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RESEARCH ARTICLE

FILIPINO STUDENTS ENROLLED IN A GERMAN LANGUAGE: TRANSLATION SKILLS, CODE SWITCHING, AND ENGLISH SPEAKING PROFICIENCY

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ABSTRACT

This research was a study on Filipino students enrolled in German Language for approximately three (3) months within a semester with regard to their translation skills (German-English), views on code switching, and their English speaking proficiency. Descriptive research method was used in which the first set of respondents composed of 76 students were given a Vocabulary Knowledge Scale (VKS) and a Translation Skills (TS) tests before and after watching two German-subtitled English music videos. Results showed that respondents' scores had improved after watching the subtitled music videos. This implies that watching music videos has a positive influence in the translation skills of the respondents, and that considering videos with subtitles in a foreign language course can help students facilitate their learning process. The outcomes of the study offer a valuable means of establishing and developing a teaching tool strategy in foreign language teaching. The second set of respondents composed of forty (40) students selected at random from the first set of respondents (76) were given a survey questionnaire on code switching and a speaking proficiency test in English. Results showed that 72.5% of the respondents have "very high" level of code switching, 25% "high" and only 2.5% "moderate". Furthermore, in the speaking proficiency test result, 45% of the respondents scored "satisfactory", 40% "need improvement", and 7.5% scored "good", and another 7.5% scored "excellent". However, results indicated that there is no significant relationship between the respondents' views on code switching and their English speaking proficiency. This implies that respondents have a tendency to speak in straight English if they are required especially when taking an English speaking proficiency test. They would just code switch for better understanding, and not necessarily because they do not know how to speak without switching codes. It can be further concluded that they know how to speak a certain language without any language shifts.

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INTRODUCTION

Foreign language can be considered from the four skills of a language: listening, speaking, reading, and writing (Luo, 2008). It has been found that people receive social interactions and new messages more efficiently via listening than reading. According to Leonardi (2011), translation as a pedagogical tool can be successfully employed at any level of proficiency, at school or university, as a valuable and creative teaching aid to support, integrate, and further strengthen the above-mentioned traditional language skills. One of the possible ways to integrate translation in foreign language classes can be through the use of translation activities. On the other hand, English is more essential than other languages because it has become the lingua franca for international communication allowing people to speak different languages to interact with each other (Roni, 2008).

However, as English becomes a medium of instruction in most tertiary level education classrooms, students are found to have experienced difficulty in using English (Ariffin and Husin, 2011). Educators who are teaching at tertiary institutions especially where English is the medium of instruction feel it challenging to teach students whose mother tongue is not English. This has forced them to use code-switching in the teaching and learning process as a means to assist both themselves and the students in achieving their education goals. Code-switching helps facilitate the flow of classroom instruction since the teachers do not have to spend so much time trying to explain to the learners or searching for the simplest words to clarify any confusion that might arise (Greggi and Gil, 2007). Code-switching can also be a useful tool in assisting English language teaching and learning process. Since code-switching is done more on oral communication, it is also important to know the students' English speaking proficiency as well. Speaking is a major language skill that English language learning programs have sought to develop to enable students express their ideas

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appropriately and to communicate successfully. Speaking proficiency has become the evidence that learning a language is achieved (Glover, 2011). Given the foregoing, this study aimed to examine the influence of watching English music videos with German subtitles on the translation skills among college students at the Visayas State University, Philippines. It also investigated the students' view of code-switching and their speaking proficiency. Through this research, teachers are expected to come up with a new and simple way to help students improve their translation skills by listening to music videos with subtitles. Furthermore, researchers will be able to come up with a new knowledge about the trends in oral communication with code-switching as a basic communication strategy.

Objectives of the Study: Generally, this study aimed to determine the influence of watching English music videos with German subtitles on the respondents' translation skills (German-English), their views on code-switching, and their English language proficiency. Specifically, it aimed to:

- Determine the Vocabulary Knowledge Scale (VKS) of the respondents;
- Determine the translation skills of the respondents;
- Determine the relationship between the pre-test (VKS) and the post-test (Translation Skills) scores of the respondents;
- Determine the respondents' views on code-switching;
- Determine the respondents' English speaking proficiency; and
- Find out the relationship between the respondents' views on code-switching and their English speaking proficiency.

One theoretical framework that supports this study was inspired by Mayer's Cognitive Theory of Multimedia Learning (2005) and its integration with Second Language Acquisition (SLA). Within this framework, two significant assumptions are taken into account. First, learners must be regarded as active participants in the learning process; second, methods of information processing and, in particular, factors such as intelligence, cognitive styles, and memory all play a role in successful acquisition of a language. The humanistic approach to teaching and learning, which focuses on developing students' self-awareness and motivation to learn was also taken into consideration: students enjoy watching films and this enhances their motivation. The findings on previous related studies showed the improvement of the students' language skills. For example, Sydorenko (2010) examined the effect of input from subtitled videos on learning written and oral word forms, vocabulary gain, and vocabulary learning strategies. On the other hand, the Communication Accommodation Theory (CAT) by Giles and Coupland (1991) also supports this study. This theory stresses that speakers code switch because they attempt to enhance or reduce social differences between themselves and the interlocutors. Here, speakers can be seen to match or differentiate their pattern of language to accommodate for differences within situations. In this context of analysis, it can be said that code-switching is part of accommodation process in which this approach is regarded as a form of communication strategy where speakers adjust their language patterns and word choice to enhance comprehensibility and intelligibility.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study followed a descriptive survey method. The researchers used a Vocabulary Knowledge Scale (VKS) Test (Wesche and Paribakht, 1996), Translation Skills Test, a survey questionnaire by Jogulu and Radzi (2018) for the respondents' views on code-switching, and English speaking proficiency test. The data collected had undergone checking to determine its consistency, accuracy, and completeness before coding and organizing, and were analyzed using descriptive statistics. To test if there is a relationship between the respondents' Vocabulary Knowledge Scale (pre-test) and their Translation Skills (post-test), the Pearson Correlation Coefficient was used to analyze the data. On the other hand, to determine the relationship between the respondents' views on code-switching and their English speaking proficiency, the Spearman's Rho Correlation was used.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Findings revealed that the Vocabulary Knowledge Scale (VKS) of the 76 respondents was 72 (93.4%) "fair" and 4 (6.6%) "good". This implies that respondents got poor results on the pre-test. Then, a remarkable results showed that their scores had improved with a post-test score description of "very good" on their Translation Skills (TS) which served as the post-test. However, results showed that there is no statistically significant relationship between the respondents' pre-test and post-test scores. Nevertheless, results still indicated that although there is no significant relationship with regard to the respondents' VKS and TS, results revealed that the presence of subtitling in music videos helped the respondents in their translation and language acquisition exercise. On the survey of the respondents' views on code-switching as a communication strategy, findings revealed that 65% of them answered "agree" and 35% answered "strongly agree". This implies that the respondents normally practice code-switching when they communicate depending upon the language or dialect used in their oral communication. Majority of the students enrolled in a foreign language course (German) are females (70%) in which 72.5% of the respondents have "very high" level of code-switching usage, 25% "high", and only 2.5% "moderate". Furthermore, in the English speaking proficiency test scores, 45% of the respondents scored "satisfactory" 40% "need improvement", while 7.5% scored "good" and another 7.5% scored "excellent". This implies that students need to develop their oral communication skills using the English language to make them proficient speakers of the said target language. Furthermore, results showed that there is no significant linear relationship between the respondents' views on code-switching and their English speaking proficiency based on the sample evidence at the 5% level of significance. This implies that respondents' code switching views and their speaking proficiency are two independent variables, and that they do not necessarily influence each other.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The result of this study concluded that there is relevant connection between watching subtitled video in the translation skills of the respondents. Any languages, first language or second languages, regardless of their language use, can improve one's translation skills by watching subtitled music videos. Respondents' scores were compared and results showed improvement of post-test scores (Translation Skills)

after watching the subtitled music videos. Though there is no statistically significant relationship between the respondents' VKS and TS, students who have a *Fair* score on the pre-test can have a bigger possibility to gain a *Good* score on post-test. Thus, watching subtitled music videos can help improve language learning and enhance vocabulary. Since majority of the respondents showed a remarkable improvement after watching subtitled music videos, this research recommends the use of audio visual or subtitled videos in language teaching especially on foreign language learning. It is advisable for the students to study and enjoy the target language at the same time. Moreover, teachers may engage learners in production tasks after exposing them to video clips, as Schmitt (2008) pointed out. This study also concluded that code switching and speaking proficiency components (grammar, pronunciation, vocabulary, comprehension, background knowledge, and fluency) are independent from each other. Thus, the speaking proficiency of the students does not necessarily associate with the degree on the use of code switching and vice versa. Since there is no significant relationship between the respondents' code switching and their speaking proficiency, this study also showed that respondents would try hard to speak in straight English especially if the test would require them to do so. They would just code switch for better understanding, and not necessarily because they do not know how to speak without switching codes. It can be further concluded that they know how to speak a certain language without any language shifts. In the light of the investigations about the applicability of code-switching and speaking proficiency, the researchers have arrived at some recommendations.

For the students, it is recommended that they have to minimize code switching and involve themselves in speaking straight English to improve their oral communication skills, to speak using the target language especially when they do classroom tasks, and to try to speak English at home, with classmates, or with some other people. Joining speaking clubs for instance, dramatics debate clubs, and speaking in front of a mirror can help language learners improve their oral skills (Tuan and Mai, 2015). Furthermore, instructors are to design strategies that could make students talk to exercise their speaking ability.

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