

Code-switching as a Politeness Marker in Sangguniang Panlalawigan Regular Sessions in Albay

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Abstract

Is code-switching used as a pragmatic marker, particularly to indicate politeness? This is the main question investigated in this paper. Specifically, it identified the types and instances of code-switching in the interactions among members of the *Sangguniang Panlalawigan ng Albay* (Albay Provincial Council) and describes their pragmatic functions, focusing on politeness as a motivation. Using available methods in identifying politeness strategies, the paper revealed via content analysis that code-switching is a politeness indicator in the given context. The paper infers that code-switching figures as a politeness marker in Albayano communication, as exemplified by their provincial council members. It concludes that while English still exists as a language of power and prestige in the province, it is inadequate in the achievement of social and interactional goals of communication such as the need to be polite and, thus, code-switching becomes necessary.

Keywords: *Code-switching, discourse analysis, multilingualism, politeness, pragmatics*

Introduction

Bicolanos are said to be inherently polite people. This can be seen in their language and is explicit in their greetings, where the distinctive inclusion of invoking God is seemingly peculiar to their language. For instance, Enriquez (1994) states “In Bicol, we have a beautiful custom of saying ‘Thank you’. We say ‘*Dios Mabalos,*’ which means ‘May God be the one to repay you’ or it could also mean, ‘God will be the one to repay you.’” Even greetings like “good morning” are uttered with the same invocation, so that we have “*Dios marhay na aga*” (*Dios* = God; *marhay* = good; *na* = which is; *aga* = morning), which is like saying, “A blessed morning.”

In the context of a community that speaks more than one language, does this politeness manifest itself, no matter which code is in use? This question led to this research of politeness in a multilingual context.

As a continuing legacy of the Bilingual Education Policy (DO 52, s. 1987), most educated Bicolanos can speak English and Filipino as the two national languages, and Bicol as their local language, in whichever variety that may be. An average Bicolano is therefore trilingual, and is expected to code-switch in almost any situation. That is, it is common to hear a Bicolano code-switch

in almost any type of conversation, formal or informal. With the implementation by the Department of Education of the Mother Tongue-Based–Multilingual Education (MTB-MLE), this fact will probably remain, and with it, the phenomenon of code-switching in its various forms.

Taking all these into account, this paper was conceived to investigate the relationship between language and politeness. In the context of a trilingual community, code-switching presented itself as a point of interest worth investigating, towards shedding light on the interaction of the three languages, as well as the identity of the people who use them.

Owing to the country’s multilingual reality, code-switching is quite common in the Philippines. Because the government recognizes both Filipino and English as official languages, there is no question why this phenomenon widely exists in various contexts across the country.

Bautista (2004) has offered a description of the phenomenon of code-switching in the Philippines based on significant studies that have been conducted in the country since the late 1960s. She argues that Taglish has become a mode of discourse in its own right, and in fact

is a linguistic resource for bilinguals.

Code-switching has since gained more attention as a topic of research in the Philippines, with researchers looking into code-switching in the classroom (Borlongan, 2009; Borlongan *et al.* 2012), in local newspapers (Erwin-Billones, 2012), in political campaign ads (Gochecho, 2013), among factory workers (Go & Gustilo, 2013), and among young urban professionals (Lesada, 2017). But few, if any, have ventured into analyzing the phenomenon as a politeness marker in particular. What studies were found linking code-switching and politeness were foreign (Gardner-Chloros & Finnis, 2007; Pradina *et al.*, 2013; Aprilla, 2017), all of which establish how code-switching indicates politeness.

Gardner-Chloros and Finnis (2007) established that gender, code-switching, and politeness are interconnected, particularly that females code-switch as a politeness strategy. Pradina *et al.*, (2013) showed that Indonesian students code-switch to reduce distance between the speaker and hearer, which is a politeness strategy as identified by Brown and Levinson (1987). Aprilla (2017) likewise established that code-switching is used primarily as a politeness strategy, in order to soften the impact of face-threatening acts, which would otherwise be delivered baldly.

This paper aimed to similarly show this connection between code-switching and politeness, particularly to show how the local language is the code of choice for expressing politeness. Its results will hopefully contribute to the knowledge about languages in the Philippines, which may be used to inform linguists, language policy-makers, and language teachers about the status of languages in the country especially in terms of code-switching and politeness. This may give them basis for making sound decisions in teaching and learning of these languages, especially in the current K to 12 context and the advancement of the MTB-MLE Program.

Taking one of the Bicol Region's six provinces, Albay, as a prototype, this study mainly asked: Is code-switching used as a pragmatic marker, particularly to indicate politeness? Specifically, it aimed to investigate the following sub-problems:

1. What are the types of code-switching in the interactions among members of the *Sangguniang Panlalawigan ng Albay* (Albay Provincial Council)?
2. Which instances function pragmatically as

expressions of politeness?

3. What can be inferred about language use among Albayanos as revealed by their code-switching behavior, and in relation to their politeness behavior?

The study is an attempt to show that code-switching figures as a politeness indicator for interlocutors in the given speech situation. It makes inferences about the code-switching behavior in Albay, alongside their politeness behavior, as exemplified by their provincial council members. It also therefore advances insights about language usage in the province.

The Bicol (also Bikol) region, of which Albay is second largest in terms of population (PSA, 2015), is a linguistically diverse community. Lobel and Tria (2000, p. 107) assert that “[o]f all the regions in the world, the Bikol region surely ranks among the highest in linguistic diversity.” The province of Albay, the locus of this research, itself cuts across two language regions, with a total of four dialects. While this study is not about dialects, it points out the diversity to explain the choice of scope as being affected by the researcher's knowledge of these language varieties. Because of these differences, the natural starting point for the researcher was her hometown for more valid and accurate translations and interpretations of code-switches.

In order to get data suitable for code-switching analysis, a speech community within the province where English is used as a medium of communication had to be identified. Choices were the academe, the government, and certain business establishments. While all three contexts are rich in possible data for analysis, the best option to start this kind of study was the government setting, where events and certain types of records are open to the public and accessible upon request. The two other choices, which entails asking permission from each individual involved, may well be subjects for subsequent researches. To obtain a wider representation of the province and therefore a larger variety of participants, the *Sangguniang Panlalawigan* was particularly selected for the study, and is herein briefly described.

The *Sangguniang Panlalawigan ng Albay* (Albay Provincial Council) is the legislative body of the province, following Section 459 of RA 7160 (An Act Providing for a Local Government Code of 1991). It is composed of 15 regular participants, specifically 13 board members (BM), one presiding officer (PO), and one board secretary. There are instances when

the presiding officer has to leave the session for some time, in which occasions a temporary presiding officer (TPO) is assigned from among the board members. The council holds its sessions primarily in English, but their House Rules allow for the use of Filipino as the national language, and Bicol as the local language. This practically formalizes, at the least permits, code-switching in the conduct of regular sessions.

Code-switching as used in this study follows Auer's (1998, p.1) definition, "the 'alternating use of two or more "codes" within one conversational episode,'" as he asserts that "code-switching has and creates communicative and social meaning (p.1)." Investigated here are switches that serve as pragmatic markers, described by Gumperz (1982) as contributing to the interpretation of messages independent of grammatical structures. The paper, therefore, does not problematize the concept in relation to other similar concepts as code mixing, meshing, or borrowing, as doing so will not contribute to the analysis of the data towards answering the research questions.

Similar to Auer's (1998) definition of code-switching is Brown and Levinson's (1987, p.110) assertion that "[t]he phenomenon of code-switching involves any switch from one language or dialect to another in communities where the linguistic repertoire includes two or more such codes." As a pragmatic phenomenon, they identify code-switching as a strategy for politeness, and labels it as an in-group identity marker under positive politeness strategies, "use of in-group language or dialect" (Brown & Levinson, 1987, p.110). It is this treatment of code-switching that has become the take-off point for investigating this phenomenon as a politeness marker. This study shows how aside from being an in-group marker, code-switching also figures in other politeness strategies identified by Brown and Levinson (1987).

Brown and Levinson (1987), also referred to here as B&L, views politeness as a means of conflict avoidance and proposed a full range of politeness strategies that may be drawn from when confronted with face-threatening acts. These strategies address either positive or negative face, and may be on-record or off-record. It is against this list of strategies that the code-switches are evaluated for politeness, where the use of in-group language earlier mentioned takes the lead.

Materials and Methods

Corpus for this research was collected from the

Sangguniang Panlalawigan, by simply requesting for copies of the pertinent Journals of regular sessions of the 12th *Sangguniang Panlalawigan ng Albay*, which was incumbent during the time of research. Particularly acquired were the journals of five sessions personally attended and observed by the researcher. These were initially scanned, and one was chosen for the study, based on length of conversations within the sessions to ensure ample data for analysis. The profile of the members of *Sanggunian* was also taken to help make a more holistic analysis of the data.

All members of the 12th *Sangguniang Panlalawigan ng Albay* are residents of the province, with representatives from each of its three districts. All have spent a good number of years in it, though two were not born there. Also, out of the 15 participants, five attended colleges in Metro Manila. Except for one undergraduate, all hold at least a college degree.

This basic profile shows an educated group of people, mostly having finished college, and observed by the researcher to have ample command of the English language, which can be expected of anyone who attends school and completes the tertiary level in a country where English is used as a medium of instruction. All except one displayed a good command of the local language, Bicol, and all are assumed to be knowledgeable of, if not proficient in, the national language, Filipino. They therefore have the linguistic background to practice code-switching.

For this paper, one regular session of this council is sampled and investigated through content analysis with the help of field notes gathered via unobtrusive observation of the session by the researcher. The chosen session was participated by 14 of its regular members and one guest (the researcher) who was asked to address the council to explain her research purpose. The guest's participation, however, was minimal. In this chosen session, seven participants took active speaking parts, although 10 have recorded speech.

The main limitation of this study is the smallness of the corpus sampled. Findings will therefore need validation through the investigation of a larger sample, and this may be extended to other speech communities such as in the academe and business establishments where possible.

The Hawthorne effect may also seem a threat to the validity of the data; however, the researcher observed that the participants were too focused on the issues discussed to be bothered enough by her presence to

affect their speaking behavior. Additionally, if there had been such effect, it could not have lasted more than the first few utterances of each speaker. Finally, in no utterance by any speaker was there a mention of the presence of the observer, which can be considered as an indication of the lack of consciousness of the same.

Both the quantitative and qualitative aspects of content analysis (Fraenkel *et al.*, 2012; Krippendorf, 2004) were applied in this research. Instances of code-switching were identified and counted, and each interpreted and evaluated for meaning by analyzing its context. To pre-categorize the data, Poplack's (1982) distinction of three kinds of code-switches was used, namely, "tag"-like switches, intra-sentential switches, and sentential switches, roughly translating into words, phrases, and sentences respectively, in the discussion. All instances were analyzed for deliberateness, which the researcher finds to be a key feature of proficiency-driven code-switching as defined by Bautista (2004), as opposed to deficiency-driven switches where "the person is not fully competent in the use of one language and therefore has to go back to the other language" (Bautista, 2004, p. 227). Code-switches that appeared to be deficiency-driven, such as when a speaker seemed groping for words, were excluded from further analysis.

All eligible instances of code-switching were then evaluated for politeness, using Brown and Levinson's (1987) list of politeness strategies, categorized as Bald On Record, Positive Politeness, Negative Politeness, and Off Record strategies. These strategies range from being very direct to being very indirect in the expression of potential face-threatening acts (FTAs). Interpretations were guided by the context of the utterances, which include the consideration of speaker and hearer background and the nature of their interlocution.

Results and Discussion

The corpus used for this paper yielded 163 cases of code-switching. These were classified according to Poplack's (1982) types of switching, and analyzed in terms of Brown and Levinson's (1987) theory of politeness. Inferences were then drawn regarding language use in the province of Albay.

Because the chosen setting is such that English is the primary language required in the local council sessions, the code-switches are identified and here defined as any use of Bicol or Filipino within the council session. The code-switches are therefore mostly from English (as the

base language) to Bikol, and very minimally to Filipino, and so distinction between these two local languages is not made. A common observation is that where an utterance starts in the local language, the participant strives to go back to using the English language. Note that in all examples given, all grammatical errors are retained and are essentially ignored where they have no bearing on the focus of the research.

Types of Code-switching

All three types of code-switching, "tag"-like switches, intra-sentential switches, and sentential switches as defined by Poplack (1982) were found in the corpus. Frequencies of these instances are presented below.

Table 1 shows that the most common type of code-switching is the "tag"-like switch, with 66 instances equivalent to 40.49% of the total occurrences. Intra-sentential switches follow with 56 instances, making up 34.36% of the total, while sentential switches number 41, covering the remaining 25.15% of the total occurrences.

Table 1. Frequency of Code-switching by Types

Type	Frequency	%
"Tag"-like Switches	66	40.49
Intra-sentential Switches	56	34.36
Sentential Switches	41	25.15
Total	163	100%

It has to be mentioned here that code-mixing instances are evident when the base language is the local system, where words in English are used either for efficiency or for want of an appropriate term in Bicol or Filipino, appearing mostly in the nominal position. It is noticeable, though, through the grammar that the register is still in the local language. In such cases, the entire sentence is counted as a sentential switch.

The total number of code-switching instances in the corpus indicates the need of the members of the *Sangguniang Panlalawigan* to express themselves in their local language even if they show proficiency in English, the primary language of transaction in the council. Three hypotheses are offered: they can express certain ideas better in the local language; they mark the kind of English they use as their own, creating that sense of solidarity among them; they register their inherent

politeness better through their own language. The former two are areas that may be further explored in future studies. The latter is investigated following.

Code-switching and Politeness

Following Bautista's (2004) assertion that one main reason for code-switching is communicative efficiency, there are indeed switches that seem to be "the fastest, easiest, most convenient way of saying something with the least waste of time, effort, and resources" (Bautista, 2004, p. 230). This is an indication of pragmatic competence of the speaker, particularly in the execution of purposeful code-switching. It suggests that there is deliberateness in the choice of language to use in certain instances, and this consciousness makes code-switching a discourse strategy. Moreover, analyzed under the lens of Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness theory, these code-switches are particularly seen as politeness strategies.

While both deficiency-driven and proficiency-driven code-switching (Bautista, 2004) are evident in the data, it is in the proficiency-driven switches that politeness can be recognized. It is theorized that by switching to the local language, the speaker is able to express politeness.

Brown and Levinson (1987) is used as guide in the identification and analysis of code-switching in connection with politeness. In this instance, it is B&L's definition of code-switching that prevails, along with his listing of politeness strategies which serves as their guide for explaining why code-switching instances are found to be polite. This whole paper operates on B&L's classification of code-switching as a positive politeness strategy, particularly as an in-group identity marker (Strategy 4 under positive politeness); however, there are other instances when the code-switch is found to be more than that and also fall under other categories of politeness.

Note that B&L's politeness strategies are identified using the abbreviation PP for positive politeness and NP for negative politeness, and the strategy number is indicated following the abbreviation, thus, the in-group marker, for example, is labeled PP4.

Words. The corpus yielded four types of words that both stood as a code-switch and were found to have politeness functions in the utterances. Discussed below are respect markers, other enclitic particles, conjunctions, and tag questions. In Poplack's categorization, these code-switches fall under "tag"-like

switches. They are mostly function words.

Respect markers. Directly connected to politeness is the particle "po", used five times as a switch, but occurs nine other times within the entire session as part of longer utterances in the local language. "Po" is a polite marker in itself, comparable to the English honorifics "sir" or "madam", but also to the use of "please" or "kindly" for imperative sentences. Bautista (2004) labels it as an enclitic that functions as a respect marker. It is found to indicate deference, that is, to lower the status or power of S or raise that of H. Here are examples:

- (1) PO: Thank you, thank you, *po*.
- (2) BM 3: Yes, *po*.

A variant "opo", which is used as a polite expression of agreement, appears once in the data.

Use of these polite markers are classified by B&L (1987) as a negative politeness strategy which they labelled as giving deference (NP5).

Similar to a respect marker is the direct address, "padi" ("madi" for females), which, in the Bicolano setting, is what parents and god-parents call each other, but has been extended to close friends, therefore, a familiar address or kinship term. It serves as an in-group marker akin to bro, mate, or buddy in certain English-speaking communities. The sole instance of use in the corpus is given below:

- (3) PO: *Padi*, would you like to *ano*, can you just... uhm...suspend yung session *para ano...yan*.

In the above example, the imposition of the indirect request is softened by the in-group marker (PP4).

Other enclitic particles. The Filipino (also borrowed Bicol) words "lang", "palang", and "nalang" are particles that occur mostly on their own to qualify or modify some other element within a sentence. Used as either adjectives or adverbs, they are optional elements in a sentence, removal of which does not affect the sentence's grammar. A total of five occurrences of "lang" (only) was recorded, while the similar expressions "palang" (only then) had one instance, and "nalang" (instead) had two. Examples of their use are given below.

- (4) PO: Make sure it's in addition *lang* [only], *ha...*
- (5) BM 7: We're just assuming it clarifies *lang* [only] that...

(6) BM 3: That's why we're *ah...rende...ordering...giving* an order slash notice and resolution to the motion only Mr. Chairman accepting, admitting the answer, and *ah* afterwards, scheduling for preliminary conference *palang* [only then].

(7) BM 3: 11 *nalang* [instead], 11 a.m. on September 4..

(8) BM 3: No, no, no. Six *pala* [it turns out], Mr. Chairman.

In the examples given, the particles “lang”, “palang”, “nalang”, and “pala” not only serve as modifiers but double as polite markers, particularly as either hedges (NP2) or expressions that minimize the imposition (NP4) of any attached FTA. These soften the tone of the utterances, which, in the given situations, are potential face threats. In these cases, the switch applies as an in-group marker, at the same time as a hedge that weakens illocutionary force or minimizes the imposition of the FTA.

Example (4), for instance, is a response to a request by a board member to comment on an item raised during the “Other Matters” part of the session where comments are normally not allowed. The board member explains that it is in addition to information just given, and so the presiding officer allows him to take the floor. However, the latter warns the board member to stick to what he said. His use of “lang” (only), coupled with the expression “ha?” (understood?) spoken in a mild voice serves to lessen or minimize the impact of the FTA.

In example (6), S is being questioned regarding a decision he made on a matter assigned to his committee. He is trying to explain that the action he is presenting for approval is not a hasty one. His use of “palang” (only then) emphasizes this point, made more *polita* via the code-switch.

Example (7), on the other hand, uses “nalang” (instead), which is an indication of a change of mind. Because he had made an earlier pronouncement that the Secretary had already recorded, this utterance is also a request to accommodate the change. As in the previous examples, the code-switch makes the utterance more *polite*.

“Pala” is an expression used to indicate that a previous statement was erroneous, and that the correct information is the one given with the expression. In example (8), S previously stated that he wanted to

calendar September 7, but after checking his schedule, corrected himself with the expression. The word is an indirect admission that he had made a mistake, while the code-switch as a way of mollifying H via its function as an in-group marker. The closest equivalent expression in English is “it turns out.” Since it refers to and succeeds the utterance in example (7), it functions similarly as “nalang” as a hedge.

Conjunctions. Conjunctions are also found to be a point of switch to the local language. Six (6) conjunctions were identified, with one occurrence each except for “kasi” (because), which has three occurrences. The other conjunctions are “para” (for/so that), “kayâ lang” (but), “kayâ” (so), and “pero” (but). Examples are given below.

(9) BM 7: ...that's why this representation wants a clarification of the third whereas *kasi* [because] it's vague

(10) PO: Can you just uhm, suspend yung session *para, ano...yan* [so that, what is this...that's it].

(11) BM 5: But, *kaya lang* [but] I'm not the Presiding Officer, *kaya* [so]...it's up to you.

(12) BM 3: I know it's difficult for the Chairman especially knowing this *pero* [but], look Mr. Chair,

The first two examples are indirect requests, and requests, by their impositive nature, are potential face threatening acts. The code-switched conjunctions have the effect of minimizing imposition of FTAs, similar to the particles earlier discussed. Example (11) is a suggestion in the form of a hint which is also a potential FTA lodged on the implication that S knows better than H. Again the code-switched conjunction softens its imposition. In example (12) S is making an appeal that he be allowed to render a report not previously recorded as an agenda, an action not allowed by the session's house rules. Because he is making a request and explaining why he is doing so, he uses more polite language but retains the formality by keeping to the base language (English). By choosing to code-switch the conjunction that marks that reason why he is making the appeal, he weakens the force of the fact that he is challenging the house rules (NP 4).

Comparing the examples with Bautista's (1999, p. 230) proposition that a reason for code-switches is to achieve “the fastest, easiest, most convenient way of saying something with the least waste of time, effort, and resources,” it can be safely said that such is not the case in these examples, seeing that the equivalents in the

other code are just as short and easy to recall. Instead, these switches are arguably politeness-driven.

Tag questions. The different tag questions that appeared in the data are found to be used for verification or clarification purposes. The tag questions identified were: “di ba?” (isn’t it?) used three times as a switch, “tama?” (is that correct?/right?) used twice, and “noh?” (a shortened version of “ano?” (“what?”, but in the context has a meaning close to “if it’s fine with you”), also occurring once. An example for each of the four tag questions found are given below:

(13) BM 7: But still you have to give importance also to...consult also at least the...at least the owners of the property beside it, *di ba* [isn’t it]?

(14) TPO/BM 7: There are only two additional reports that are proposed to be added because one was withdrawn already, *tama* [is that correct], BM ——?

(15) TPO/BM 7: BM ——, if you will allow, *noh* [if it’s fine with you]?

These tag questions serve as hedges as well, which, like the particles in the previous section, weaken the illocutionary force of the statement through the expression of uncertainty. In examples (13) and (14), if there is anything erroneous about what is claimed by S, the hedge becomes an out for saving face. Politeness here is in not claiming to be all-knowing about the matters at hand, especially in front of a body of equals. In example (15), because the utterance is a hedge in itself, indicating an indirect request, the tag question adds to the weakening of the illocutionary force of the request, making the statement doubly polite.

There are instances when the question marker “ano” (what) becomes a semantic filler, which, in turn may function as a hedge and a politeness marker. Here are some examples:

(16) BM 7: *Ano man lang* [it’s just what’s this], it’s just a manifestation.

(17) BM 3: May I render my *ano* [what’s this...]

(18) BM 3: As I already accommodated the request of the *ano* [who is this], do I still need to answer the question?

Example (16) is a statement qualifying a suggestion earlier made, lessening its imposition on H, especially since it is addressed to a fellow board member, a post

commanding respect. In example (17), by not expressing his request in full, and replacing the thought with a Bicol semantic filler instead, politeness is emphasized. The same effect is achieved in example (18), where the question, via indirectness, implies an intended refusal to answer some other question, thereby posing a face threat. By using the semantic filler “ano”, especially delivered in a softened tone of voice, creates the effect of politeness, thus softening the FTA. While it is apparent he is groping for words to give a complimentary description of H (signaled by “the”), which he fails at, the substitute *ano* suffices to show he means to suggest politeness in the speech act he is carrying out.

Phrases. Following Poplack’s (1992) definitions, phrases that figure as code-switches are categorized under inter-sentential switches. The data shows that there are more inter-sentential code-switches than sentential ones, with 56 instances recorded, 15 more than the sentential switches. It is observed that inter-sentential switches somehow modify the meaning of the entire utterance in which they occur. Examples given below try to illustrate various instances that function as politeness strategies.

(19) BM 2: Yeah I understand that Mr. Presiding Officer because I received your letter that the DILG is approved or gave me a Foreign Travel Authority already so *kung sa hiling ko po na may kulang an sakuyang mga papeles* [as I see it, if my papers lack something] I don’t think the DILG will give me the FTA.

In the instance where example (19) occurred, BM 2 is questioning the decision made by the presiding officer regarding his non-attendance in the previous session. This is therefore considered a face-threatening situation. The code-switch is used to express a personal opinion, and serves to soften this FTA. Specifically, the use of “*sa hiling ko po*” [as I see it], functions as a hedge to weaken the impact of the FTA.

(20) PO: Okay, before the Chair ——...I would like to call for a ruling for that matter, I would like to designate BM —— to be the Temporary Presiding Officer (TPO), because *uni nagpaparaapud na* [here, (they) keep calling already] because I have to attend to some important matter.

In the middle of an on-going argument, there is a need for the PO to leave the session, and he interrupts the conversation to appoint a temporary presiding officer. This is done through the utterance presented as example (20), with a code-switch that serves to

explain the urgency of the matter. This is a full use of the positive politeness strategy, using the code-switch as an in-group identity marker. Also, it applies positive politeness strategy 13 (PP 13), which is giving or asking for reasons for the illocutionary act.

(21) PO: I heard that Congressman S— donated the lot there in Sugcad, *duman sa may Jacem бага, padi* [there near Jacem, if you will recall].

In example (21), the code-switch signals a change in addressee that serves as an in-group marker as well. In content, the utterance gives additional information or clarification about something being discussed in the session. By offering the information, there is an implication on the lack of knowledge of H. By using the familiar address “padi” and the particle “baga” [if you will recall], presupposing or asserting common ground (PP 7) is achieved, indicating politeness to soften the impact of the implication. The use of the expression *baga* particularly implies that S is telling H that it is not that H does not know, but rather, he knows, he just had to be reminded about it.

(22) BM 3: Oh yes, but sometimes *kasi* [because] Mr. Chairman, *pag* [when] usufruct *hindi masyado* [not so (well—)] crafted especially with this one.

Example (22) is a more complicated mix of codes within a sentence. It has a “tag”-like switch with the conjunction “*kasi*” [because] which allows S to use two conjunctions (but and because) for one thought, which cannot normally be accommodated using one code only. The conjunction “*pag*” (when) allows a shorter production of the thought “when we talk about usufructs” by using the local grammar, “*pag usufruct*.” The adverbs “*hindi masyado*” (not so) to describe how a document has been crafted (thus the inference that S means “not so well-crafted,” allows a more polite way of explaining why the document in question is not properly crafted, that is, is found to be lacking certain elements. The overall effect is a more efficient delivery of a message, which can only come from someone with a high level of communicative competence. S is attempting to convince the body to approve his motion that will allow the use of the document, which is found to be deficient by being as polite as possible while not sacrificing formality as he delivers his argument. The choice of code-switching the conjunction, the adverbial clause, and the adverb, allows the employment of the switch as an in-group marker, while retaining the base language to preserve a tone of formality.

(23) BM 3: Mr. Chair, as I already accommodated

the request of the *ano*, do I still need to answer the question? Or you can just follow up? *Pasensya na, ah...*[I beg your indulgence, ok?] because...I have accommodated the question, eh...

The code-switch in example (23) is an appeal to be understood for questioning the presiding officer’s call to accommodate another question for S from the body, constituting an FTA. It is an indirect way of asking if the rules allow for a follow up question specifically from the same board member who already asked him a previous question, therefore, challenging the knowledge and competence of the presiding officer. By begging the indulgence of H and using the local language to express it, he softens the impact of the FTA (NP 6, Apologize).

Code-switches also figure in expressing humor, such as in the example below.

(24) TPO/BM 7: Then maybe when your constituents will approach you, you would be better informed, *lalo na malibut libut ta makampanya nanaman ta eleksyon* [especially that (you) will be going around to campaign again because it is election time].

In example (24), the first portion of the utterance, expressed in English, comes out formal, and is directly connected with the discussion. The second part, in the local language, is in a bantering tone, and is meant as a joke, though there is truth in it. The first portion is an FTA implying that H was previously not properly informed. This threat to face is softened through a joke (PP 8) delivered in a code-switched manner (PP 4).

Sentential Switches. The 41 instances of sentential code-switching vary in nature and purpose. Because the context dictates English to be the primary language in use, the code-switches are identified as any use of Bicol or Filipino within the session.

Here are examples of sentential switches:

(25) BM 2: Thank you, Mr. Presiding Officer, good afternoon. I just want to ask the Secretariat because I was not around last uh...99th...uh...session because I was on official business attending the Asian Council Forum. So *gusto ko lang po maaraman kung ano po su status duman nakakabit kung absent ako* or official business . . . [I just want to know please what the status is there in the attachment, if I am absent or on official business]. Mm-mm . . . *Ahh . . .* I am asking the Secretariat, Mr. Presiding Officer.

It can be noted in example (25) that the change in code is also a change in tone. The first part of the utterance, in English, functions to set the background of a query, with the query then rendered in Bicol.

(26) PO: *Di mo na kailangan yata...*[maybe you don't need it anymore]

The inclusion of the expression “yata” (maybe) in the utterance in example (26) is an indication that S is unsure or not confident about his assertion. This seems to be the cause for the code-switch. The utterance came out like S was thinking aloud, thus using the local language.

(27) PO: I don't think they will risk the *ano . . . kasi* we are ratifying here if the loans contracted by the Municipality of Polangui is for the establishment of the Polangui Community College. *Wala man yan eh* [There's nothing to it.]

This utterance is actually in contradiction to what is claimed in the previous statement. The code-switch therefore softens this FTA.

(28) BM 7: There are no neighbors? *Warang neighbor yan* [There are no neighbors?]

PO: *Wara* [None].

BM 7: *Wara kataning* [No neighbors?]. Okay, anyway I'm just, I'm just saying that...

The second part of the first utterance of BM 7 in example (28) is basically a translation of the first part. It serves to emphasize the question. This prompts a reply also in the same local language. BM 7's second utterance has a switch back to English, after a third repeat of the question, serving as an appeal for assurance, that he may accept the fact which he first showed surprise about. Then he reverts back to the point he was driving at.

Reiteration via a code-switch is also used to emphasize statements, as in example (29):

(29) TPO/BM7: Yes. I know it is cancelled already. *Iyo...cancelled na Albay* [Yes, Albay has been cancelled already].

The code-switch in example (30) serves to explain why S is making a request for verification of information.

(30) TPO/BM7: Can you verify that, Manila Bulletin, August 23. Albay *nakalaag, eh* [Albay is

the one written there]. No, no. There was—there's news in Manila Bulletin.

Requests for verification themselves are also found to be code-switched, such as in example (31):

(31) BM 5: That is the Board Resolution of PCSO. *Kasuarin ngani yan BM ——? Anong date kaiyan tabi?* [When was that again, BM ——? What is the date of that, please?]

Reinforcement of an explanation is also effected through a code-switch:

(32) BM 7: That's why this is just, for me, an endorsement. *Bahala na...kung magtao sinda di maray...*[I live it up to fate...if they give, well and good...]

Finally, code-switching also figures in humorous exchanges:

(33) TPO/BM 7: Please take note Madam Secretary. And...That's the last? What? *Tulu lang* [only three? You're not busy this week?

BM 3: No, no, no, Mr. Chairman, *ah...*

TPO/BM 7: You're going back to your table for more. *Tulu lang* [only three? That's very unbecoming of BM —— to have 3 only.

In all the given examples, code-switches signal something that adds to the meaning of the utterance. This clearly supports the assertion that code-switching is a pragmatic marker. Moreover, the switches indicate some form of politeness, and are found to fall under certain strategies outlined by Brown and Levinson (1987), as presented in Table 2.

Among the 33 examples given, 12 code-switches (36.36%) were interpreted to provide positive politeness to the utterances, while 21 (63.64%) provided negative politeness. This shows that Albayanos prefer the negative type of politeness, which takes care not to impose on others and which recognizes “the want of every ‘competent adult member’ that his actions be unimpeded by others” (Brown & Levinson, 1987, p.62). As seen in Table 2, the most common politeness strategy effected by the code-switches is Negative Politeness 4, Minimize the imposition (of the FTA).

Table 2. Politeness Strategies Used

Strategy	Frequency	%
Positive Politeness	12	36.36
PP 4 (Use in-group identity markers)	5	
PP 7 (Presuppose, raise, assert common ground)	1	
PP 8 (Joke)	2	
PP 13 (Give [or ask for] reasons)	4	
Negative Politeness	21	63.64
NP 2 (Question, hedge)	6	
NP 4 (Minimize the imposition, Rx)	11	
NP 5 (Give deference)	2	
NP 6 (Apologize)	1	
NP 1 (Be conventionally indirect)	1	
Total	33	100.00

Code-switching, Politeness, and Language Use among Albayanos

Given the results of the foregoing analysis, it can be inferred that code-switching behavior among the Board Members of the *Sangguniang Panlalawigan* is directly connected with their politeness practices. The co-occurrence of code-switching and potential FTAs is an indication of this. As seen in the examples given, interlocutors switch from English to Bicol when they say something that may threaten either the positive or the negative face of the other.

The data on Table 2 also suggests that while code-switches are used by S to make H feel “ratified, understood, approved of, liked or admired” (Brown & Levinson, 1987, p.62), the switches are mostly used to preserve H’s negative face, or the want to not be imposed upon or the want for one’s actions to be unimpeded. However, the presence of both positive and negative strategies, sometimes found in a single utterance, is an indication of an inherent desire to be polite to others, and to preserve both positive and negative faces of an individual, including oneself.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This study has attempted to look into the code-switching behavior of Albayanos, particularly to investigate whether they have a pragmatic function and figure as politeness indicators in the given utterances.

The subsequent findings have led to the following conclusions:

1. Albayano communication in a multilingual context is replete with code-switches, consisting of “tag”-like switches, intra-sentential switches, and sentential switches;
2. The majority of the code-switches have pragmatic functions, particularly indicating politeness largely of the negative kind; and
3. Albayanos utilize code-switching for more efficient communication. They put premium on politeness towards preserving both their and H’s face. They are most careful about not imposing on H nor hurting their feelings/threatening their face.

Overall, it can be said that the Albayanos are indeed a very polite people. Because of this need to be polite, they resort to code-switching when in a context where English is enforced as the primary language of transaction, in order to incorporate their kind of politeness, which, apparently, cannot be captured in the English language. It can therefore be inferred that while English still exists as a language of power and prestige in the province, it is found to be inadequate in the achievement of social and interactional goals of communication, and thus code-switching becomes necessary. Policy-makers and advocates of culture may therefore find insight from this study where issues regarding communication and language use are concerned.

It is recommended that this study be replicated to include a larger corpus, that is, increase the number of council sessions to be investigated, and encompass more local councils in the province, or even the Bicol Region, such that results may be more conclusive and generalizable to Bicolanos as a whole. To make this aspect of Bicolano communication even more inclusive and comprehensive, other groups of Bicolanos may be studied, such as the academe, private businesses and organizations, and even informal gatherings.

Meanwhile, findings of this research may be used to add to the existing knowledge on Albayano identity and culture, as well as linguistics, particularly in the areas of code-switching, politeness, and pragmatic competence in general.

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