

A CASE STUDY OF MULTILINGUAL LEARNERS

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ABSTRACT

A study on the multilingual learners of Valencia National High School is designed to understand the lived experiences of Muslim students who navigate multiple languages in their academic, social, and religious lives. The study seeks to explore how these learners use different languages in various contexts, how they balance their multilingual identities, and what challenges and opportunities they encounter in using multiple languages. The analysis focuses on their language practices, adaptive strategies, and implications for inclusive education.

This study employs a qualitative case study design to gain in-depth insights into the multilingual practices of Muslim learners, particularly those who use Bisaya, Tagalog, Maranao, English, and Arabic. The participants of the study were randomly chosen from Grades 10 to 12 of Valencia National High School, with a total of 4-5 respondents interviewed until data saturation was reached. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions, and classroom observations to allow participants to freely express their linguistic experiences while ensuring that key aspects of multilingualism were explored.

Keyword: *multilingual learners, muslim students*

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of the Study

The Philippines, an archipelago of over 180 languages, presents a fundamentally multilingual educational landscape. Nowhere is this linguistic diversity more pronounced than in Mindanao, where ethnolinguistic and religious diversity necessitates daily navigation across multiple linguistic codes. For Muslim learners in this region, language is not merely a tool for communication but a core component of faith, cultural heritage, and personal identity. Their linguistic repertoire is uniquely complex, encompassing heritage languages like Maranao for community and identity, local lingua francas such as Bisaya for wider social interaction, Filipino as the national language, English as the dominant medium of academic advancement, and Arabic for religious practice and Qur'anic studies.

At institutions like Valencia National High School, this reality manifests in a dynamic yet challenging learning environment. Students fluidly shift between languages, yet the formal educational system often fails to align with this complex reality. A critical problem emerges: while these learners possess rich multilingual competencies, the classroom often creates tension by

discouraging natural practices like code-switching, overlooking the pedagogical value of heritage languages, and prioritizing academic English in ways that can marginalize students' existing linguistic knowledge. This misalignment represents a significant barrier to creating truly inclusive and effective education.

Existing research, while informative, has not sufficiently addressed this specific problem. Studies by Jamora (2014) and Reyes (2018) acknowledge the multilingualism of Maranao learners and the utility of translanguaging, while Santiago and Dagdag (2021) demonstrate the benefits of mother tongue-based education. Furthermore, recent studies highlight practical challenges, such as the misalignment of MTB-MLE materials (E-palli, 2022) and the difficulties teachers face in balancing multiple languages (Lacerna & Angeles, 2021; Esmael & Pandi, 2024). However, a conspicuous research gap remains. The predominant focus of Philippine language research is on Filipino-English bilingualism, leaving a critical void in the understanding of learners who must concurrently negotiate a five-language repertoire encompassing heritage, local, national, global, and religious domains.

Therefore, this study seeks to address this gap by investigating the lived experiences of Muslim multilingual learners at Valencia National High School. It aims to provide a holistic understanding of how they strategically manage their complex linguistic resources, the challenges they encounter, and the opportunities they perceive. The findings of this research are essential to inform pedagogical approaches and school policies that recognize and leverage this intricate multilingualism not as a barrier to overcome, but as a foundational asset for learning and identity formation.

1.2. Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on two major theories: the Sociocultural Theory of Vygotsky (1978) and the Translanguaging Theory of García (2009). According to Sociocultural Theory, learning is shaped by social and cultural contexts, and language serves as a primary mediating tool in the construction of knowledge. For Muslim learners, this implies that their academic experiences cannot be separated from the cultural and linguistic environments where they live and study. Their identities, communication styles, and learning practices are deeply connected to the interplay of languages they use—Bisaya, Tagalog, Maranao, Arabic, and English.

Meanwhile, Translanguaging Theory provides a lens to understand how these learners navigate their multilingual identities by drawing from their entire linguistic repertoire. Instead of compartmentalizing each language, Muslim learners fluidly combine them depending on the situation, whether in the classroom, at home, or in religious contexts. This perspective positions multilingualism not as a deficiency but as a powerful resource that learners use to construct meaning, solve problems, and engage in learning.

In relation to the Statement of the Problem, these theories guide the study in three ways. First, Sociocultural Theory helps explain what languages Muslim learners use in different contexts (Problem 1) by emphasizing the role of culture and environment in shaping language use. Second, Translanguaging Theory provides insight into how learners negotiate and balance their multilingual identities in academic and social interactions (Problem 2), showing that fluid language practices are natural and purposeful. Finally, together, both theories shed light on the

challenges and opportunities multilingual learners encounter (Problem 3), framing these experiences not as obstacles but as part of their adaptive strategies in learning and communication.

1.3. Objectives of the Study:

To explore the experiences, perspectives, and strategies of multilingual learners, highlighting the complexities and benefits of multilingualism in learning and communication.

Specific Objectives:

1. To investigate the language learning experiences and strategies of multilingual learners, including challenges and successes.
2. To examine the role of multilingualism in shaping identity, worldview, and cognitive abilities.
3. To identify the benefits and challenges of multilingualism in personal and professional contexts.
4. To gather insights and recommendations from multilingual learners that can inform language education policies and practices.

Operational Definition of Terms

1. **Multilingual Learners** – students who use three or more languages in different contexts, specifically Bisaya, Tagalog, Maranao, English, and Arabic.
2. **Arabic Language** – used by Muslim learners primarily for religious and cultural purposes such as Qur’anic studies.
3. **Translanguaging** – the practice of drawing from one’s entire linguistic repertoire to communicate and learn.
4. **Case Study** – a qualitative research method focusing on an in-depth exploration of a specific group, in this case, Muslim multilingual learners in Valencia National High School.

1.4. Statement of the Problem

In today’s increasingly interconnected and linguistically diverse world, multilingualism has become both a valuable asset and a complex challenge for learners. Multilingual learners navigate multiple languages in their academic,

social, and personal lives, which can influence their identity, cognitive development, and communication skills. While multilingualism offers significant advantages—such as enhanced cognitive flexibility and cultural awareness—it can also present difficulties related to language dominance, code-switching, and maintaining proficiency across languages.

This study seeks to explore the experiences, perspectives, and strategies of multilingual learners, emphasizing the complexities and benefits of multilingualism in learning and communication. It aims to understand how multilingual learners develop, use, and manage multiple languages, as well as how these experiences shape their identity and learning outcomes.

Specifically, this study aims to answer the following questions:

1. What are the language learning experiences and strategies of multilingual learners, including the challenges they face and the successes they achieve?
2. How does multilingualism influence the identity, worldview, and cognitive abilities of multilingual learners?
3. What benefits and challenges do multilingual learners experience in their personal and professional contexts?
4. What insights and recommendations can multilingual learners offer to help improve language education policies and practices?

1.5. Significance of the study

This study is significant for various stakeholders in the field of education and language research, as it highlights the importance of embracing linguistic diversity and fostering inclusive learning environments. For educators, the findings will provide valuable insights into effective teaching strategies that support multilingual learners, particularly those who navigate both academic and religious languages such as Maranao and Arabic. By understanding the diverse linguistic experiences of students, teachers will be able to design instruction that validates and incorporates learners' cultural and linguistic backgrounds, encouraging engagement and inclusivity in the classroom. The study also promotes a shift in perspective recognizing multilingualism not as a

challenge but as an asset that enhances learning, creativity, and communication.

For school administrators, the results of this study will serve as a guide in formulating school programs and policies that are linguistically inclusive and culturally responsive, especially in communities with Muslim learners. It will also provide a foundation for developing professional training that equips teachers with the knowledge and skills needed to handle linguistically diverse classrooms. Furthermore, the study supports evidence-based decision-making in resource allocation, curriculum design, and the creation of school environments that honor and celebrate multilingual identities.

For students, this study affirms that their ability to speak and understand multiple languages is a strength that contributes to their personal growth, academic success, and sense of identity. It empowers them to take pride in their linguistic and cultural heritage and to view their multilingualism as a source of confidence rather than confusion. The findings will help learners recognize that language diversity can serve as a bridge for understanding and connecting with others.

For researchers and curriculum developers, this study adds to the growing body of literature on multilingualism in the Philippine context. It moves beyond the common Filipino-English framework by including minority and religious languages such as Maranao and Arabic. The findings may inform future research on language use, policy-making, and curriculum design that reflect the realities of multilingual learners in diverse educational settings. Lastly, for policymakers and the broader educational community, this study underscores the importance of promoting linguistic inclusion and cultural sensitivity in schools. It provides insights that can guide the creation of educational policies that view multilingual competence as a valuable national asset, fostering unity in diversity across the country's multicultural and multireligious communities.

1.6. Scope and Delimitations of the Study

The scope of this research is limited to Muslim learners at Valencia National High School who actively use Bisaya, Tagalog, Maranao, English, and Arabic in their daily lives. It centers on their experiences, challenges, and strategies in

navigating multiple languages across academic, social, and religious settings. The study does not attempt to generalize findings to all Muslim learners in the Philippines but instead seeks to provide an in-depth understanding of a specific group. Furthermore, the research employs only qualitative methods such as interviews as the aim is to explore lived experiences rather than generate numerical or statistical data.

2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

2.1. Research Design

This study employs a qualitative case study design to explore the cultural identity and language use of Maranao students in a multilingual classroom. The case study design is appropriate for this research as it allows for an in-depth understanding of the lived experiences, communication strategies, and cultural expressions of multilingual learners within their natural academic setting. Through this design, the study aims to capture the complex realities of language use and identity formation among students who navigate multiple languages in both school and home environments.

2.2. Research Setting

The study will be conducted at Valencia National High School, located in Valencia City, Bukidnon. The school was selected as the research setting because it represents a multicultural and multilingual learning environment, with a significant number of Maranao students enrolled across different grade levels. Within this setting, students frequently interact with peers from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds, making it an ideal context for examining multilingualism and cultural identity. The school follows the Department of Education's K to 12 Basic Education Curriculum and provides various opportunities for language learning through classroom instruction and social interaction.

2.3. Participants

The participants of the study will consist of four (4) Maranao students randomly selected from Grades 10 to 12. Random selection will be used to minimize bias and ensure that participants represent a range of communication experiences and backgrounds. This number is sufficient for a case study, as it allows for a comprehensive exploration of perspectives while maintaining

manageable data collection and analysis. The participants will be chosen based on their ability to communicate in more than one language, including Maranao, Filipino, English, and Arabic, reflecting the multilingual nature of the study.

2.4. Role of The Researcher

The researcher acted as the primary instrument for this study, conducting all data collection through one-on-one interviews. In this role, a commitment to neutrality and cultural sensitivity was maintained to foster an environment where participants could share their experiences authentically. Furthermore, the researcher practiced reflexivity throughout the process to ensure that personal biases and perspectives did not shape the interpretation of the participants' narratives.

2.5. Trustworthiness of The Study (Ethical Procedure)

To ensure the trustworthiness and ethical integrity of the study, informed consent will be obtained from all participants prior to data collection. Participants will be fully informed of the study's purpose, procedures, and their right to withdraw at any time without consequence. Confidentiality and anonymity will be strictly maintained through the use of pseudonyms, and all data will be securely stored and used solely for academic purposes. The study will also employ member-checking and data triangulation to enhance credibility and ensure that participants' perspectives are accurately represented.

2.6. Data Gathering Procedure (Entry Protocol, Steps in Gathering Data)

Data will be collected through semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions, and classroom observations.

1. Entry Protocol: The researcher will first seek permission from the school administration and coordinate with teachers to identify potential participants.
2. Interview and Discussion Phase: Semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions will be conducted to explore students' perspectives on language use, identity, and cultural expression. These will be held face-to-face in a safe and comfortable environment.

3. Observation Phase: The researcher will observe classroom interactions to document authentic communication practices among multilingual learners. Field notes and audio recordings will be used as primary data sources.

Interview questions will focus on:

- Students' experiences in using multiple languages in academic and social contexts
- The challenges and strategies they employ in multilingual communication
- The influence of multilingualism on their identity and worldview
- Their perceptions of the benefits and complexities of being multilingual

2.7. Instrumentation and Validation

An interview guide will be developed based on the objectives of the study to ensure alignment between research questions and data collection. The guide will undergo expert validation by professionals in qualitative research and language education to assess the clarity, appropriateness, and cultural sensitivity of the questions. It will also be pilot-tested with two students outside the main participants to ensure reliability and refine question flow and wording before final implementation.

2.8. Data Analysis

Data analysis will be conducted using thematic analysis. Interview and observation data will be transcribed, coded, and categorized into themes that reflect the participants' cultural identity, language use, and communication practices. Emerging patterns will be analyzed in relation to the research objectives, and supporting quotations from participants will be included to illustrate key findings. Interpretation will focus on understanding how multilingual learners negotiate their linguistic and cultural identities within the school context.

3. PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF FINDINGS

3.1. Presentation of Findings

This section presents the key findings derived from a thematic analysis of the interviews

conducted with the four multilingual learners. The data are organized into four central themes that capture the core of their shared experiences: (1) The Dual Nature of the Multilingual Journey, (2) Strategic Integration of Linguistic Resources, (3) The Shaping of Identity and Perspective, and (4) Contextual Navigation and Social Adaptation. Direct quotes from the participants in both Maranao and their provided English translations are integrated to provide a rich, evidence-based narrative.

Theme 1: The Dual Nature of the Multilingual Journey: Cognitive Challenges and Empowering Rewards

A consistent pattern across all interviews was the description of the multilingual experience as a balance between significant cognitive effort and a profound sense of achievement. Participants were candid about the difficulties but unanimous in affirming the value of their linguistic skills.

The Experience of Cognitive Load and Confusion: Participants frequently described moments of mental strain and confusion when processing multiple languages.

- Participant A articulated this clearly: "*Sii ko languwan a basa a kiyapaganadan akn nagu miyasuwa akn na aya kiyasagadan akn non naso kababaloy niyan a pakalibog nagu mathay a kapamimikiran ka ko maana niyan...*" ("In all the languages I have studied and learned, what I have experienced is confusion and a long thinking process for the meaning of a word I want to say...").
- Participant C echoed this in the context of learning English: "*Ang mga challenges na na-encounter ko ay ang pag learn ng English... nakaka-confuse paminsan-minsan kung paano ba yung proper usage niya...*" ("The challenges I encountered include learning English... Sometimes I get confused about the proper usage of words.").
- Participant D pointed to specific linguistic features as sources of challenge: "*Aya mga t'p'ng a pyanguukitan akn na so correct a kapmbals, kaosar, meaning, correct grammar...*" ("The challenges I encountered included correct

pronunciation, usage, meaning, proper grammar...").

The Empowering Sense of Reward and Advantage: Despite the challenges, all participants expressed a strong, positive regard for their multilingual abilities, viewing them as a unique advantage.

- Participant A stated: "*Gayunpaman, napakaganda sa feeling na nakakayang intindihin at mag salita sa maraming language.*" ("Nevertheless, it is a wonderful feeling to be able to understand and speak in many languages."). She also noted it allows her to understand "things that others cannot."
- Participant B highlighted the social utility: "*Miyakabgay ragn a tabang ka igira adn a pd akn a di niyan sabotn so isa a basa na sakn i di ron di maka translate...*" ("It has been helpful for me because when someone doesn't understand a language, I can translate it for them...").
- Participant C cited tangible academic advantages, such as being chosen "*Na i present ang ibat-ibang languages na alam ko*" ("to present the different languages that I know").

Theme 2: Strategic Integration of Linguistic Resources: Translanguaging as a Core Practice

The data reveals that participants do not treat their languages as separate systems but instead actively and strategically integrate them into a unified toolkit for communication and learning.

The "Unification" and "Combining" Technique: A prominent strategy involved mentally merging all known languages.

- Participant A explicitly described her method: "*Ang teknik na ginamit ko ay yung lahat na languages na napag-aralan at natutunan ko ay dinadagdag ko sa aking linggwahe para malagay sa isipan ko na kasama yung language.*" ("The technique I used is that I add all the languages I have studied and learned to my language so that my mind incorporates them."). She further confirmed this by stating, "*Oo, sa pamamaraan na pinag kakaisa ko yung languages na alam ko.*" ("Yes, through the

method of unifying the languages I know.").

Cross-Linguistic Scaffolding and Recall: Participants use their proficiency in one language to support another, both for learning and for recalling information.

- Participant A provided a clear example: "*Kung makakalimutan ko man ang isang salita pwede ako matulungan ng isang language para matandaan ito.*" ("And if I ever forget a word, another language can help me remember it."). She also uses translation for comprehension: "*In my studies... when I don't understand a word in Arabic or Maranao, I translate it into Tagalog or English so I can understand it.*"
- Participant B affirmed the cross-language influence on learning capacity: "*Oway ka mas kabtadan kawn sa bag'r ko kaphaganadi ron ka an kawmani so katawan ka ko pitibarangan a katharo*" ("Yes, because the more you practice and study one language, the more it strengthens your ability to learn and increases your knowledge of other languages.").

Theme 3: The Shaping of Identity and Worldview

Being multilingual was reported not merely as a skill, but as a fundamental force in shaping the participants' self-perception and their understanding of the world.

Broadening of Perspectives: Participants described how knowing multiple languages opened their minds to different cultures and viewpoints.

- Participant C stated: "*Ang pagiging multilingual ay nagpapalawak ng aking pananaw at pagkatao. Dahil sa ibat-ibang language na alam ko ay doon ko malalaman ang mga pananaw ng ibang tao.*" ("Being multilingual broadens my perspective and character. Through the different languages I know, I am able to understand the viewpoints of other people.").

- Participant D shared a similar view: "*Kyaugopan ako o kababaloy akn a matao sa pithibarangan a katharo sa ukit a naging more open, knowledgebale ago understanding ako sa salakaw a culture ago pananaw iran...*" ("Being knowledgeable in different languages has helped me become more open-minded, knowledgeable, and understanding of other cultures and their perspectives.").

Building Confidence and a Capable Self-Identity: Successfully managing multiple languages fostered a strong sense of self-efficacy and confidence.

- Participant C noted: "*Pkha btadan ka sa confidence igira aya oosarn a katharo na so kata katawan ka di mbaloy a advance so otk akn.*" ("It has given me confidence because when I use a language I know, it helps me think more clearly and become more advanced in my thinking.").
- Participant D also connected multilingualism to confidence and cognitive organization: "*Sa kadakl a katharo a katawan akn na phakabgay skaniyan rakn sa ka confidence ka igira a katawan akn so katharo na mas pzabut'n nakn ago pkha organize so idea sa pamikiran akn.*" ("Being multilingual has given me more confidence because when I use a language I know, it helps me think more clearly and organize my thoughts better.").

Theme 4: Contextual Navigation and Social Adaptation

The participants demonstrated a high degree of sociolinguistic awareness, consciously adapting their language use based on the social context, audience, and purpose.

Conscious Code-Switching and Adjustment: They are not passive users of language but active agents who strategically select from their repertoire.

- Participant A explained: "*Pkkatundo akn nggulalan sii ko sifat a pakaasal iyan nago so tono o lagu niyan a phagusarn. Phag adjust ako sa katharo depende ko antaa e diyakn mimbitiyarae.*" ("I navigate different cultural or social contexts by paying attention to the attributes, origin,

and tone of the language I am using. I adjust the way I speak depending on who I am talking to...").

- Participant D described a similar, almost intuitive process: "*Ip'manage akn so kaph'nggamit akn sa mbida-bida a basa na diyakn siran phikir'n sa mrnga-rngan. Phalaiyoon akn na depende sii ko kabitiyarae akn nago sii ko masa s ataman sa dimbaloy a natural.*" ("I manage my use of multiple languages by not thinking about them all at the same time. I use them depending on the person I'm speaking to and the situation, and gradually it becomes natural.").

4.DISCUSSION

This discussion synthesizes the key findings of the study by examining them through the lens of the established theoretical framework—Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory and García's Translanguaging Theory. The analysis addresses the study's objectives by exploring how the participants' experiences are shaped by their social context and how they strategically leverage their multilingualism.

1. The Sociocultural Mediation of Language Learning and Identity

The first objective was to investigate the language learning experiences and strategies of multilingual learners. The findings reveal that these experiences are deeply rooted in the participants' sociocultural environments, as Vygotsky (1978) posits. The "cognitive load" reported by Participant A and Participant C is not merely a mental phenomenon; it is the manifestation of navigating multiple, distinct sociocultural contexts—the home (Maranao), the school (English/Filipino), and the Madrasah (Arabic). Each context comes with its own set of rules, expectations, and ways of thinking. The "long thinking process" is, therefore, the cognitive effort required to mediate between these different cultural worlds. Their successes, such as the ability to translate for peers, are evidence of them mastering these mediational tools, turning a challenge into a social and academic asset.

2. Translanguaging as a Strategic and Cognitive Resource

The second objective was to examine the role of multilingualism in shaping identity, worldview, and cognitive abilities. The findings provide powerful evidence for García's (2009) Translanguaging Theory. Participants did not treat their languages as separate, bounded systems. Instead, they described an integrated linguistic repertoire. Participant A's strategy of "unifying" languages and using one to recall words in another demonstrates that their mental lexicon is a dynamic, interconnected network. This practice is a sophisticated metacognitive strategy that enhances learning and problem-solving. When Participant D and Participant C use translation to understand complex concepts, they are not cheating; they are using their full cognitive toolkit to construct meaning. This directly influences their worldview, fostering the "open-mindedness" and "curiosity" they described, as they can access multiple perspectives embedded within each language.

3. The Construction of a Multilingual Identity

The third objective was to identify the benefits and challenges in personal and professional contexts. The data shows that the challenges (confusion, external expectations) and benefits (confidence, unique capabilities) are two sides of the same coin, actively shaping their identity. The consistent theme of gained confidence—as stated by Participant B and Participant D—stems from successfully overcoming these linguistic challenges. This success builds a self-perception of being a capable and resourceful individual. Their identity is not fractured by multiple languages but is fortified by the ability to navigate them. The "advantage" they feel is not just practical; it is integral to their self-worth, positioning them as valuable mediators and knowledgeable individuals within their communities.

Interpretation of Findings

Interpreting these findings through a holistic, case-based lens allows us to derive deeper meaning about the phenomenon of being a multilingual learner in this specific context.

The Multilingual Mind as an Integrated, Not a Compartmentalized, System: The core finding of this case study is that for these learners, multilingualism functions as a unified, holistic system. The strategies of "unification" and "cross-linguistic scaffolding" are not coping mechanisms but are the default, optimal way their brains

operate. Forgetting a word in one language and recalling it via another is not a failure of memory but a successful query within an integrated network. This interpretation challenges deficit-based views of code-switching and positions translanguaging as the natural cognitive state of the multilingual individual.

Multilingualism as a Catalyst for Metacognitive and Socio-Cultural Development: The participants' experiences suggest that the constant need to monitor, select, and adjust language use fosters a heightened level of metacognitive awareness. They are not just using language; they are constantly thinking about language. This metacognition spills over into a greater socio-cultural awareness, allowing them to "adjust" their communication and understand different "viewpoints," as Participant C noted. Their multilingualism is, therefore, a primary driver in developing their ability to think flexibly and empathetically.

Agency and Identity are Forged in the Navigation of Linguistic Boundaries: The participants are not passive subjects of their multilingual environment; they are active agents. They consciously "unify," "translate," "adjust," and "navigate." This agency is central to their identity formation. Each successful act of communication across linguistic boundaries—whether helping a peer or presenting in class—is a building block for a confident, self-assured identity. Their identity is thus interpreted as an ongoing project of "becoming"—a capable person whose power derives from their ability to bridge worlds.

Implication of the Findings

The findings of this case study carry significant implications for educational theory and practice, urging a fundamental shift in how multilingual learners are perceived and supported. Primarily, they demand a move away from pedagogical approaches that enforce strict language separation, which this study reveals to be cognitively dissonant with the learners' natural mental processes. The documented success of strategies like "unification" and cross-linguistic scaffolding implies that educators should be empowered to intentionally integrate translanguaging into their teaching, allowing students to use their full linguistic repertoire as a legitimate tool for brainstorming, drafting, and comprehending complex concepts. This approach

would reduce the cognitive load reported by learners and leverage their existing knowledge as a bridge to new learning. Furthermore, the profound influence of multilingualism on identity and confidence underscores the need for systemic and curricular reform. School administrators and policymakers must foster linguistically inclusive environments by developing resources that support academic language development across all languages, integrating cultural and linguistic awareness into the curriculum, and revising assessment policies to be more responsive to diverse expressions of understanding. Ultimately, these findings necessitate a reconceptualization of teacher training to equip educators with an asset-based perspective, grounded in Sociocultural and Translanguaging theories, ensuring they can create low-anxiety classrooms that view multilingualism not as a barrier to be overcome, but as a foundational strength to be cultivated for academic success and personal

5.CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

5.1. Conclusion

This case study set out to explore the complex experiences of multilingual learners. Based on an in-depth analysis of the data, the study arrives at the following conclusions, which directly address the research questions:

In response to the question of language learning experiences, strategies, challenges, and successes, the study concludes that multilingual learners navigate a dual reality. They face significant challenges, primarily a persistent cognitive load and moments of confusion as they process multiple linguistic systems. However, they achieve remarkable success by developing sophisticated, self-taught strategies. Their most pivotal strategy is translanguaging—the conscious unification and integration of their languages into a single mental toolkit. This allows them to scaffold their own learning, using proficiency in one language to support another, thereby turning a potential obstacle into a powerful mechanism for comprehension and communication.

Regarding the influence of multilingualism on identity, worldview, and cognitive abilities, the study concludes that it is a profoundly formative force. Multilingualism actively shapes their identity, fostering a strong sense of self-confidence and unique capability derived from their ability to bridge linguistic and cultural

divides. It expands their worldview, making them more open-minded, curious, and understanding of diverse cultures and perspectives. Cognitively, while it demands mental effort, it simultaneously hones their metacognitive and problem-solving abilities, training them to think flexibly and approach problems from multiple angles.

Concerning the personal and professional benefits and challenges, the study concludes that the benefits far outweigh the difficulties. Personally, multilingualism provides learners with confidence, independence, and a unique social role as translators and mediators. Professionally, it is perceived as a key that unlocks future opportunities in a globalized world. The primary challenges remain the internal cognitive strain and, at times, the external pressure of others' high expectations for their translation abilities.

Pertaining to the insights and recommendations for improving language education, the central insight from the learners is that their multilingualism is an asset, not a handicap. Therefore, their key recommendation—both implicit in their strategies and explicit in their advice—is for a fundamental shift in educational practice. They call for educational policies and teaching methodologies that move away from strict language separation and instead validate, incorporate, and actively leverage their full linguistic repertoires to make learning more inclusive, effective, and psychologically supportive.

In essence, this study concludes that the multilingual learner is not a deficit thinker but a resourceful, adaptive, and cognitively agile individual. Embracing this reality is the key to unlocking their full potential within the educational system.

6.RECOMMENDATION FOR FUTURE INVESTIGATION

Based on the conclusive findings of this study, the following recommendations are proposed to enhance educational support for multilingual learners and to transform pedagogical practices.

1. For Pedagogical Practice and Classroom Strategies

To address the cognitive challenges and leverage the effective strategies employed by learners, it is recommended that educators formally integrate

translanguaging pedagogies into classroom instruction. This should involve designing lessons that intentionally allow students to use their entire linguistic repertoire as a learning tool, such as permitting brainstorming in Maranao or Tagalog for a concept that will ultimately be drafted in English. Furthermore, teachers should receive professional development on how to explicitly teach metacognitive strategies, helping students better manage the mental load of switching between languages and turning a innate practice into a refined academic skill.

2. For Curriculum Development and School Policy

To foster the positive identity formation and global perspectives that multilingualism enables, it is recommended that school administrators and curriculum developers implement an asset-based, culturally responsive curriculum. This can be achieved by incorporating multilingual resources and diverse cultural content across all subjects, not just language classes, to validate students' backgrounds and broaden all learners' worldviews. Additionally, school language policies should be revised to move away from "English-only" or "Filipino-only" mandates and instead create formal guidelines that recognize translanguaging as a legitimate and powerful communicative and cognitive strategy within the academic setting.

3. For Teacher Training and Professional Development

To ensure that the benefits of multilingualism are fully realized and its challenges are effectively supported, it is crucial that pre-service and in-service teacher training programs are enhanced. These programs must equip educators with a strong foundational understanding of theories like Sociocultural Theory and Translanguaging, shifting the prevailing mindset from viewing multilingualism as a barrier to recognizing it as a strategic advantage. Training should also provide teachers with practical, hands-on techniques for creating low-anxiety classrooms where the "long thinking process" is respected and where students' home languages are seen as bridges to, rather than obstacles for, academic achievement.

4. For Future Research and Community Engagement

To build upon the insights of this study and continue advancing the field, it is recommended

that future research expands to longitudinal studies that track the academic and personal development of multilingual learners over time. Further investigation should also be conducted into the specific role of Arabic literacy in the overall language acquisition and identity of Muslim learners. Finally, it is recommended that schools actively foster partnerships with parents and community leaders to create a cohesive and supportive ecosystem that values and sustains multilingualism, ensuring that efforts within the school are reinforced and celebrated at home and in the wider community.

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