i+belleng (itapon; throw), i+lukat (ibukas; open), i+lako (ibenta; sell), etc. The use of the prefix -i is the same with how it is used in Filipino.

Another intra-sentential code-switching in this statement is the term “page sen”. The rule here is the same as what was discussed earlier. The “sen” is the variation of the suffixes

-n and -en. Since it will be awkward to say pagen, the letter -s is added, which makes it “page sen”.

Na-koVID iti Amerika kano Doctor Ariel. Kasla piyek kada marabutit dagiti patayenda sir. Agasem dat?

Translation: Covid affected America, doctor Ariel. Those who will be killed are like chicks and mice. Imagine that?

The extrasentential code-switching in this statement is the term Agasem dat. The term dat is derived from the English word “that”. It is a borrowed word but spelled in Ilocano. It is a very common tag question used by Ilocano speakers in informal discourse.

In another Facebook comment, this tag was also used:

Ni nanang met gayam nagkammali, agasem dat

Translation: The mother/elderly woman is the one who made a mistake, imagine that?

Conclusion

The findings of this study reveal that Ilocano speakers already mix Ilocano, Filipino and English when they post, comment, and make memes in Facebook as evident in the four types of code-switching that are categorized and analyzed. This means that they use their linguistic repertoire in the three languages in order to easily express their thoughts and feelings. Although two or three languages are used, it is clear that the rules for Ilocano grammar and inflection were used. Lastly, the shift from one language is very fluid which indicates the mastery of the users in the three languages.

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Affiliations and Corresponding Information

Marvin C. Sermonia, Jr.

Panpacific University North Philippines

Tayug Campus, Philippines

marvinjrsermonia@gmail.com