

## LANGUAGE MODE: A CONVERSATIONAL ANALYSIS ON THE LANGUAGE USE OF FILIPINO BILINGUALS

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### *Abstract*

*This study, using a quantitative-qualitative research design, aimed to determine and analyze the language mode of Filipino bilinguals from the University of San Carlos – Talamban Campus Cebu, Philippines. Specifically, this study focused on the language use in conversational strategies and the factors that influenced their language mode. The data were taken from seven small group conversations consisting of three bilinguals each. The data gathering involved a brief survey, a picture-stimuli to elicit conversations, and an interview. Findings revealed that when the bilinguals activated both of their languages in utilizing strategies, Code Switching, Filler, and Surprising were the top three conversational strategies that were mostly used. Also, results revealed that the language mode of bilinguals were largely-dependent on the Participants and Situation of the interaction. Moreover, another notable finding was that the bilinguals were always in their bilingual language mode as evident in their utilization of the CSs in their available languages. These outcomes suggest that even if bilingualism intervenes lexical retrieval in both languages, it still improves and ensures the flow of the communication process; hence, it does not adversely affect the usage of the first language.*

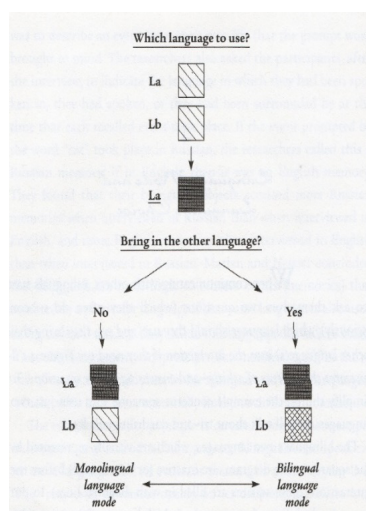
**Keywords:** *bilingualism, language mode, Filipino bilingual, conversational analysis, conversational strategies*

### **1. Introduction**

Language is essential to human life as people are born to interact as they use it as “a vehicle of thought and a system of expression” (Finegan, 2015). Bilingualism can be considered as a worldwide phenomenon today as nearly half of the world’s population are bilinguals (Grosjean, 2010) and use more than one language in their day-to-day living. The Philippines is known as one of the bilingual countries in the world where Filipinos use diverse languages in many domains. For instance, it can be observed that the bilinguals’ usage of the mother tongue, any of the Philippine languages, is prevalent as it is often the language spoken by the locals to communicate whereas English is utilized in academic and professional interactions. Language shifts to cater to the needs of day-to-day situations in bilingual communities. And this notion has encouraged the present researchers to find out if Filipino bilinguals have their two available language systems independent from each other enabling them to operate either in a true monolingual mode or if they are always in their bilingual language mode (Nicol, 1999).

With this phenomenon where bilinguals, such as the present participants, simultaneously and alternately utilize their languages, Grosjean (1999) introduced the concept of bilingual language mode which encompassed two questions (which were often asked subconsciously) when communicating with others: “which language should they use, and can they bring their other language(s) into the interaction if they need to?” (Grosjean, 2010, p. 39). Given that a bilingual undergoes two levels of activation: 1) the choosing of his base language and, 2)

the comparative level of activation of his two languages then a language mode is activated depending on what language choice the bilingual makes and this bilingual phenomenon can be clearly explained in the diagram.



**Diagram 1. Language Mode (Grosjean, 2010)**

In this process of language choice, the bilinguals exhibit their communicative competence which is defined by Deckert and Vickers (2011) as any speaker's capability to utilize language(s) appropriately in a given social situation. Because if the Filipino bilinguals can operate in a true monolingual mode using their mother tongue in the conversation, then the usage of the first language is not in any way affected by bilingualism. Moreover, if they are in their bilingual language mode having their first language as the base language, then again, the usage of the first language is not put at risk. But, if their second language acts as the base language in their conversations, then it could be said that bilingualism might adversely affect the bilingual's first language.

Speakers, bilinguals or not, establish and maintain the communication which also show how communicatively competent they are. Conversational strategies (CSs), also termed as Communication Strategies, help the speaker and interlocutor maintain and achieve their conversation goals. Faerch and Kasper (1983, cited in Doqaruni, 2013, p. 177) defined CSs as "potentially conscious plans for solving what to an individual presents itself as a problem in reaching a particular communicative goal," such as finding the appropriate expressions and/or grammatical constructions (Bialystok, 1990, cited in Doqaruni, 2013). Moreover, Andi-Pallawa (2013) presented twelve verbal conversation strategies namely: filler, asking for clarification, code switching, interpretive summary, changing topic, circumlocution, comprehension check, self-correcting, giving clarification, correcting others, self-referencing, and surprising. It is through these conversational strategies that one could determine how bilinguals utilize a language which they deem effective in maintaining the conversation. Thus, a number of researches focused on the bilinguals' language use in their conversations. An example is Gafaranga (2012) who found out in his study of conversations among Belgian bilinguals that language alternation and conversational repairs interact in diverse ways, such that language alternation can occur at any point in the repair sequence and can even be a form of repair. Likewise, Bautista (2004) found out that code-switching was employed by Tagalog-English speakers as a strategic competence to attain communicative efficiency and these bilinguals are believed to calculate what language to use in saying something

expressively and concisely. However, if Filipino bilinguals indeed effortlessly mix their languages (Ramos, 1979) and go into a bilingual language mode, the concern of what affects this language mixing arises. Hence, this has driven the current researchers to determine the factors (Grosjean, 1999) that could influence the language mode of the Filipino bilinguals when communicating.

Grosjean (2010) suggested five main categories namely: participants, situation, form and content of the message (discourse), function of the language act (interaction), and specific research factors. Several studies have been conducted to find out patterns in the language choice and language use of bilinguals. Raju, Sireesha, Suvarna, and Vasanta (2010) found out that not only language proficiency affects the particular language choice of an Indian bilingual, but also their interlocutors as well as the situational demands e.g. intimate, informal, and formal. Similarly, Ramos (1979) concluded that the nature of discourse may determine the language choice, as it was found out in the study of Pascasio and Hidalgo (1973, cited in Ramos, 1979) that Filipino bilinguals use Tagalog more at home and in casual conversation whereas English is utilized in school. Even with these factors, the bilinguals' attempt of making optimal use of the full range of expressive structures within the linguistic repertoire that is at their disposal is believed to be leading to the emergence of stable mixed languages (Matras & Bakker 2003; Bakker & Matras 2013, cited in Matras, 2013). Likewise, Nicol (1999) mentioned that children who acquire two languages simultaneously develop language mixing and consequently, are often in a bilingual language mode. For instance, Bautista (2004) concluded that the use of Tagalog-English (Taglish) in conversations has become a mode of discourse for Filipino bilinguals.

Despite the spread of bilingualism around the world, language mode has received relatively little attention in bilingualism research. In the Philippines, bilingualism studies mostly focused on speakers in the northern regions. With this, the study aimed to determine and analyze the language mode used in interaction among Filipino bilinguals, especially from the central and southern regions, by seeking answers to (i) what verbal conversation strategy (Andi-Pallawa, 2013) do bilinguals activate in their language mode and (ii) what factors (Grosjean, 1999) influence the language mode of the bilinguals during conversations.

## 2. Research Method

The study used the qualitative and quantitative design of research in determining and analyzing the language mode used in conversations of the Filipino bilinguals in the University of San Carlos. Using purposive sampling, fifteen bilinguals who were divided into five small groups composed of three bilinguals each were chosen. They were linguistically-diverse as they spoke both Philippine language(s) and English. After the students gave their approval, they filled out the profile form that contained questions on basic information i.e. name, age, course and year, languages spoken, and years of friendship to see if they had fit the set criteria. The chosen participants were based on the criteria set by the current researches: (1) bilinguals who speak any of the Philippine languages and English, (2) enrolled in the University of San Carlos, and (3) the three bilinguals in the group must be friends for at least three to four years. The last criteria emphasized on the years of friendship given that "As friends get closer, they establish rapport and develop knowledge coordination among themselves that during conversations, they raise more topics and are more responsive to one another's talk (Cassell, Gill & Tepper, 2007)."

In addition, after getting the participants' approval, they were assisted to one of the rooms on the ground floor of the Philip van Engelen building of the university. Consent forms were provided for the participants to sign and afterwards, instructions were specified.

The bilingual participants were asked to converse for fifteen minutes and were left on their own inside the room with the recorder in order for them to not feel conscious. To elicit conversations, a non-linguistic prompt in the form of pictures were used as a picture-stimuli as this have been a traditional means in linguistic research in stimulating discourse wherein the speech of diverse individuals becomes directly comparable (Cooper, 1990; Olness, 2002). The pictures had dissimilar themes like Christmas celebrations, parties, children activities, school classrooms, and food and these depicted both the Philippine and Western cultures. Successively, an interview was conducted and recorded to verify data and to avoid misquotations. In substantiating the data, the five fifteen-minute recorded conversations were transcribed using a laptop although the first five minutes was disregarded to address the Observer's Paradox. It was to ensure that the conversations analyzed would reflect participants who were comfortable as interlocutors. Then with the use of coding sheets, the conversational strategies presented by Andi-Pallawa (2013) were identified and tallied. Also, the researchers verified the participants' language use with different interlocutors, as reflected in their profile. The entire conversation was examined again to find out as well as tally the factors (Grosjean, 1999) present in the conversations which influenced the bilinguals' language mode. In addition, to check the validity of the study's findings, an inter-rater with a Master's degree in Applied Linguistics verified the results.

Afterwards, the current researchers had then tabulated the results for analysis and interpretation. First, the language mode utilized in the conversational strategies were identified and examined for discussion. Next, the factors reflected in their profile form and in the conversations were evaluated. Consequently, the interview, which was conducted after analyzing the conversation, was transcribed using a laptop. The answers elicited from the interviews also aided in answering the second sub-problem on the factors that influenced the language mode used by the bilinguals. Furthermore, it was used to validate the results gathered and support the present researchers' analysis.

### **3. Findings and Discussion**

Significant results have responded to the questions raised involving the twelve Conversational Strategies of Andi-Pallawa (2013), their language use and the five factors by Grosjean (1999) which affected the language mode of the participants during the conversations; all of which are shown and explained henceforth.

#### **3.1 Conversational Strategies**

Conversational strategies (CSs) are introduced during the onset of second language acquisition researches that L2 learners employ these strategies when faced with linguistic difficulties (Delamere, 1998). Table 1 below presents the different CS(s) employed by the participants in the conversations.

**Table 1. Conversational Strategies**

Strategies	Frequency	Percentage
Filler	272	19.13
Asking For Clarification	55	3.87
Code Switching	826	58.09
Interpretive Summary	7	0.49
Changing Topic	37	2.6
Circumlocution	5	0.35
Comprehension Check	7	0.49
Self-Correction	14	0.98
Giving Clarification	54	3.8
Correcting Others	0	0
Self-referencing	56	3.94
Surprising	89	6.26
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1422</b>	<b>100%</b>

The results showed that Filipino bilinguals employed conversational strategies when they encountered difficulties during communication. This coincides with Bialystok's (1990) idea that when speakers struggle in relaying their intended meaning, they attempt to find the appropriate expression and/or grammatical constructions by using conversational strategies. Out of the twelve Conversational Strategies of Andi-Pallawa (2013), eleven were utilized using both the first and second languages of the current participants, namely: Code Switching as the most used, followed by Filler, Surprising, Self-Referencing, Asking for Clarification, Giving Clarification, Changing Topic Self-Correction, Interpretive Summary, Comprehension Check, and Circumlocution. However, there were no instances of Correcting Others Strategy and it was notable that the participants utilized the top three strategies (Code Switching Strategy, Filler Strategy, and Surprising Strategy) using both of their languages almost equally. These strategies are then further explained with samples below.

### 3.1.1 Code Switching Strategy

Code Switching Strategy is the topmost strategy utilized in the conversations as this was observed when the Filipino bilingual participants activated their other language by bringing in terminologies from that language in order to express their desired meaning as seen in Example 1 below.

Example 1 Group A Lines 228-231

S2: Mmm.. Mu kuan.. Spirit of kuan na siya.. Christmas. Hapit na mag-ber—  
‘Mmm.. Will uhh.. That’s Spirit of uhh.. Christmas. It’s almost ber—’

S1: Oy! Lately baja kay di na jud— Sauna pag high school ha kay kusog jud kaajo ang spirit of Christmas bitaw.

‘Hey! Lately, it’s not anymore— In high school, the Spirit of Christmas is very strong.’

Speaker 2 above switched from his base language to English when he could not supply the Bisaya term that he intended as evident in the fillers he uttered. Likewise, Speaker 1 used the code switching strategy to provide the words, “high school” and “spirit of Christmas” which do not have an equal term in Bisaya.

To note, the present participants had code - switched as a conversational strategy when they failed to provide the desired term, as reflected in the switches that occurred in middle and final positions. Furthermore, it was revealed that there was a number of occurrences

wherein the utilization of the said strategy was preceded by fillers like ‘kuan,’ and ‘uhh’ as presented in the example below.

Example 2 Group E Line 1475-1488

S15: Kay ano bi, uh, ma-failure ko DC damo damo sa ma anak [...] Uhh, kung ma-fail ko, di daw ka pila lang ka subject ang makuha ko man? Less than 15 units.  
 ‘Because, uh, I’ll fail DC which has many branches [...] Ahh, If I fail then how many subjects can I take? Less than 15 units.’

The findings on Code Switching Strategy coincides with the idea of Doqaruni (2013) which presented that code switching is one of the frequently utilized strategies in conversations. The current researchers consider that the participants used their other language/s to continue the talk because of the presence of another language system. This coincided with the study of Bautista (2004) which revealed that the use of code switching by Tagalog-English speakers is a strategic competence in realizing communicative efficiency.

### 3.1.2 Filler Strategy

Filler Strategy ranks second as this was observed when the participants utilized fillers from both of their available languages. This was shown in their use of the Filipino fillers like kuan, kanang, jaon, and ano, as well as the English fillers um, like, and uhh when the bilingual was in the process of thinking for the appropriate word to say. Example 3 below shows how the speakers used the fillers during their conversation when they struggled in conveying their desired message.

Example 3 Group A Lines 351-354

S1: Kanang mga kanang.. Kanang dub.. dub dub ba!  
 ‘Umm those umm.. those dub.. dubbed videos!’  
 S2 & S3: ((laughs))  
 S1: Kanang dub nga mu-dub ko ninyo ba, “Shuta this. Pwesto ko ‘to. Umalis ka diyan.”  
 ‘Those dubbed videos where I’ll dub you, “Shuta this. That’s my place. Move away.”’

Likewise, the participants maintained the conversation by inserting fillers in their pauses to keep their interlocutors’ attention during the talk. This matches with the findings of Cotejar and Lacia (2016) wherein speakers insert ‘uh’ in their pauses to signal the interlocutors to wait as they plan and prepare for what to say next.

### 3.1.3 Surprising Strategy

The Surprising Strategy ranks third and was evident when the interlocutors displayed interest at the speaker’s utterances or vice-versa. The utilization of this strategy showed the speakers’ interest to the content that aided in upholding the flow of the dialogue as seen in example 4 below.

## Example 4 Group A Lines 33-36

S2: Mao ba? Di man ko ka-get over sa extinguisher, dai.

‘Really? I can’t get over on the extinguisher, dai.’

S3: O, dai. ((laughs))

‘Yeah, dai. ((laughs))’

S1: Over lagi na sila, dai. Palabi—

‘They’re exaggerating, dai. Too much—’

S2: Grabe naa jud diay ing-ana?

‘Grabe there really is something like that?’

Seeing that the participants were attentive during the interaction permitted the conversation to continue smoothly. In the present study, surprise benefitted both speakers and interlocutors as they used this as an ‘interactional resource and achievement’ (Kitzinger & Wilkinson, 2006). The conversation would not have been maintained if the interlocutors did not express certain emotions like surprise, curiosity, or disbelief since the speaker would have lost interest in continuing his or her speech. In other words, expressions of surprise served as a way to cooperate (resource) and maintain it (achievement). This may have been the reason why this strategy placed third in rank among all strategies since the speaker’s motivation to speak would not be boosted without the interlocutors’ motivation to listen as reflected in their attentiveness towards the topic at hand.

### 3.1.4 Self – Referencing Strategy

Self-Referencing Strategy was utilized when the interlocutor made a comment about oneself as a way of maintaining the conversation (Andi-Pallawa, 2013). It only yielded a few occurrences since during the talk, the speaker provided cues to his or her interlocutor for their turn such as in the form of questions (as seen in example 5 below); thus, there was no need to employ this strategy.

#### Example 5 Group B Lines 673-677

S6: Murag..wala—buluk, kanang, bugu.

‘Seems like.. none—buluk, meaning, bugu.’

S4: Ou, buluk, kana.

‘Yes, buluk, that one.’

S5: Buguk jud na sa amua uy, buguk.

‘It’s buguk in our place, buguk.’

S4: Buguk, ou.

‘Buguk, yes.’

S6: Buguk? Buluk—amua sad sa Butuan, buluk.

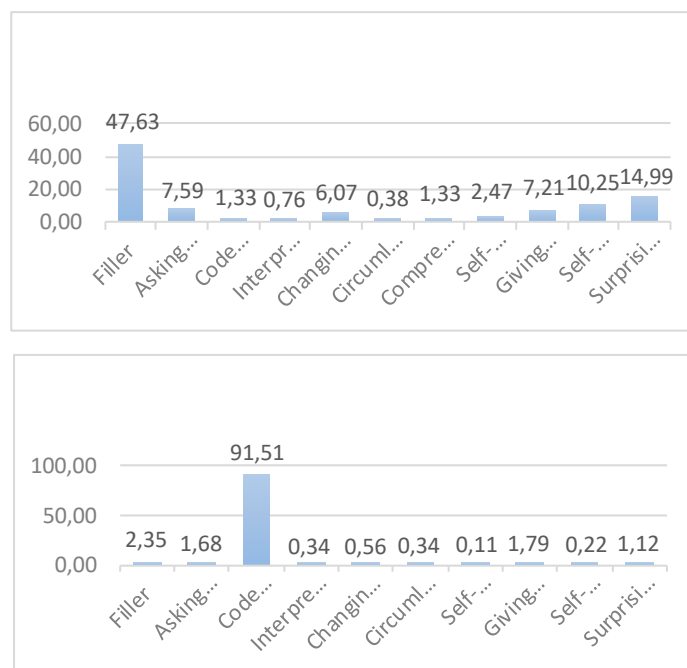
‘Buguk? Buluk—in our place too, in Butuan, it’s buluk.’

In example 13, Speaker 5 uttered “Buguk jud na sa amua oy.” (It’s buguk in our place.) sharing about the difference of the term buguk in his own place. This has maintained the conversation as speaker 6 added information regarding the term as used in his hometown when he uttered, “Amua sad sa Butuan, buluk.” (In our place too, in Butuan, it’s buluk.). The present researchers suppose that Self-referencing Strategy is one of the ways of reciprocating the desire to uphold a conversation given the fact that communication is a two-way process wherein individuals contribute to the conversation.

Additionally, the data showcased that there were only a few occurrences for the remaining strategies. First, Asking for and Giving Clarification Strategy occurred insignificantly since the speakers already gave concise information therefore their interlocutors did not see the need to request for clarification to previous utterances. Accordingly, there was no elucidation given on the part of the speaker as the interlocutors have understood the messages conveyed. Next, Changing Topic Strategy was only reflected slightly as the participants did not see the need to utilize it as the flow of the conversation was not put at risk in terms of topic. It was apparent in the data that they recognized what to talk about as pictures were provided. Third, Self – Correction Strategy showed minimal occurrences as the speakers did not correct their utterances in most instances of the conversation as this revealed their adeptness with their own languages. Fourth, both Interpretative Summary and Comprehension Check Strategies were not habitually used due to the clarity and familiarity of the topics at hand. To add, Comprehension Check Strategy was not repeated since the participants have observed that their interlocutors were attentive enough to the existing talk. This was manifested in their utilization of the Surprising Strategy when the speakers did not check on his or her interlocutors from time to time. Fifth, Circumlocution Strategy was rarely present owing to the fact that the participants did not find it problematic to look for the desired term, but when they did, they chose to code-switch as they had another language system available to them to supply the exact word. Lastly, Correcting Others Strategy gained zero occurrences as the participants were proficient in their languages such that there was no need for the interlocutors to correct any unsuitable usage of words and/or erroneous grammar constructions during the conversational flow. Also, with the occurrence of Self-Correcting Strategy, it showed that the Filipino bilingual participants were capable of fixing their own utterances without the aid of their interlocutors.

It could be said that all these conversational strategies were effectual in maintaining the flow of the conversation. Though the topmost utilized strategy, Code Switching with 826 occurrences, has presented a huge gap between the second most utilized strategy, Filler Strategy, with 272 occurrences. With this result, the present researchers presume that the recurring problem encountered in the conversations was finding the appropriate expression. Moreover, only three strategies namely: Code Switching, Filler, and Surprising frequently occurred while the rest only gained minimal to zero occurrences. This outcome is due to the fact that Filipino bilinguals learned and started using both of their languages at a young age, and that such longevity of usage made it easy for them to employ and converse in either languages. Hence, the results reveal how Filipino bilinguals could attain their communicative goal even by just utilizing three strategies with their ability to use both of the available languages. Furthermore, it is significant to take into account that the language used by the participants when they utilized strategies are all their available languages. There were differences among the seven groups in using the Philippine Language and the English language during the utilization of the CSs, as presented in diagram 1.





**Diagram 1 Conversational Strategies in L1 and Conversational Strategies in L2**

Diagram 1 above shows the different Conversational Strategies used by the participants in their first language (L1) and second language (L2). The Filler Strategy and Surprising Strategy were utilized using the participants' L1 while the L2 only came in when they have employed the Code Switching Strategy. Grosjean (2010) mentioned that when in a bilingual language mode during conversations, they first choose a base language to use with their interlocutors. In the present study, the seven groups had different percentages between the first language and second language use wherein the usage of English language consisted mostly, if not all, of the Code Switching Strategy and the rest of the occurring strategies were all utilized using the first language in Groups A, B, and F. On the other hand, Groups C, D, E, and G had used all their languages which were distributed almost, if not all, in every occurring strategy. This shows that the participants activated a base language and only brought in their other language when they deemed it necessary (Grosjean, 2010) such as how they all used Philippine language(s) and only brought in English, activating their bilingual language mode, to supply scientific, academic, professional, and internet terminologies which were mostly nouns, verbs, and adjectives. It is noteworthy to consider that in all groups, the high percentage of the English language usage was due to the utilization of the Code Switching Strategy which shows that the lack of terminologies in the base language is the main reason for activating the other language (Pan, 1975, cited in Bautista, 2004).

In addition, the outcomes relate to the claim of Nicol (1993) that bilinguals who learn their languages at a young age are always in their bilingual language mode. But despite the constant code switching of the participants, the second language(s) does not threaten the first language. Rather, it improves communication competence as seen in how the participants were able to maintain the conversation using all their available languages with the various conversational strategies. The language choice reflected in the conversational strategies could not be taken alone in concluding the participants' language use in the entire conversation given that bilinguals have diverse communicative choices. Maintaining and realizing a successful communication may not be the only motive behind the language

switch of bilinguals, but the context and environment of the current conversation they are in could influence their language choice as well. Thus, the present study looked into the diverse factors that had influenced the language mode of the Filipino bilinguals.

### 3.2 Factors that Influence the Language Mode

Certain factors inclined the participants in activating their bilingual language mode. Grosjean (1999) presented five main categories that affect a bilingual's language mode namely: participants, situation, form and content of the message, function of the language act, and specific research factors as reflected in Table 2 below.

**Table 2. Factors on Language Mode**

Factors	Frequency	Percentage
Participants	7	20.59
Situation	7	20.59
Form and content of the message	7	20.59
Function of the language act	7	20.59
Specific Research Factors (Picture-stimuli)	3	8.82
Specific Research Factors (Knowledge of the Research)	3	8.82
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>100%</b>

The results revealed that all five factors presented by Grosjean (2010) influenced the bilingual's language mode. However, only four were reflected in the conversations of the seven groups, namely: participants, situation, form and content of the message, and function of the language act. Specific research factors, specifically the picture-stimuli and the knowledge of the research only influenced the bilingual language mode of the participants from three groups. The results present that Filipino bilinguals are always in their bilingual language mode and that there were instances of language mixing (Nicol, 1999; Matras, 2013). The presence of the factors in the conversation of all seven groups then further showed that these Filipino bilinguals chose which language/s to use, when to bring it in, and why their bilingual language mode was activated during the said interactions.

#### 3.2.1 Participants as Factor

The data revealed that half of the participants are always in their bilingual language mode regardless of who they are interacting with (be it with family, classmates, close friends, and/or teachers). However, the occurrence of the first language, which is a Philippine language, shows that there are still speakers who remain in their base language as displayed by the level one activation of their language mode (Grosjean, 2010). For instance, when it comes to family, the participants solely used the first language that is a Philippine language in interacting while, English (the participants' second language) did not occur frequently in the survey answers so it was only mostly used when they were in their bilingual language mode. This result links with the notion of Grosjean (1999) which explains that bilinguals consider his or her interlocutors—their language proficiency, language mixing habits and attitudes, usual mode of interaction, kinship relation, and others in choosing what language to use. Consequently, the participants get to control the language mode he or she activates during a conversation. Likewise, the participants revealed in their interviews that their language use depends on the “level of closeness,” their “relationship with the person,” and their “shared language(s).”

### 3.2.2 Situation as Factor

Likewise, the participants' language mode was influenced by the situation such that they were in their bilingual language mode in the presence of fellow bilinguals. Also, they further revealed during the interview that their language use would depend on the degree of formality and intimacy when they conversed. The first language was employed in friendly and informal interactions and their second language was used in formal situations. In the study of Pan (1975, cited in Bautista, 2004), the Tagalog conversants used both their languages, specifically the Tagalog language and the English language (TagLish), in friendly discussions. Additionally, the result coincides with the study of Raju, Sireesha, Suvarna, and Vasanta (2010) wherein situational demands were present in the conversation of Indian bilinguals. Other situational demands would be the conversational topic which clearly influenced the participants' language mode as reflected in what language was used more and less and which was activated as the base language in connection to the topic. For instance, in the present study, the participants from Group E had more language mixing due to the demand of an academic topic while the participants from Group B employed their first language more due to the topic at hand i.e. Philippine Street Food ("Dirty Ice Cream").

### 3.2.3 Form and Content of Message as Factors

The form and content of the message (e.g. the language used and amount of language mixing of the interlocutors) also influenced the participants as they activated their bilingual language mode during the conversations. In the present study, there were participants who language mixed more than the others and there were those groups that had the English language less inhibited than the others. With this, the present researchers believe that the language used and amount of language mixing of the interlocutors subjected the present participants to activate their bilingual language mode during the conversations such that even if the first language is the base language in all groups, English was also actuated. Furthermore, the participants mentioned in the interview that they used both of their languages since they were aware that their interlocutors and the entire community mixed languages as well. This accords with the study of Berlinsky-Shay (2016) wherein he found out that Hebrew bilinguals find it natural to switch between their languages from time to time due to living in a multilingual society.

### 3.2.4 Function of the Language Act as Factor

Communicative goal is as significant in the bilingual's language mode as it is in conversational strategies. In the present study, the participants used their first language as their base language in conveying their message such as sharing personal experiences. Additionally, the results also expose that the function of the language act influenced the language mode of the participants as they activated their bilingual language mode when they used their second languages for comic effect, euphemizing and emphasizing their message, clarity or ease in understanding, and supplication of lacking indigenous terms. In the interview conducted, two participants (Speakers 13 and 21) admitted that they used their first language to isolate themselves from others, such that they can talk about things without other people understanding them. This reason corresponds to one of the sub-factors under the Function of the Language Act mentioned by Grosjean (1999) which is the usage of another language to create a social distance between the bilinguals themselves and other people. Furthermore, the participants also shared during the interview that they use their second language and consequently, activate their bilingual language mode to easily express strong emotions.

### 3.2.5 Specific Research Factors

Despite the lack of attention on language choice by the bilinguals during daily conversations, some became conscious of their language use once they knew the reason of the research that they were participating in. Because of the interview, the present researchers found out that there were specific research factors that influenced the participants' language mode. The language mode of Groups A, B, and E were influenced by the picture-stimuli as they had chosen a language which matched the culture reflected in the provided picture. On the other hand, Group A used Boholano-Bisaya in talking about their Christmas experiences since the picture-stimuli for the group was about the Philippine Christmas. Likewise, Group B used Bisaya as they talked about Philippine Street Food (Ice Cream). Notably, the participants in Group B even assimilated the sound of the English words 'artistic' and 'pink' to Bisaya pronunciation 'artestik' and 'penk' while Group E participants were in their bilingual language mode as they talked about the academe, specifically the Western School. Furthermore, few of them seemed to have an idea that they were chosen due to their bilingual background when they were asked to fill-out the Profile form which contained details on the languages they used as well as their years of usage. Thus, it was discovered that the bilinguals chose to be in a specific language mode after determining the language in the CSs and the factors behind its activation. The bilingual language mode was freely activated when there was a need to overcome difficulty in one's lexical retrieval, as this result was reflected in the explanation on why only three out of the twelve CSs were utilized. As it was proven that bilinguals who learn their languages together at a young age is always in a bilingual language mode (Nicol, 1999), there is then the fear that bilingualism adversely affects the usage of the first language as knowledge of two languages intervenes the lexical retrieval in bilinguals in either of their languages or both (Ng, 2015) and could therefore lead to a default discourse mode which is language mixing (Matras, 2013).

However, the findings showed that Filipino bilinguals still chose their first language to be the base language, and only activated their second language to supply the lack of terminologies in conversing. Language mixing, then, is not a default choice for the participants as reflected in their usage of the first language during conversations. They have mentioned in the interview as well that it was unnecessary to bring in their second language as the existence of their first language was enough to serve as their communicative tool in most situations. Hence, bilingualism does not adversely affect the usage of the first language. Rather, having another language system for lexical retrieval, the Filipino bilinguals were able to ensure the smooth flow of their conversations as well as improve their communicative competence.

## 4. Conclusion

The occurrences of the Conversational Strategies by Andi-Pallawa (2013) in the recorded conversations, specifically Code Switching, Filler, and Surprising, activated the bilingual language mode of the Filipino bilinguals. They have more than one language system when utilizing various strategies as they conversed about the different themes presented. In the conversations among Filipino bilinguals, the recurrent problem which hinders them from achieving their communicative goal is finding the right expression to use. So in overcoming this difficulty, they activated their bilingual language mode. Consequently, the three abovementioned strategies are enough when the Filipino bilinguals activated the said language mode. Therefore, bilingualism improves a speaker's communicative competence as one can achieve the aim of the interaction with the help of the other language(s).

Furthermore, the type of relationship among speakers and the type of verbal communication can greatly influence the Filipino bilinguals' language mode. The factors participants and situation (Grosjean, 1999) were the two recurring causes behind the language choice of the participants as shared during their interviews. They mentioned that they used their first language as there were no standards set for their language use since the talk was with friends. Therefore, the bilingual's first language is mainly used in informal conversations. In all seven groups, regardless of their differences in the inhibition of the other activated language, the Filipino bilinguals activated their first language e.g. Bisaya, Waray, and Ilonggo as their base language during the conversations. The degree of formality of their conversations (Grosjean, 1999) influenced them in choosing a base language. Hence, the first language maintains its role as a communicative tool (Finegan, 2015) in the bilingual Philippine society today as it is still mainly used by the participants in their informal conversations.

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