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DETERMINANTS OF SELF-ASSESSED CODE SWITCHING OF GRADE 7 STUDENTS: A CONVERGENT PARALLEL APPROACH

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed at analyzing teachers' and students' attitude towards the use of code switching and the English language anxiety of students, explored in a mixed-methods approach particularly the convergent parallel design. Purposive sampling was utilized in choosing the 200 respondents of this study. Descriptive correlational approach is used in the quantitative part, and the descriptive qualitative research design for the qualitative part. The results reveal that students' favor the use of code-switching as it allows them to understand better and view code-switching as something that enhances their communication skills. As for teachers' attitudes towards the use of code-switching, the result shows that respondents highly support the teachers' code-switching during discussion because they believe that it helps them understand better. Language anxiety obtained a remarkable result postulating that it affects learners' inability to learn and speak the English language because of fear of committing errors, fear of correction and humiliation. The self-assessed code-switching findings reveal that students are likely to use code-switching in communicating with teachers and peer during classroom instruction. Moreover, the IDI and FGD generated themes which are English language anxiety, lack of language learning opportunities, and English-speaking apprehension leading to their inability to express their ideas in English. Overall, the quantitative data result converges with the qualitative data displaying a positive attitude towards the use of code-switching. For the axiological implication, the result implies that the use of the first language in communication and in learning the second language helps one in understanding and encourages easy expression of ideas.

KEYWORDS: *Education, Code-Switching, English Language Anxiety, Language Proficiency, Philippines*

INTRODUCTION

The decline of the English language proficiency in the Philippines has become such an alarming phenomenon. In light of this, the call to advance students' English competence has been intensified by the Department of Education (DepEd). Much effort has been made to ensure that every Filipino learner is provided substantial knowledge of the English language. However, the 'English only' strategy employed by educators to uplift the English language proficiency still remains to be proved effective and the considerable effort of the DepEd in 'closing the gap' in English literacy remains not good enough. The reasons for this continuing problem are many and various and are generally known at social and environmental levels.

Researches worldwide have uncovered several factors accounting for the difficulties in achieving English language proficiency. Wang, et. al (2022) criticized English-speaking education for the problems caused by the use of outdated teaching methods, a lack of a communicative approach, and insufficient teacher training. Chamalika, et. Al (2022) argued that the main obstacles to proficiency are that people do not practice enough, have low motivation, and have limited access to English media.

In the Philippines, numerous studies have been conducted on the use of code-switching as an effective tool in classroom instruction. In most studies, it had been observed that CS was used to establish rapport among students and teachers as the former can express themselves freely and elaborately when they are allowed to make switches. The researchers maintained that students feel motivated and interested in the discussion because they no longer hesitate to speak and participate, making them more comfortable and at ease (Baguerfo, 2013).

However, the Philippine educational system mandates that the English language shall be used as the primary medium of instruction in all public and private institutions of learning in the secondary level, including those established as laboratory and/or experimental schools, and non-formal and vocational or technical educational institutions. This directive known as Executive Order No. 210, which aims to establish the policy to strengthen the use of the English language as a medium of instruction in the educational system, prevents most educators to employ CS in their classroom instruction.

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Though much effort has been made by the Philippine government through the Department of Education to ensure that every Filipino learner is provided substantial knowledge of the English language, a similar problem is still manifested in Malita, Davao Occidental. The unsatisfactory performance of students in national examinations and their poor English communication skills certainly calls for a re-evaluation on the present teaching techniques of the subject.

Garcia and Huang (2019) maintained that strict English-only policies may emotionally disconnect language learners and lower their educational achievements, and that the isolation of English oral practice in class caused the students' unwillingness to participate and understanding of the content in the ESL learners. Though several entities have denounced CS to be a limitation to second language learning, recent studies in bilingual and multilingual education has emerged and offered proof that CS can not only be used as a useful instructional strategy for teaching and learning (Canagarajah, 2011) but also should be seen as a sign of linguistic creativity and criticality (Li, 2011). In fact, several researchers claimed that CS is suggestive of advanced language ability, in which the child adjusts his or her language choice to manage the communicative need (Yow et. al, 2017; Kaushanskaya & Crespo, 2019).

These language problems prompted the researcher to assess the teachers' and students' attitude towards CS and how they view such language phenomenon. The researcher sought to determine their different attitudes towards code-switching through a self-assessment tool and determine the status of teachers' and students' attitude towards code switching, language anxiety and self-assessed code switching of Grade 7 students to be able to know how these have influenced their language learning in the classroom. It also sought to determine the lived experiences of Grade 7 students as regards their self-assessed code switching.

Theoretical Lens

This study was anchored on the Mother Tongue Based Multilingual Education by van Ginkel (2016), which maintains that an education program that utilizes 'mother tongue' as mode of instruction helps a learner become bi/multilingual at school. MTB-MLE instruction has been encouraged by UNESCO in primary education since 1953 (UNESCO, 1953).

Conceptual Framework

The study's independent variables: students' attitude towards code switching, teachers' attitude towards code switching and language anxiety will be taken into consideration. Code–switching, according to Sert (2005), performs different functions as speakers use this to control or influence or describe a situation, and to express meaning and personal intention. On the other hand, language anxiety takes a great part in determining the learner's success as far as English language learning is concerned, in the same way the teacher plays a vital part in increasing or reducing the feelings of anxiety faced by learners (Souad, 2011).

The dependent variable, self-assessed code-switching by grade 7 students, considers the students' stance towards code-switching through a self-assessment tool. This study would like to explore both the teachers and students' attitudes towards the utilization of CS and to find out if students are highly interested with the subject of code-switching, if they like their teachers to employ CS in the classroom and if many are regularly using CS in their conversations.

Henceforth, the arrow that connects the independent variable towards the dependent variable signifies a theoretical relationship between the two variables in the context of grade 7 students.

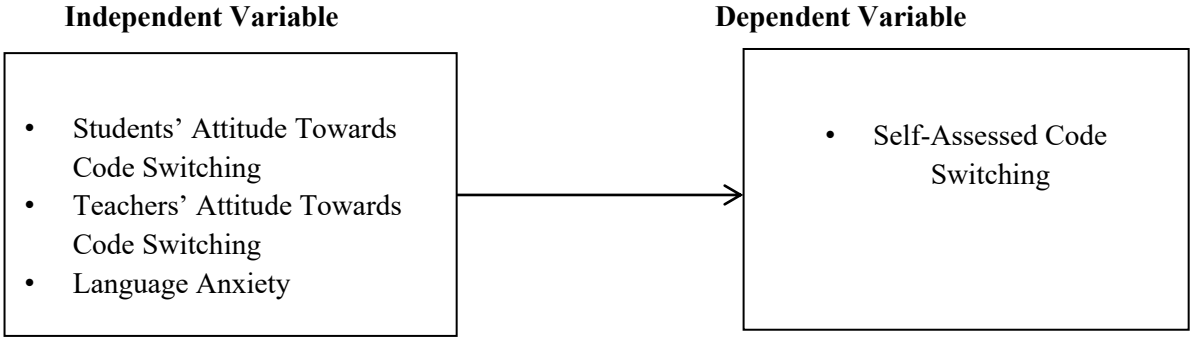


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework Showing the Variables of the Study

Research Questions

1. What is the status of teachers' and students' attitude towards code switching, language anxiety and self-assessed code switching of Grade 7 students?
2. Do the teachers' and students' attitude towards code switching and language anxiety significantly influence the self-assessed code switching?
3. What are the lived experiences of the Grade 7 students as regards their self-assessed code switching?
4. How do these experiences on teachers' and students' attitude towards code switching and language anxiety shape their practices on code switching?
5. To what extent do the qualitative data corroborate with the quantitative data?

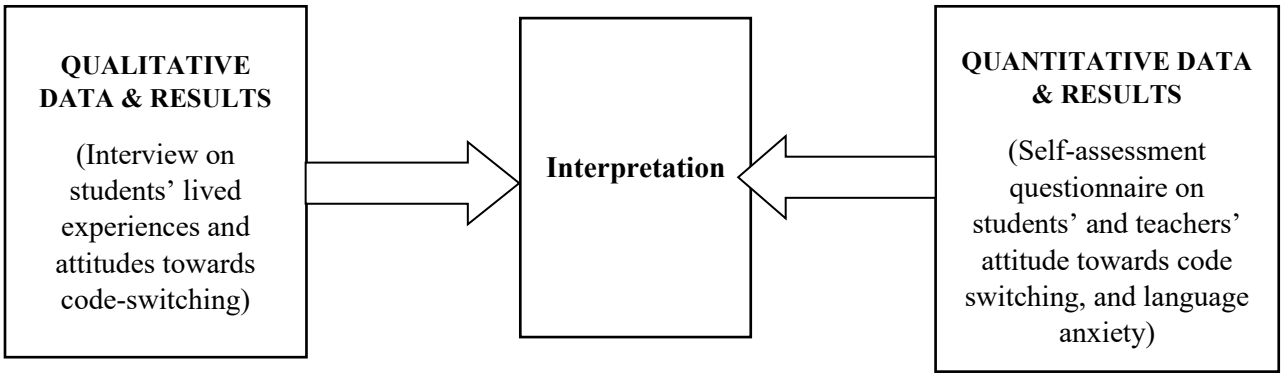
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6. On the basis of the findings of the study, what action plan can be proposed?

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study utilized the mixed methods, specifically the convergent parallel approach. For the quantitative part, this study utilized the descriptive correlational approach and for the qualitative part, the descriptive qualitative research design was used as it enables the researcher to observe a large number of the target population and make necessary conclusions about the variable. Furthermore, the researcher conducted in-depth interview (IDI) and focus-group discussion (FGD) with different groups of students. In this type of research method, the data gathered from the responses of the respondents can be statistically presented for the easy interpretation of the report users. To capture the various dimensions of code switching and to assure the validity of the research, the researcher utilized the within subject design to determine the attitude of teachers and students towards code switching and their experiences on English language anxiety, which made them resort or not resort to CS.



Research Respondents and Participants

The respondents of this study were Grade 7 students enrolled in the three (3) secondary schools of Malita, Davao Occidental. Respondents for the quantitative survey were 200 students. For the qualitative part, 10 students for the IDI and 7 for the FGD.

Research Instruments

Quantitative Phase. This study utilized an adapted questionnaire tailored from Noor Jasim Muhi Al-Qaysi's (2016) research - "Examining Students' and Educators' Attitudes Towards the Use of Code-Switching within Higher Educational Environments in Oman." In determining the respondents' Foreign Language Anxiety, Horwitz, Horwitz, & Cope's (1986) Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) consisting of 33 items presented on a five-point Likert scale was used.

Qualitative Phase. For the In-depth Interview (IDI) and the Focus Group Discussion (FGD), 8 interview questions were made by the researcher. The instruments were validated by a pool of experts to ensure that the survey questionnaires adapted by the researcher were appropriate, valid, and reliable.

Data Analysis

Quantitative Data Analysis. In analyzing the quantitative data gathered, the researcher used the Frequency distribution (f) and Percentage (%), Weighted Mean, and Pearson Product Moment Correlation. Frequency distribution (f) and Percentage (%) were used to describe the profile based on gender of the students/ respondents, the language(s) with which they have been mostly taught, and the language(s) they use in communicating with their classmates, teachers, and staff in their respective schools. Weighted Mean was utilized to determine the average computation of the responses of the students to the questions on (1) Students' attitude towards the use of code-switching, (2) Perceived teachers' attitude towards the use of code-switching, (3) Bilingual Switching Questionnaire (BSWQ), and (4) Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS). Pearson Product Moment Correlation was utilized to measure the significant relationship of the teacher's reasons and students' language attitude on the use of code-switching as well as on the language anxiety experienced by grade 7 students.

Qualitative Data Analysis. The researcher used the coding analysis and the thematic analysis. Upon collection of the data, the researcher transcribed the participants' recorded answers. Then, data reduction method was done to eliminate unnecessary details from the participants' answers. After data reduction, the first cycle coding was made, in which the researcher encoded all the participants' answers. In the thematic data analysis, the researcher contemplated on the different viewpoints of the participants in order to make a good understanding of their experiences. Then, the data were interpreted, classified into themes, and meanings of their answers about the phenomenon were studied, then grouped the participants' answers into themes. The identified themes were filtered and analyzed to generate a general set of themes. Finally, the data obtained in both quantitative and qualitative analysis were converged.

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RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Status of Teachers' and Students' Attitude towards Code Switching, Language Anxiety and Self-Assessed Code Switching of Grade 7 Students

Table 1.1 Students' Attitudes towards the use of Code-Switching

No.	Item	MEAN	SD	DESCRIPTION
1	Code-switching enhances my communication skills.	4.05	1.03	High
2	Code-switching helps me to develop my language skills.	3.82	0.98	High
3	Using code-switching shows that I'm well-educated.	3.59	1.15	High
4	Using code-switching shows that I'm prestigious.	3.04	1.15	Moderate
5	I code-switch due to the lack of Visayan equivalents.	3.51	1.13	High
6	Code-switching allows me to understand better.	4.25	0.96	Very high
7	Code-switching helps me to convey new words easily.	4.05	0.89	High
8	Code-switching makes me feel more comfortable and confident in classrooms.	4.04	1.05	High
9	I code-switch with my colleagues for discussing lectures and exams.	3.84	0.96	High
10	Code-switching helps me to practice the second language that I use.	3.88	1.14	High
11	Code-switching helps me in learning new words from the educators while they are switching between English and Visayan.	3.97	1.05	High
12	I code-switch with my colleagues due to the complexity of some words in my native language.	3.53	1.12	High
13	Usage of English allows me to express the ideas that I can't express in Visayan.	3.55	1.13	High
14	Usage of code-switching attracts my attention.	3.89	1.05	High
	Overall Mean	**3.78**	**0.58**	**High**

The results reveal that the respondents find that "code-switching allows them to understand better" which garnered an overall mean of 4.25. Although the standard deviation is set at 0.96, it can be noted that most of the students believe code-switching to be an effective strategy in allowing them to understand better the ideas presented. Equally assessed among the students' perception of code-switching, were items 1 and 7, with a mean of 4.05 with a descriptive rating of High and standard deviations of 1.05 and 0.89, respectively. These results show that students view code-switching as something that "enhances their communication skills" and "helps them to convey new words easily." Following closely with a mean of 4.04 is item number 6 which affirms that "code-switching makes the students feel more comfortable and confident in classrooms."

Table 1.2 Teachers' Attitudes towards the use of Code-Switching

No.	Item	MEAN	SD	DESCRIPTION
1	The teacher code-switches while teaching in order to help the students understand better.	4.57	0.78	Very high
2	The teacher code-switches due to lack of equivalents in Visayan language.	3.91	0.82	High
3	Code-switching helps teacher to bond strongly with students.	4.14	0.90	High
4	Code-switching helps teachers to convey meaning easily to students.	4.26	0.95	Very high
5	Usage of code-switching helps the students in learning the second language.	4.12	0.94	High
6	The teacher code-switches due to the complexity of certain words in my language.	3.68	0.95	High
7	The teacher code-switches because he/she feels that the students are not exposed to English.	4.11	0.92	High
8	Using code-switching while illustrating new terms helps the students to learn better.	4.21	0.95	Very high
9	Code-switching makes the discussions more interesting.	4.22	0.96	Very high

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10	Code-switching enhances the teacher's communication skills with the students.	4.09	0.94	High
11	Code-switching enables the students to boost up their second language skills.	3.96	1.01	High
12	Code-switching makes the students feel more comfortable and confident while learning.	4.35	0.86	High
	Overall Mean	4.13	0.58	High

The results show that respondents highly favor item number 1, which has a mean of 4.57, a standard deviation of 0.78, and a descriptive rating of Very High, an indication that students strongly believe that their teachers employ code-switching so they could be provided a comprehensive discussion of the topic or lesson. Also described as Very High is item number 4, with a mean of 4.26 and a standard deviation of 0.95. Moreover, closely assessed were items 8 and 9 with mean, 4.21 and 4.22, and standard deviation of 0.95 and 0.96 respectively, asserting that students affirm the statements that "using code-switching while illustrating new terms helps them to learn better" and that "code-switching makes the discussions more interesting." Thus, the results show that students' perception of their teachers and the latters' code-switching practices is highly positive.

Table 1.3 Language Anxiety

No.	Items	MEAN	SD	DESCRIPTION
1	I never feel quite sure of myself when I am speaking in my English language class.	3.56	1.05	High
2	I don't worry about making mistakes in language class.	3.26	1.24	Moderate
3	I tremble when I know that I'm going to be called on in language class.	3.49	1.09	High
4	It frightens me when I don't understand what the teacher is saying in the foreign language.	3.36	1.11	Moderate
5	It wouldn't bother me at all to take more English language classes.	3.41	1.13	High
6	During language class, I find myself thinking about things that have nothing to do with the course.	3.35	1.17	Moderate
7	I keep thinking that the other students are better at languages than I am.	3.57	1.09	High
8	I am usually at ease during tests in my language class.	3.29	1.07	Moderate
9	I start to panic when I have to speak without preparation in language class.	3.58	1.04	High
10	I worry about the consequences of failing my foreign language class.	3.89	1.07	High
11	I don't understand why some people get so upset over foreign language classes.	3.46	1.16	High
12	In language class, I can get so nervous I forget things I know.	3.54	0.96	High
13	It embarrasses me to volunteer answers in my language class.	3.39	1.10	Moderate
14	I would not be nervous speaking the foreign language with native speakers.	3.23	1.20	Moderate
15	I get upset when I don't understand what the teacher is correcting.	3.45	1.09	High
16	Even if I am well prepared for language class, I feel anxious about it.	3.53	1.06	High
17	I often feel like not going to my language class.	2.77	1.34	Moderate
18	I feel confident when I speak in foreign language class.	3.33	1.17	Moderate
19	I am afraid that my language teacher is ready to correct every mistake I make.	3.48	1.23	High
20	I can feel my heart pounding when I'm going to be called on in language class.	3.52	1.19	High
21	The more I study for a language test, the more confused I get.	3.51	1.12	High
22	I don't feel pressure to prepare very well for language class.	3.29	1.12	High
23	I always feel that the other students speak the foreign language better than I do.	3.52	1.04	High

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24	I feel very self-conscious about speaking the foreign language in front of other students.	3.61	1.10	High
25	Language class moves so quickly I worry about getting left behind.	3.37	1.02	Moderate
26	I feel more tense and nervous in my language class than in my other classes.	3.31	1.14	Moderate
27	I get nervous and confused when I am speaking in my language class.	3.53	1.11	High
28	When I'm on my way to language class, I feel very sure and relaxed.	3.43	1.03	High
29	I get nervous when I don't understand every word the language teacher says.	3.44	1.12	High
30	I feel overwhelmed by the number of rules you have to learn to speak a foreign language.	3.42	1.08	High
31	I am afraid that the other students will laugh at me when I speak the foreign language.	4.21	0.78	Very high
32	I would probably feel comfortable around native speakers of the foreign language.	3.31	1.08	Moderate
33	I get nervous when the language teacher asks questions which I haven't prepared in advance.	3.74	0.98	High
	Overall Mean	3.79	0.45	High

This shows the English Language Anxiety of students as they struggle to understand the lessons taught using the English language. This result means that the items characterizing language anxiety is always manifested in the experiences of the respondents.

Table 1.4 Self-Assessed Code Switching of Grade 7 Students

No.	Item	MEAN	SD	DESCRIPTION
1	I do not remember or I cannot recall some Visayan words when I am speaking in the English language.	3.03	1.19	Moderate
2	I do not remember or I cannot recall some English words when I am speaking in this language.	3.20	1.12	Moderate
3	I tend to switch languages during a conversation (for example, I switch from English to Visayan or vice versa).	3.83	0.97	High
4	When I cannot recall a word in Visayan, I tend to immediately produce it in English.	3.75	1.01	High
5	When I cannot recall a word in English, I tend to immediately produce it in Visayan.	3.74	1.06	High
6	I do not realize when I switch the language during a conversation (e.g. from Visayan to English) or when I mix the two languages; I often realize it only if I am informed of the switch by another person.	3.52	1.05	High
7	When I switch languages, I do it consciously.	3.60	0.99	High
8	It is difficult for me to control the language switches I introduce during a conversation (e.g. from Visayan to English).	3.54	1.07	High
9	Without intending to, I sometimes produce the English word faster when I am speaking in Visayan.	3.62	1.01	High
10	Without intending to, I sometimes produce the Visayan word faster when I am speaking in English.	3.65	1.06	High
11	There are situations in which I always switch between the two languages.	3.68	1.02	High
12	There are certain topics or issues for which I normally switch between the two languages.	3.74	0.92	High
	Overall Mean	3.57	0.57	High

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As shown in the Table 1.4, the mean overall mean for this domain is 3.57 which is equivalent to a descriptive rating of High. This means that the respondents in the study have always experienced code-switching in the classroom and even outside of it. As regards the consistency of responses, a standard deviation of 0.57 reveals a homogeneous view of this variable of the study.

Significant Influence of Students' Attitude Towards Code-switching, Teachers' Attitude Towards Code-switching, and English Language Anxiety over the Self-Assessed Code-switching of Grade 7 Students

Table 2. Significance of the Difference of Students' Attitude Towards Code-switching, Teachers' Attitude Towards Code-switching, and English Language Anxiety over the Self-Assessed Code-switching of Grade 7 Students

Predictor	Beta Coefficient	t-value	p-value	Remarks
Students' Attitude	.18	2.90	.004	S
Teachers' Attitude	.116	1.81	.072	NS
Language Anxiety	.573	10.37	.000	S

R = .739, R-square = .546, F = 78.42, p-value = .000

The table shows the influence of the variables, Students' Attitude, Teacher's Attitude and Language Anxiety on the Self-assessed Code-switching of Grade 7 students. The first independent variable, Students' Attitude towards the use of code-switching, garnered a p-value of .004 which is lower than the alpha level set to 0.05, and thus makes the variable a significant influence on the code switching of the Grade 7 students.

On the other hand, the second independent variable Teachers' Attitude towards the use of code-switching has a p-value at 0.75 which is greater than the alpha which indicates a no significant level of the code switching of the students. It does not play a vital role on the self-assessed code switching of the Grade 7 students.

The third independent variable Language Anxiety has gained a p-value of .000 which was lower the alpha level. It shows a significant influence to the code switching of the students.

Lived Experiences of Grade 7 Students as Regards Their Self-Assessed Code Switching

The results reveal that the respondents observe that *code-switching allows them to understand better* which acquired an overall mean of 4.25 and descriptive rating of Very high. Evaluated equally with High rating and a mean 0f 4.05 are items on students view of code-switching as something that enhances their communication skills and helps them to convey new words easily. Item number 6 garnered a mean of 4.04 which confirms that "code-switching makes the students feel more comfortable and confident in classrooms." These findings are supported in the theory of Mother Tongue Based Multilingual Education by van Ginkel (2016), which maintains that an education program that utilizes 'mother tongue' as mode of instruction helps a learner become bi/multilingual at school. Research also show that children's first language or mother tongue is the best language for literacy and learning throughout primary school (UNESCO, 2008a).

The Role of Experiences in Shaping the Attitudes and Motivations of Teachers' and Students' Attitude Towards Code-Switching and Language Anxiety

The first theme which emerged is Apprehension versus Self-efficacy with codes Apprehension, Capacity-building, Multimedia Aids and Building Self-confidence. Another theme is Empowerment with codes Aids in understanding, Attaining self-confidence, and Encourages articulation and engagement, and the third theme Expressing with confidence with codes, Encourage use of code-switching, Maximizing multimedia experience, and Observing and benchmarking.

Salient Qualitative and Quantitative Findings

Based on the results, the first aspect of focal point is the Students' Positive Attitude towards the Use of Code-switching as supported by the results which manifested that code-switching allows them to understand better which garnered an overall mean of 4.25, which is also reinforced on *Teachers' and Students' Attitude Towards Code-Switching* which generate a code - *aids in understanding.* This shows the merging nature of data integration which serves as converging. Hence, the quantitative data result converges with the qualitative data result for the theme display of positive attitude towards the use of code-switching. For the axiological implication, the result implies that the use of the first language in communication and in learning the second language helps one in understanding and comprehending.

The second aspect of focal point, the Use of Code-switching facilitates understanding is supported by a Very high description and 4.57 mean on Table 1.2, item 1 – *The teacher code-switches while teaching in order to help the students understand better,* which is further backed by Table 4 on *Teachers' and Students' Attitude Towards Code-Switching* which has codes such as *Aids in understanding.* This presents the merging nature of data integration which serves as converging. Here, quantitative data result meets with the qualitative data result for the theme display of encouraged use of code-switching in the classroom. As for the axiological implication, the result suggests that social interaction through code-switching performs an important part in the advancement of comprehension.

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The third aspect of focal point, Language Anxiety hampers language learning and communication, is hereby reinforced by the result of the quantitative data on Table 1.3 that shows very high description with mean of 4.21 for item 31 - *I am afraid that the other students will laugh at me when I speak the foreign language.* This is also maintained by the quantitative data result, Table 3 on *Lived Experiences of Grade 7 Students as Regards their Self-Assessed Code-Switching* has codes such as , *bad grammar, speech incompetence, and essential theme – English language anxiety.* As such, Foreign Language Anxiety hinders an individual's communicative competence and language learning proficiency as reflected in the axiological implication in column 6.

Finally, the last aspect of focal point, the wide use of code-switching among result on students is sustained by the quantitative result on Table 1.4 presenting high ratings for item number 3, that speakers tend to switch languages during a conversation , (for example, from English to Visayan) and the qualitative data, Table 1.4, items, number 3 holding similar ideas with Table 4 with codes to employ code-switching to express ides easily and express ideas through code-switching. Similarly, this shows the merging nature of data integration which serves as converging. Thus, the quantitative data result converges with the qualitative data result for the theme display of the wide use of code-switching among result on students. For the axiological implication, the result implies that the use of the first language encourages easy expression of ideas.

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