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## Multilingual Situation in Zamboanga City: Native and Nonnative Chavacano Speakers' Experiences and Perspectives

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### ABSTRACT

This paper aimed to describe the multilingual situation in the city, where consultants from three (3) ethnic groups were interviewed via focus group discussions—namely, Muslim, Visayan, and native speakers of Zamboanga Chavacano. To address the objective at hand, the data were gathered and analyzed qualitatively and thematically, after being selected purposively, three (3) native speakers of Chavacano, five (5) Muslim speakers of the same language, and three (3) Visayan speakers of the same language became consultants. Language ecology theory (Haugen, 1971) frames the current investigation. Different themes were generated for each of the ethnic groups. The five themes generated from the Muslim speakers of Chavacano are Linguistic Repertoire, Language of the Community, Language Learning, Variation

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**ARTICLE INFO**

Received: 7 August 2024 | Revised: 17 August 2024 | Accepted: 14 November 2024 | Published Online: 12 December 2024

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.30564/fls.v6i6.6847>

**CITATION**

Eijansantos, A.M., Aidil-Karanain, F.L., Ambion, L.J., et al., 2024. Multilingual Situation in Zamboanga City: Native and Nonnative Chavacano Speakers' Experiences and Perspectives. *Forum for Linguistic Studies*. 6(6): 897–914. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.30564/fls.v6i6.6847>

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in Speaking, and Status of Language Domains. Language, Multilingualism, and Language Use are the three (3) themes from the Visayan speakers of Chavacano, whereas from the native speakers of Chavacano, Languages Spoken, Learned, and Used, English vs Tagalog, Language Use in Varied Domains and Situations, and Variation in Use are the four (4) themes found. Furthermore, convergent themes were likewise consolidated: Code-switching, Lingua Franca, Intermarriages, Languages in the Socmed Platforms, Language Acquisition/Learning by Children, Methods for Learning and Using Language, and Language(s) Used in the Community. Additionally, an insider's position on the multilingual situation in the city is provided. The current analyses may serve as a point of departure for other inquirers with an identical interest relative to the multilinguistic situation in Zamboanga City.

**Keywords:** Multilingualism; Chavacano; Zamboanga City; Muslim and Visayan Speakers of Chavacano

## I. Introduction

Research in Zamboanga City has focused on Chavacano, its central language. It has gone deep into investigations of several aspects of its grammar. This includes verb alignment and case marking (Barrios & Bernardo, 2012) <sup>[1]</sup> Austronesian influence on word order (Barrios, 2006) <sup>[2]</sup>, some morphosyntactic features and tense aspect mood (Steinkrüger, 2008) <sup>[3]</sup>, noun phrase marking (Porras, 2004) <sup>[4]</sup>, and the pronominal system (Lipski, 2012; De Castro, 2018) <sup>[5-6]</sup>. Other research focuses on grammatical structure by <sup>[7]</sup>, the variety of Cotabato Chavacano by <sup>[8]</sup>, and many other grammatical aspects (Delgado, 2019; Eijansantos, 2017; Eijansantos et al., 2021; Eijansantos et al., 2022; Lesho & Seppola, 2014; Lesho, 2022; Owen, 2023) <sup>[9-15]</sup>. Orthography is addressed in studies such as that of Himoro and Pareja-Lora (2022) <sup>[16]</sup> and the origin of language in Parkyall and Jacobs (2018) <sup>[17]</sup>.

Although grammatical investigations of the language appear to be rich and comprehensive, much work needs to be carried out even in the sphere of the language's systems, and not akin to the studies on the main language's system, it cannot be denied that scholars of language in the macro sense and those that put Zamboanga Chavacano and its locale at the core of their examination inevitably detect meager inquiry concerning Zamboanga City's linguistic landscape. Some touch on the idea of the multilingual setup in Zamboanga City, such as (Alieto, 2018; Anudin, 2018; Clorion et al., 2024; Clorion et al., 2024; Concepcion, n.d; Delos Reyes, 2019; Lim-Ramos et al., 2020; Metila et al., 2017; Perez & Alieto, 2018; Somblingo &

Alieto, 2018) <sup>[18-27]</sup>; however, in the preceding studies, although the multilingual state of Zamboanga City has been alluded and/or examined in a certain manner, there is no clear-cut and in-depth description of how the multilingual Zamboanga City is and how people utilize its languages. Therefore, the preceding concerns related to the multilingual situation in Zamboanga City remain a fertile area for research. With this gap in mind, the following research objectives guided the current investigation to address and fill in the aforementioned research gap.

General Research Objective:

Describe how multilingual Zamboanga City is.

Specific Research objectives:

Describe the multilingual situation in Zamboanga City among speakers of Zamboanga Chavacano from the following ethnic groups:

1. Muslim speakers of Zamboanga Chavacano;
2. Visayan speakers of the foregoing language; and
3. Native speakers of the same language.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1. Multilingualism

Numerous academic fields, including linguistics, psycholinguistics, sociolinguistics, and education, are involved in multilingualism (Cenoz, 2013) <sup>[28]</sup>. It describes the capacity to talk, write, and listen in multiple languages actively, as well as to read and listen in multiple languages passively (Li, 2018) <sup>[29]</sup>. This can entail adopting different languages, which is a natural human state, and code mix-

ing to varying degrees (Ferguson, 2009; Gardner-Chloros, 2009) <sup>[30-31]</sup>. It describes both individual and societal language use (Aronin, 2019; Clyne, 2017) <sup>[32-33]</sup> and encompasses bilingualism and trilingualism (Aronin & Singleton, 2008) <sup>[34]</sup>. Language proficiency can fluctuate among speakers (Kemp, 2004) <sup>[35]</sup>. Although it is not always evident, there is a difference between multilingualism at the individual and societal levels (Akachukwu, 2021) <sup>[36]</sup>. Understanding the effects of multilingualism on an individual basis is necessary to comprehend the phenomenon in society (Aronin, 2019) <sup>[37]</sup>. Globalization, changes in the political and economic spheres, mobility, and technology are some of the factors influencing multilingualism (de Zarobe & de Zarobe, 2015) <sup>[38]</sup>. It permeates every aspect of existence (Aronin & Singleton, 2012) <sup>[39]</sup>. In Zamboanga city, this contextual framework was specifically investigated.

## 2.2. Multilingualism in Zamboanga City

Filmore (2014) <sup>[40]</sup> and Symaco (2013) <sup>[41]</sup> argued that Zamboanga City is considered the most ethnically and linguistically diverse among the Philippine Islands. The multilingual situation in the city is already expected and has been attested to earlier by other scholars (Concepcion, n.d) <sup>[22]</sup> (Filmore, 2014; Symaco, 2013) <sup>[40-41]</sup>. Concepcion (n.d) <sup>[22]</sup> refers to Zamboanga as a polyglossic area where English, Tagalog, Chavacano, Tausug, Sama, and Ilonggo are spoken. This is reflected in the signage in the city: English, 51.25%; Filipino, 23.36%; Chavacano, 19.59%; Tausug, 2.99%; Chinese, 1.74%; and Bisaya, 1.07% Clorion et al. (2024) <sup>[21]</sup>. Parents from diverse ethnicities have favorable attitudes toward Chavacano as the language of instruction <sup>[24]</sup>. Translanguaging in tertiary schools may highlight the city's multilingual nature (Lucas et al., 2023) <sup>[42]</sup>. Additionally, most speakers of Zamboanga Chavacano normally master more than one language (Grant, 2011) <sup>[43]</sup>. Chavacano, Tausug, Sama, Ilonggo, Yakan, Subanen, and Hiligaynon are spoken by different ethnic groups in the city (Anudin, 2018) <sup>[19]</sup>. Tagalog and Bisaya are the lingua francas in business activities (Concepcion, n.d; Muysken, 2011) <sup>[22]</sup> <sup>[44]</sup> whereas Chavacano also performs such a function (Muysken, 2011) <sup>[44]</sup>. Cebuano-Bisaya is the offi-

cial language of Zamboanga city, whereas Tausug is widely spoken by the coastal residents of Sulu and Tawi-Tawi (Grant, 2011) <sup>[43]</sup>, places neighboring Zamboanga city.

The work of (Muysken, 2011) <sup>[44]</sup> highlights Chavacano, Cebuano (most likely the same as Bisaya), Tausug, and Filipino as the primary linguistic groups the school investigated. The extensively spoken local language all over the city, Chavacano, is employed in schools, governments, and mass media (Muysken, 2011) <sup>[44]</sup>; in the case of social media, great efforts are exerted to maintain it (Concepcion, n.d) <sup>[22]</sup>. Additionally, in signage at a local university and all over Zamboanga city itself, one sees Chavacano along with Tausug, Bisaya, English, and Filipino, as well as the occasional Chinese (Clorion et al., 2024) <sup>[21]</sup>.

In view of the creole nature of Zamboanga Chavacano (Barrios, 2006; Steinkrüger, 2008; Steinkrüger, 2013; Paz et al., 2010; Porras, 2013) <sup>[2,3,4,7,45]</sup>, which is a fusion of some languages (Paz et al., 2010) <sup>[45]</sup>, the substrate languages represent Yakan, Sinama, Hiligaynon, and Tagalog, while the superstrates represent Caviteño and Spanish; the adstrates represent Cebuano, English, Spanish, and Tagalog (Grant, 2011) <sup>[43]</sup>.

Additionally, the current scholarly discussions in the literature point to the emergence of a multilinguistic situation in Zamboanga city but are focused on areas such as MTB-MLE (Delos Reyes, 2019; Lim-Ramos et al., 2020; Metila et al., 2017; Perez & Alieto, 2018; Somblingo & Alieto, 2018; Metila et al., 2017) <sup>[23-27]</sup>, translanguaging (Lucas et al., 2023; Grant, 2011; Musyken, 2011) <sup>[42-44]</sup>, the linguistic landscape (Clorion et al., 2024; Clorion et al., 2024) <sup>[20-21]</sup>, the linguistic description (Grant, 2011) <sup>[43]</sup>, and a rather superficial and generic description of Zamboanga city's polyglossic status (Concepcion, n.d) <sup>[22]</sup>. In the scholarly work found pertinent to the study's focus, the sociolinguistic state noticeably manifests how the different languages operate in the purview of education where the language(s) of the children are utilized in the classroom and parents and would be educators' perspectives relative to or opposing the mother tongue. The literature vividly includes investigations of the landscape of a higher learning institution and the cityscape per se. With some claim that there exists a multilingual emergence in the city owing to the apparent linguistic meshing of Chavacano's adstrate

languages, the current languages influence the former, with these languages being in contact at present.

Hinged on the preceding premises, the very essence of the multilingual state of affairs in Zamboanga City remains unexplored in the sense of describing how multiple languages are utilized in the daily and regular lives of language users in a multilingual locale such as Zamboanga city. This is in consideration of the coexistence of the diverse ethnic groups in the foregoing place and thus the contact of the languages on account of the language users hailing from diverse ethnicities being themselves in contact; it is on account of the aforesaid gap that this paper has come to face. Filling this identified gap is filling a void in human knowledge pertinent to Zamboanga City, its people, its languages, and its culture.

### 3. Theoretical Underpinnings

This current investigation is undergirded by language ecology theory, whose proponent is a Norwegian–American linguist and sociologist, (Haugen, 1971) <sup>[46]</sup>. The theory scopes the complex relationships of the languages with their environment. The metaphorical sense in which the interactions between the languages and their sociocultural environment are called language ecology. Linguistic ecosystems consist of intricate interdependencies, rivalry, and coexistence, similar to those of biological ecosystems.

It is anchored in a theory that languages are part of a network of social and linguistic practices underlining their interdependence and ontological dependency on one another but from the political, social, and cultural contexts. The theory also highlights that languages, such as living organisms, change with sociopolitical institutions, cultural fashions, technology, and demographics. It compares biodiversity with linguistic diversity and states that the latter is an intrinsic part of cultural richness and resilience. Hence, the loss of any language entails a loss of a particular cultural and cognitive viewpoint. The final point that this theory makes concerns the fact that it emphasizes sustainability in language practice by promoting multilingualism through language policies to protect endangered languages for long-lasting survival with vibrancy in linguistic diversity.

Moreover, Riger and Sigurvinsdottir's (2016) <sup>[47]</sup> step-by-step thematic analysis encases the procedures carried out in teasing apart the generated qualitative data. This has ascertained the accuracy and precision of the treatment of lengthy and wordy data into a manageable, understandable, dissectible, and interpretable set of collected data. Despite the length of the collected data, in the process of (1) familiarizing the data; (2) initially coding them; (3) searching for themes; (4) reviewing the themes; (5) naming and defining them; and (6) reporting the analysis, the data were managed, understood, dissected and interpreted herein.

## 4. Methods

### 4.1. Data Collection Procedure and Instrument

The data were gathered through three individual video-recorded focus group interviews (Creswell, 2014) <sup>[48]</sup>. The questions asked originated from a predetermined list, and probing was conducted where necessary to obtain more information. The consultants were grouped on the basis of ethnicity. This allowed segmented questioning and analysis since they are those who share similar experiences. Although the discussions were on video, note-taking still ensured that critical highlights were not missed and would be easy to recall during the analysis process.

The data collection instrument used was a semi-structured interview guide. The questions were validated to ensure that they were in line with the research questions and adequate for eliciting necessary data. This led to comments and suggestions, especially concerning those areas that required probes for further questioning. Probing beyond the prepared questions was necessary because it might have caused the omission of relevant data.

### 4.2. Data Analysis

The data were analyzed thematically, where the recurring themes were identified (Riger & Sigurvinsdottir, 2016) <sup>[47]</sup>. These themes served as the backbone for the discourse relative to the research objectives at hand. The thematic analysis required that analysts undergo the following steps: (1) data familiarization; (2) initial code

generation; (3) theme search; (4) theme review; (5) theme naming and definition; and (6) reporting the analysis (Riger & Sigurvinsdottir, 2016) <sup>[47]</sup>. To aid in the data analysis, ELAN—a professional tool for manually and partially automatically annotating and transcribing audio or video recordings that offer multilevel, multiparticipant annotation of time-based media via a tier-based data model—was utilized.

After the interviews were conducted via video recording, the recorded videos were digitally uploaded to ELAN. The questions and responses were initially coded in the foregoing software to manage the voluminous, relevant data into analyzable segments after the data were familiarized. Thereupon this process, the segments were then manually transferred into MS Excel, where the data were coded in two separate instances, the initial one in ELAN and the succeeding one in Excel—as this was necessary to render the data more generic. The initial and secondary coding were input into different sheets. Once this was done, a separate sheet was utilized to categorize the codes as the initial process of the theme search. However, in another sheet, the categories were put into themes, which were used as the actual themes and subthemes in providing the results and discussion. These processes were separately performed for each of the ethnic groups: Muslim, Bisaya, and the native speakers of Zamboanga Chavacano. After the separate analysis for each of the ethnic groups, the data were synthesized for a unified presentation of the themes alongside the individual discussion of the data obtained from each ethnic group.

### **4.3. Consultants**

The consultants were then grouped into three linguistic groups: Native Chavacano speakers, Muslim speakers of Chavacano, and Visayan speakers of Chavacano. This ensured the representation of the multilingual context of the city. Since Chavacano is the prevalent language in Zamboanga city (Delos Reyes, 2019) <sup>[23]</sup>, it was necessary to ensure that the informants to be selected were those who could convert well in this language. This selection criterion recognized the fact that members of other ethnic groups tend to have some knowledge of Chavacano, whereas only some Chavacano speakers acquire Muslim

or Visayan languages. The inclusion of the L2 speakers of Chavacano was very important in this survey to obtain an accurate picture of multilingualism in the city and to ensure that the representation was thorough.

### **4.4. Sampling Technique**

The sampling technique was purposive; a certain set of criteria had to be utilized in the selection of the consultants (Clorion et al., 2024) <sup>[49]</sup>. The consultants had to be of legal age, having at least reached college and speaking Zamboanga Chavacano. Since they are to be grouped according to ethnic group, some must be native speakers of the Zamboanga Chavacano, Muslim speakers of Chavacano, and Visayan speakers of the language.

### **4.5. Ethical Consideration**

Before the interviews, the ethnicity and multilingual status of the consultants were checked. They were given project information in hard copies and an oral explanation; then, they signed a consent form consenting to their participation and confirming their wish for anonymity. One minor withdrew, another consultant left the project for personal reasons, and the interviews with the remaining consultants were conducted without any problems. Their anonymity was guaranteed in light of their wishes (Clorion et al., 2024; Fuentes et al., 2024; Santos et al., 2024) <sup>[50-52]</sup>.

## **5. The Results and Discussion**

This section presents the results and discussions of the research objective of the study on the basis of the themes generated in the analyses of the focus group interviews. This section is divided into three general ethnic groups that speak the Zamboanga Chavacano language; the first subsection focuses on Muslim speakers of the aforementioned language, followed by Visayan speakers and ultimately native speakers.

### **5.1. Muslim Speakers of Zamboanga Chavacano**

For this subsection, five themes emerged: (1) linguis-

tic repertoire, (2) community language, (3) language learning, (4) variation in speaking, and (5) status of language. Each one is discussed successively:

### 5.1.1. Linguistic Repertoire

Muslim consultants claimed to speak Sama, Tausug, Bisaya, Chavacano, and Yakan. These reports are consistent with those of (Concepcion, n.d; Muysken, 2011)<sup>[22] [44]</sup>, and they are corroborated by (Clorion et al., 2024; Clorion et al., 2024) [20-21]. Like Concepcion (n.d)<sup>[22]</sup>, English was reported to be a language they also speak throughout the interviews. With dialects such as Sama-Badjao, Sama-Bangingi, and Sama-Vitali, the Sama language was less widespread. Tausug was the most widely spoken Muslim language in the city. The consultants confirmed that Chavacano, Tausug, and Bisaya are widely spoken, as reported by (Delos Reyes, 2019)<sup>[23]</sup>. Unexpectedly, Muslim family members spoke Chavacano, probably as a result of intermarriage. A consultant mentioned conversing in Chavacano with a stepfather who spoke the language fluently. Speaking Chavacano with friends and students who are fluent in the language is common. When speaking with native speakers, nonnative speakers use only Chavacano. Below are excerpts instantiating the preceding claims:

Question: How many languages do you know and use? What are these languages?

Consultant 1: (I speak) Yakan, Chavacano, Tausug, Samal, and Tagalog. "I speak Yakan, Chavacano, Samal, and Tagalog."

Question: In your experiences living here in Zamboanga city, what are the languages commonly used by the people?

Consultant 5: "Na mga Zamboangeño, Chavacano gayot." "Among the Zamboangeños, it's truly Chavacano."

Consultant 1: "Masquin onde tu anda, Chavacano gat todo. Masquin na mga Tausug chene gayot Chavacano syempre." "Everywhere you go, it's truly Chavacano. Even among the Tausugs, there truly are Chavacano."

### 5.1.2. Language of the Community

The language used in the community is influenced mostly by the ethnicity of the majority population. For ex-

ample, contrary to earlier research with no mention of Yakan [20-23], it is widely spoken in Muti. One's ethnic heritage is frequently reflected in the language used at home. Some consultants who spoke Chavacano as their first language reported being discriminated against for speaking it and faced pressure from the community to talk in a Muslim language. This finding supports the conclusion of Chavacano supremacy made by<sup>[23]</sup>. In contrast, Sama is a language in which people of ethnic origin speak in their homes. Others, inspired by family members who spoke the language well, persisted in speaking Chavacano even after studying Muslim languages later in life. Interestingly, because Muslims come from a range of ethnic backgrounds, some native Muslims are unable to understand or speak Chavacano. In highly multilingual settlements such as Talabaaan, languages such as Chavacano, Tausug, and Sama Bangingi are spoken, demonstrating a rich linguistic milieu. The following conclusions can be drawn from the interviews:

Question: What language do you predominantly use in your community?

Consultant 2: "Diamon na Muti, Yakan." "For us in Muti, it's Yakan."

Consultant 3: "Si na entero barangay de Talabaaan, yan halo-halo ya kasi. Bale alya na Zone

1 parte kanamon parang manada pa Christian tan combersahan Chavacano, pero si alya ya tu na punta alya na Zone 6, ansina, mga Muslim ya kel alya. Alya kanamun tamen, na lugar lang gat diamon halo-halo din sir kasi kame mga de adentro Christian, mga de apuera apuera serca na barangay mga Muslim pero ta usa sila Chavacano." "In the entire barangay of Talabaaan, it's mixed. In the area of Zone 1, there appear to be many Christians who speak Chavacano with each other, but if you reach at the end point of our place, in Zone 6, it is the Muslims who stay there. In our place exactly, just in our place, it's also mixed, because those who stay in the inner portion are Christians; those in the outer area near the barangay [hall], they are Muslims there but they still use Chavacano."

### 5.1.3. Language Learning

This theme is composed of two subthemes, namely, (1) how languages are used and learned and (2) how chil-

dren acquire community language.

How languages are used and learned

The consultants claim that the Visayan language was learned through family gatherings, which shows that these gatherings are frequently held. Bisaya is also known when families often travel to Visayan-speaking places. Moreover, with the influx of Visayan students in the city, other speakers learn their language, just as they learn other languages, such as Zamboanga Chavacano, further suggesting its predominance (Delos Reyes, 2013)<sup>[23]</sup>. As a lingua franca (Clorion et al., 2024; Clorion et al., 2024; Concepcion, n.d; Delos Reyes, 2019<sup>[22-23]</sup>), the Tagalog language is utilized with friends and classmates, which is further practiced with visiting relatives from Manila. Social and mainstream media also ease language use and learning, particularly English and Tagalog. On the other hand, Chavacano was learned through intermarriage and community interactions, whereas Tausug was picked up from native-speaking mothers and the local community. The Samal Bangingi language, which is unique in terms of its accent and vocabulary, can arouse interest or questions from other speakers in this language (Anudin, 2018)<sup>[19]</sup>, further tucking it into the linguistic urban setting (Concepcion, n.d)<sup>[22]</sup>. To illustrate some of the responses from the interviews, the following excerpts are in order:

Question: How did you learn how to speak Bisaya?

Consultant 1: “Hinde man sila ta combersa canamon. Como ya pipina lang kame si chene mag reunion reunion. Ta uwi uwi lang kame ansina, kabar amo ya kel kame, komo, kabar si tan kwento sila kabar chene accion, ta entende ya kame. Alya ya kame ya aprende como hinay hinay ya sabe ya gat man Bisaya. Ta saca ya kame el diila ano....” “They do not truly talk to us. It’s like we picked up [the Visayan language] at reunions. We just listen to them, and then when they talk and then there are accompanying actions, we understand [what they are saying]. That was where we gradually learned to speak Bisaya. We get to pick up their what [language].”

Children Learning the Language

It was claimed that children learn English from their family members who speak the language to them, from social media such as YouTube, and from watching shows in English, such as Peppa Pig, attesting to the positive

attitude toward the English language in the Philippines (Somblingo & Alieto, 2019)<sup>[27]</sup>. This language acquisition is facilitated early on by providing gadgets to children. There is also a consultative view that there has been a generational shift, with more children learning English. Some even prefer to use English rather than community language, which further reinforces its use in the city (Clorion et al., 2024)<sup>[21]</sup>. To specify some of the findings in this subtheme, the following are the transcripts from the interviews carried out with Muslim native speakers.

Question: Do you think that the languages that you speak are being learned by the children?

Consultant 1: Kame kasi otro ya man el generation, no? Majority del mga bata English ya man gat sila...” “As for us, we belong to a different generation, right? Majority of the children truly speak English.”

Question: Where do you think this is coming from?

Consultant 1: Na ano, sir, na mga YouTube, na social media, Peppa Pig.” “From YouTube, in the social media, Peppa Pig.”

#### 5.1.4. Variations in Speaking

There is a notable pattern of using multiple languages within families as an effect of intermarriage. For example, one side of the family speaks Bisaya during gatherings, while Chavacano and Tausug are used as well, depending on which family members are present. This linguistic diversity is depicted in families where the father’s side speaks Chavacano, the mother’s side speaks Tausug, and some members speak Samal-Bangingi. One family, for example, speaks Chavacano with one another but converses with the daughter in Samal-Bangingi because of the mother’s use of it. This multilingual usage confirms the argument for Zamboanga city as a polyglossic environment (Filmore, 2014; Symaco, 2013)<sup>[40-41]</sup> and even in regional landscape studies (Clorion et al., 2024; Clorion et al., 2024)<sup>[20-21]</sup>. There could also be intergenerational mixing of Tagalog, English, and Chavacano; the younger generation would use more English, and cousins coming home from Manila would use Tagalog. Chavacano and Tausug tend to cut across ethnic lines. Samal-Bangingi is widely used among all generations, particularly middle-aged and older members. The following illustrates these points:

Question: Have you noticed a difference among the generations of speakers? For example,

what language is truly spoken by your parents, your grandparents, then the younger ones? Do you see the patterns in the languages that are used?

Consultant 3: “El dimi tata, mga Chavacano gat kel sila. Tas na side dimi nana mostly Tausug. Kay komo el grande pamilya dila na side dimi nana, Tausug, tas konti lang sila Bangingi.” “On my father’s side they are truly Chavacano, and then on my mother’s side, they are mostly Tausug as the bigger portion of my mother’s family is Tausug. There are only a few of them who are Bangingi.”

Consultant 4: Kame Samal gayot. Mi mga anti. (comment: mga grandparents...) Yes sir.

“For us, it’s truly Samal. My aunts and grandparents.”

### 5.1.5. Status of the Language Domains

Chavacano language is used as a lingua franca (Delos Reyes, 2019) <sup>[23]</sup> in markets and even in class recitations if allowed. Tagalog may also be used in classes especially when English is too inaccessible to be used. Bisaya is used in classes, especially in class discussions with many speakers who are Visayans. Code-switching happens usually because of the multilingual nature of ZC, confirming (Clorion et al., 2024; Clorion et al., 2024; Concepcion, n.d; Delos Reyes, 2019) <sup>[20-23]</sup>, (Filmore, 2014) <sup>[40]</sup> as well as (Symaco, 2013) <sup>[41]</sup>. In class, code-switching is based on the personal ability of both of the speakers in the languages, which also happens when they teach each other’s languages. On social media, especially on Facebook, the use of both Tagalog and English is pervasive, but Tagalog is preferred for people to have a better understanding of the message within groups. Below are specific comments from the consultants on this topic:

Question: In your community, what is the most commonly used language?

Consultant 5: “Tagalog or Chavacano. Chene tamen mga Muslims ta cumpra, tan Tagalog gat sila.” “Tagalog or Chavacano. There are also Muslims who use Tagalog when they buy [things].”

Question: Do you use Tagalog when you recite in class?

Consultant 1: Chenebes. Kay tan expect man sila kay English major kame, na man English gat kame.” “Sometimes. Because they expect that we are English majors, so we truly use the English language.”

## 5.2. Visayan Speakers of Chavacano

For the Visayan speakers of Chavacano, three themes were identified in the analyses of the qualitative data: (1) Language; (2) Multilingualism; and (3) Language Use.

### 5.2.1. Language

This theme is composed of two subthemes: (a) spoken language and (b) specific languages. The discussions for each follow suit are as follows:

#### Languages spoken

The consultants reported that they speak, in a general sense, the following languages: Bisaya, Chavacano, Tagalog, English and Tausug, where the Chavacano language is considered to be the major language spoken in the City of Zamboanga, corroborating (Delos Reyes, 2019) <sup>[23]</sup> argument relative to this language’s dominance. The languages reported to be spoken are in line with the findings of previous studies, which characterize the conclusions of (Clorion et al., 2024; Clorion et al., 2024) <sup>[20-21]</sup>, the claim of (Delos Reyes, 2019) <sup>[23]</sup>, and the description of (Concepcion, n.d) <sup>[22]</sup>. English is used mostly formally and on different social media platforms. The Visayan language is likewise deemed a major language in the city, which may be attributed to the influx of Visayan speakers, where some of them come from Del Norte and a few, such as that of one of the consultants’ mothers, come from Davao, who either come here temporarily or stay in the city for good. This substantiates the claim that Bisaya is a linguistic group even in the classroom setting (Delos Reyes, 2019) <sup>[23]</sup>. Like Tausug or Visayan, Samal, which has been documented as one of the languages in Zamboanga (Anudin, 2018; Delos Reyes, 2019) <sup>[19,23]</sup>, Samal is reportedly heard but may be considered a minor language, as there are few natives of this language in the city. However, the Samal language and its dialects are considered languages spoken in the city. The following transcripts were obtained from the interviews:



Question: What languages do you speak?

Consultant 3: “Iyo, four. Chavacano, Bisaya, Tagalog, English. El muslim, poko poko lang,

pero sabe yo combersa Tausug.” “As for me, I speak four [languages]. Muslim, just a few, but I know how to speak Tausug.”

#### Specific Languages

These consultants, who are native speakers of Visayan, consequently speak the same language at home with their relatives. The language is also used natively with fellow speakers in school and among friends. Chavacano is learned and practiced similarly within its speaking communities, mainly with friends, hence its practice as a lingua franca (Delos Reyes, 2019) <sup>[23]</sup>. Moreover, the correction of common mistakes involves further learning through the use of the formal second-person pronoun “itu.” The family also uses Chavacano when some relatives who speak this language visit it. Reflective of Zamboanga’s state as a polyglossic place (Clorion et al., 2024; Clorion et al., 2024; Concepcion, n.d; Delos Reyes, 2019) [20-23], both Chavacano and Visayan are similarly acquired by children and mixed within families because of intermarriage, as is also the case with Muslim speakers.

They learn English through online gaming platforms such as Roblox, DOTA, Mobile Legends, and Valorant, which have open features in communication. Another consultant, from his experience, even made an application with which he started to advertise among foreigners because of learning the language: dating applications and social networks, such as Facebook and TikTok, through chats and video lectures. Additionally, the interaction with foreign friends and senior high school formal classes, such as creative writing, exposed me to a great deal. This broad exposure explains the preference for English as the language of instruction (Somblino & Alieto, 2019) <sup>[27]</sup>.

Tagalog is a language that is a lingua franca in Zamboanga city (Delos Reyes, 2019) <sup>[23]</sup>, as manifested in its status among Tausug classmates and friends alike. It is also a language learned formally in school, as it is one of the core courses in the curriculum. These are not the sole sources where the language is learned; the mainstream media—and possibly the social media—via Philippine TV programs—accord individuals with opportunities to learn

the language. Similarly, it is a language understood and used among members of the family who prefer Tagalog over other languages. Moreover, it is the main language used in the church. A quite uncanny situation is where a mother speaks in Bisaya to the family, and they all respond in Tagalog, which is still a phenomenon where the latter language serves as a lingua franca (Delos Reyes, 2019) <sup>[23]</sup>.

In the case of Cebuano-speaking speakers of Chavacano, they reported that, for the most part, the Tausug language is not very spoken and is rare. It is generally learned from an intimate family member who is proficient in the language. It was reported that their fathers, without Muslim heritage, spoke to them in Tausug, leading them to learn it. Having a partner who is a native speaker also leads to learning. Immersion in a community where a Muslim language is widely spoken helps increase the chances of one picking up Tausug. Like Bisaya and Chavacano, Tausug meets near Chavacano as a result of cross-ethnic marriage. The above assertions are corroborated by excerpts from the interviews.

Question: Where did you learn and where do you use English?

Consultant 2: “Iyo na school, na online games, kasi minsan chene man mga foreign country, hinde man sila ta entende diaton lenguaje, English ta man kwento.” “In my case, at school, in online games, because sometimes there are foreigners who do not speak our language, so we need to speak English to them.”

#### 5.2.2. Multilingualism

Zamboanga city is a multilingual locale, as observed by scholars (Filmore, 2014; Symaco, 2013) <sup>[40,41]</sup>. The consultants claimed that the languages Chavacano, Bisaya, Tagalog, and Muslim were multilingual, similar to previous findings (Concepcion, n.d; Delos Reyes, 2019) <sup>[22,23]</sup> and the landscape assessment of (Clorion et al., 2024; Clorion et al., 2024) <sup>[20-21]</sup>. The diverse linguistic nature of the city is attributed to various factors, including the visits that the city had from its sister neighboring islands, such as Tawi-Tawi and Jolo, both dominated by Muslims and the Visayan-dominated Zamboanga Del Norte and Del Sur. All these are driven by the more progressive economy in comparison with Zamboanga city. The residents who visit

it from these places drive the need for a lingua franca, usually Tagalog or Bisaya . The superior healthcare system in the city would also attract more medical professionals with its four large private hospitals and two public hospitals. Inter-marriages also add to the linguistic scene of the city. Below are excerpts lifted from the data.

Question: What languages do you think the people of Zamboanga city speak?

Consultant 2: “Alya kanamon kasi, parte ariba so tan speak sila alya kanamon si para Culianan, most likely kasi alya Chavacano gayot, pero si aqui sila parte abaha Zambowood, Bisaya. Si Boalan sila abaha, Chavacano. Si abaha tamen sila aqui na City Hardware na Boalan, chene se Tagalog ali, mixed se ali, Muslim, Tagalog, como le urban poor.” “There in our place, somewhere in the upper portion, somewhere in Culianan, people there are most likely Chavacano, but if you go somewhere closer, in Zambowood, [they speak] Bisaya. If they go to Boalan, [they speak] Chavacano. If they go to the city hardware in Boalan, it is mixed; there is Tagalog. It’s mixed: Muslim and Tagalog, it’s like the place is an urban poor.

### 5.2.3. Language Use

This theme is an umbrella for two more subthemes: (1) domains of language use and (2) language in use. Below are the discussions for each of them.

#### Domain of Language Use

School is one of the domains in which languages in the city are utilized and thus are mixed, a phenomenon that has been observed by Clorion et al. (2024) <sup>[20]</sup> and Delos Reyes (2019) <sup>[23]</sup>, who noticed the differing ethnic groups in a particular learning institution. Visayan, Chavacano, and Tausug are spoken with classmates at school, a clear instantiation of linguistic polyglossia (Filmore, 2014; Symaco, 2013) <sup>[40-41]</sup>. This happens when they are native speakers of the language. As already noted by Delos Reyes (2019) <sup>[23]</sup>, Tagalog is utilized as a lingua franca when there is no other common language that both parties are proficient in or comfortable using. There are some instances in which teachers would require learners to speak plain English, suggesting that the English language is likewise utilized in the classroom context, a circumstance that matches Somblino and Alieto (2019) <sup>[27]</sup> contention that

English is the favored language among prospective language teachers. Furthermore, the language that the teacher uses in teaching becomes the basis for what language the students will utilize in conversing with them (the teachers) and in class recitation. Tagalog is likewise drawn upon during class recitation, which is most likely possible when no imposition with respect to language is made by the teacher.

The socials are likewise a rich domain where different languages are utilized; for instance, Concepcion (n.d) <sup>[22]</sup> noted how Chavacano has made its way to the socials. The term Chavacocang refers to the code mixing between Chavacano and Tagalog on social media. In addition to chatting, Chavacano and Bisaya are used depending on the members in a group chat, but Tagalog is utilized as a lingua franca in group chats to ensure everyone’s comprehension of the provided message(s) in the GC, and this strengthens the claim of Concepcion (n.d) <sup>[22]</sup> and (Delos Reyes, 2019) <sup>[23]</sup> that Tagalog is a lingua franca in some other domain. Formally, English is sometimes also used in GCs to serve as a lingua franca when a teacher provides activities and/or passes announcements; therefore, some responses are phrased in English. Furthermore, English is likewise considered the language utilized for shared posts.

In different communities, the domination of a particular ethnic group becomes the basis for the language the community speaks for apparent reasons; for example, in Boalan, many are Visayan, whereas in Pasobolong, many are Chavacano. Some communities, however, are reported to have an amalgamation of languages, as different ethnic groups coexist in those communities. In community markets, languages also mix—that is, some sellers are Tausug, and not all buyers know their language. Code-switching then becomes necessary. All the preceding linguistic setup and contact are corroborations of previous scholars’ claims that Zamboanga city is a place where different languages are spoken (Filmore, 2014; Symaco, 2013) <sup>[40-41]</sup>. The language that serves as the lingua franca is premised on what language they both share; in the context of the consultants, it is torn between Chavacano (Concepcion, n.d) <sup>[22]</sup> and Tagalog (Delos Reyes, 2019) <sup>[23]</sup> when, for instance, the vendor or seller does not speak Bisaya—or, by extension, a Muslim language. Many Chavacano communities exist

in community stores. Tagalog, English, and Chavacano are used separately in churches, and some churches likewise use Bisaya for Visayan communities. Speaking to a seat-mate at church depends on the language spoken by his or her interlocutor. Furthermore, when a preacher or minister speaks in Chavacano, the responses must also be in Chavacano. In some communities dominated by Chavacano, the Visayans living therewith are hard to identify because they have acquired near-native speaker proficiency, confirming the dominance of this language (Delos Reyes, 2019) <sup>[23]</sup>. Below are cases in which the transcripts of the responses of some of the consultants are presented:

Question: What language do you use in posting in Socmed?

Consultant 3: “Sa pagpost, diba meron tayong tinatawag na Chavacocang? Diba pag sa atin sa Chavacano, magtatagalog tayo tapos magchachavacano, parang half...” “In posting, we do have what we call Chavacocang, right? In Chavacano, we speak Tagalog and then we speak Chavacano; it’s like they’re half and half.”

#### Language in Use

The English language was utilized in the design and promotion of the online app. This minimized issues such as trash-talking and scamming. The English language is also crucial in schools, particularly in classes on creative writing, reinforcing the claimed positive attitude toward English (Somblino & Alieto, 2019) <sup>[27]</sup>. The Tagalog language was also reported as having been utilized in summer classes among young multilingual learners, thus showing the Tagalog language as a lingua franca (Delos Reyes, 2019) <sup>[23]</sup>. Switching between languages is also practiced in multilingual tertiary classes to facilitate understanding. Language switching is dependent on cointerlocutors’ linguistic repertoire, and it is also practiced at bus terminals, showing the multilingual setting of the city (Filmore, 2014; Symaco, 2013) <sup>[40–41]</sup>. Tagalog is used in most situations as a common language, as depicted in the claims previously made (Delos Reyes, 2019) <sup>[23]</sup>.

Question: Is there a skill that requires the use of a particular language?

Consultant 3: Naa pud katung nagtudlo mi “Learn to Play” arnis diri sa Baliwasan. Kasi diba most likely Tausug to didto, kabar mixed naa pod Bisaya, naa pod Cha-

vacano, so gatagalog na lang mi didto.” “There was a time we taught ‘Learn to Play’ Arnis in Baliwasan. [Learners] there were mostly Tausug, right? The situation was also mixed, and then there were also Bisaya and Chavacano, too, so we spoke Tagalog.”

### 5.3. Native Speakers of Chavacano

#### 5.3.1. Languages Spoken, Learned, and Used

This theme is composed of two subthemes: (1) the languages spoken and (2) where the languages are learned and used. These subthemes are discussed below.

#### Languages spoken

The reported languages that are spoken are Chavacano, Tagalog, English and Bisaya, an observation partly akin to the premise put forth by (Anudin, 2018) <sup>[19]</sup>. In this group, the consultants also noted other languages spoken in the city, namely, Subanen and Illonggo, as previously observed (Anudin, 2018) <sup>[19]</sup>. To our knowledge, it is difficult to identify where these languages are spoken, although their claim is inaccurate is in fact incorrect. Among these languages, Tausug is also reported to be a language that many people use around the city proper, at school, and—of course—where the natives are. In Bunguiao, a highly Chavacano-dominated area, where the consultants all come from, Tausug—and by extension, other Muslim languages—are very rarely spoken. Adjustments need to be made when living in a new place, including language use, which is premised on the language of the community. These findings support the dominance of Zamboanga Chavacano (Delos Reyes, 2019) <sup>[23]</sup>. The transcript below was taken from the interviews:

Question: What are the languages that you know how to speak?

Consultant 3: “Iyo, four, every day yo tan kwento, Chavacano, Tagalog, English, Bisaya.” “As for me, four, I use every day, Chavacano, English, Tagalog, and Bisaya.”

Consultant 2: “Same.” “Same.”

Consultant 1: Same. “Same.”

#### Where the languages are learned and used

English and Tagalog are reportedly used and learned at school while watching television and vlogs. Syntax is

explicitly taught for English but not so much for Tagalog. The extensive use of Tagalog, as it is supposedly a lingua franca (Delos Reyes, 2019) <sup>[23]</sup>, is reportedly made with classmates and native speaker friends, especially in colleges where diverse students meet. Although Chavacano is very dominant (Delos Reyes, 2019) <sup>[23]</sup>, it is not widely understood. Some cases involve the teaching of each other's respective languages between native speakers of Chavacano and Tagalog. It is also often the case that Chavacano speakers start off using Tagalog with unknown speakers only to determine that they speak the same language. Chavacano speakers adopted Visayan because some Visayan families began to migrate to Zamboanga city. Given that Chavacano is predominant in Bunguiao, which is 36 kilometers away from the city proper, it is difficult for other ethnic groups to penetrate owing to its seclusion and Chavacano dominance (Delos Reyes, 2019) <sup>[23]</sup>. Chavacano is spoken in markets, churches, and schools, with friends and playmates, and young speakers also reinforce its use.

Children learn English because some older, educated family members deliberately speak to them in the language, implying a favorable attitude toward it (Somblingo & Alieto, 2019) <sup>[27]</sup>. As such, it is less likely that members of families with low educational attainment will speak English to younger generations. Additionally, some children are observed to be provided with gadgets from where they spontaneously acquire the English language. The following transcripts were obtained from the interviews:

Question: [What language(s) do you speak] in the community, for example, in the market, in the stores, or at church?

Consultant 1: "Syempre Chavacano." "Of course, Chavacano."

Consultant 2: "Lehos gat diaton lugar. Paadentro gayot. Kabar hinde kita igual de open highway. Paadentro kasi kita." "Our place is far flung. It is not by the highway. We stay in a rather secluded place."

### 5.3.2. English vs Tagalog

This would make the English language more accessible to native speakers, with many vocabulary items similar to those of Chavacano, in addition to the extensive borrowings from English, making Chavacano easier to learn

for its speakers. It is widely used in academic courses, formal gatherings such as seminars and flag ceremonies, and even teachers use it in instructional settings, thus providing a positive attitude toward English, which lends support to Somblingo and Alieto (2019) <sup>[27]</sup> claim about favorable attitudes toward English. Tagalog, on the other hand, is considered more challenging because it is formally taught and informally used outside the classroom setting, thus leading to judgments and discrimination. Even if Tagalog is regarded as a lingua franca (Delos Reyes, 2019) <sup>[23]</sup>, its usability significantly decreases in areas where people speak Chavacano more. On the other hand, having a friend who speaks Tagalog natively can help one easily learn the language. However, for many, particularly those expressing negative attitudes and even considering it a foreign language, it still seems hard to learn.

Question: Is English more predominantly used than Tagalog?

Consultant 2: "Dol, ano o, English, dol ele ta keda ano o, si hiram na salita..." "It's English that becomes the language where we borrow from when we lack terms."

Consultant 1: Not all the time. Masquin math gane, English tamen... manada gayot." "Not all the time. Even in math, English is also used... there are plenty [of subjects that use English]."

### 5.3.3. Language Use in Various Domains and Situations

In the socmed platforms, English is widely used, but there is also a tendency to be multilingual; for instance, in comments, Tagalog and Bisaya are used. In chats, however, the language used is dependent on whom one communicates with. In group chats, it depends on what is thought to be understood by more. This supports the multilingual set up of the city (Filmore, 2014; Symaco, 2013) <sup>[40-41]</sup>, which, like Chavacano (Concepcion, n.d) <sup>[22]</sup>, has reached the realm of the socials. With respect to specific skills, English is the language required during job interviews, and it is the language most commonly used in class recitations and other scholastic activities. Teachers also provided instructions in English. The same language is used in writing resumes and other formal letters, and it is utilized in designing and developing concepts in architecture classes. These findings lend credence to Somblingo

and Alieto (2019)<sup>[27]</sup> argument of the favor afforded to the English language. Chavacano is the language required for architectural construction materials, as many laborers are not highly proficient in English because of their educational attainment. The entire linguistic repertoire may be helpful in a multilingual classroom. In addition to social media platforms and certain skills, code-switching often occurs in times where a situation arises where it is difficult to express in a particular language. For those comfortable in English as well, it happens between Chavacano and English. Among friends, Chavacano and Tagalog are likewise languages in which speakers switch to and from. This is also a common phenomenon when one attempts to speak in Tagalog but when the code switches to Chavacano. Chavacano speakers experience instances in which terms in Bisaya follow Chavacano utterances, which they attribute to their Visayan friends' influence. Code-switching is believed to be a normal phenomenon, as people are accustomed to doing it. Unquestioningly, these flesh out the claim of Zamboanga city being multilingual (Anudin, 2018; Clorion et al., 2024; Clorion et al., 2024)<sup>[19-21]</sup>. To specify the preceding discussions, the following excerpts seek to clarify them even further:

Question: What language do you use in society?

Consultant 3: "English." "English"

Question: Do you have specific skills that you know one of these languages may be used?

Consultant 2: "El na mga construction, mga quien ta ase trabaho, laborers, hinde man se

silang educado. Na Nisita usa kanila dila language na para puede silang entende. Kasi kita kay educado kita, kita man adjust kanila." "For construction, to those who work, the laborers, they are not educated. Therefore, we need to use their language so they can understand. Because we are educated, we are those who need to adjust."

Question: When do you code switch?

Consultant 2: "Si ta tormenta ya." "When [I am] already having a hard time."

#### 5.3.4. Variation in Use

In Bunguiao, Chavacano is still the dominant language among generations. However, it may vary depending on the household and community structure. Because

they use gadgets and digital media, children are exposed early to the English language, suggesting its favored use (Somblino & Alieto, 2019)<sup>[27]</sup>. However, most children still respond in Chavacano. On the other hand, some children may be able to learn Tagalog from Filipino television programs, but this rarely happens in remote areas that do not have contact with technological means. In this case, what is commonly acquired by children is the prevailing language of the community. The observations provided by consultants indicate that Chavacano is passed on dynamically in Bunguiao (Delos Reyes, 2019)<sup>[23]</sup>.

Question: Among the languages that you use, which of them do you think the children learn?

Consultant 1: [English] Na gadgets gayot, si ken gatchene gadgets, parang sila el chene guts, parang chene possibility tan convert sila na..." "[English] [the language is learned through] gadgets truly. Whoever has gadgets, it's like they're the one who seems to have the possibility to convert [into speaking the English language]."

Question: Do you think it is safe to say that children in Zamboanga City, in your observation, still speak the language?

Consultant 2: "Yes, alia kanamun, manada pa man [quien ta combersa el lenguahe], alia

kanamun" "Yes, in our place, there are many [children who speak the language], there in our place."

Consultant 3: "For some cases." "For some cases."

#### 5.4. Relevant Authors' Positions as Insiders in the Multilingual Situation in Zamboanga City and an Encapsulation of the Findings and Some Authors' Positions

As insiders who have lived in Zamboanga City practically all our lives, we have borne witness to the multilingual setup in this place. The large number of native speakers of Zamboanga Chavacano may be why Zamboanga Chavacano is the major language spoken in the city (Delos Reyes, 2019)<sup>[23]</sup>. It may be the case that Muslims and Visayans reside in varying areas in the city, but they do not outnumber the Chavacanos. As such, when these languages come into contact, Chavacano is likely to dominate (Delos Reyes, 2019)<sup>[23]</sup>, paving the way for speakers of

other languages to gradually and spontaneously obtain linguistic skills that, with high probability, eventually transition into proficiency. In cases where a group is dominated by Muslim speakers and a Chavacano infiltrates, the adjustment happens at the polar opposite, suggesting that there are native Chavacano speakers who speak a Muslim language, especially Tausug. Personally, we have met some native Muslim speakers who speak to some degree the Chavacano language or who show proficiency in the language such that telling them apart from the natives of Chavacano proves to be a challenge, a phenomenon further fortifying the dominance of the foregoing language (Delos Reyes, 2019) <sup>[23]</sup>.

Owing to the dominance of the Chavacano speakers and, by extension, of the Chavacano language per se and owing to the proficiency in Chavacano that other speakers of other languages possess, it has become a lingua franca of the place, a circumstance that has been previously noted (Delos Reyes, 2019) <sup>[23]</sup>. In contrast, there are still speakers who are not proficient in Chavacano; Tagalog is mostly the shared lingua franca, as previously claimed by scholars such as (Delos Reyes, 2019) <sup>[23]</sup>. This is often heard in the city proper, schools, markets, and malls, which all cater to individuals who are exceedingly divergent in multilingualism. Simply put, this lingua franca becomes necessary in places where residents inevitably cross paths. Aside from the necessity of a certain language as a tool to break linguistic barriers, code-switching is likewise not uncommon. This happens when an individual is somehow proficient in other languages spoken in the city. This is especially observable among individuals who have close ties with each other, but indicating that this phenomenon is exclusive to close individuals is an understatement and even replete with inaccuracies. Furthermore, intermarriage between ethnic groups contributes to a city's multilingual status. Often, parents do not come into accord as to what language to use with their children; rather, they leave it all to situational spontaneity, making the provision of both parents' languages available for acquisition. All these lend credence and support to the polyglossic status of the city (Filmore, 2014; Symaco, 2013) <sup>[40-41]</sup>.

In addition to Chavacano, Tausug and Visayan speakers also constitute in great numbers the population in

Zamboanga City, precipitating into these languages being spoken by large groups; therefore, these languages may likewise be considered—to a certain degree—major languages in the city. As expected, these languages are drawn on by individuals who are natives in places where they are and where they typically make their way to. The other languages, such as Yakan and Samal, are attested languages spoken in the city, but they are in no way close to Tausug and Visayan due to their extent of use. This is especially true for the Samal varieties. Furthermore, there are particular places where Chavacano sizably dominates (Delos Reyes, 2019) <sup>[23]</sup>; if not the sole language being spoken tout au contraire, there are places where Muslim speakers cluster together. In our experience, there are Visayans who likewise aggregate but, to precisely identify their permanent whereabouts, are not within our capacity.

Concerning the lingua franca status of Tagalog (Delos Reyes, 2019) <sup>[23]</sup>, residents of Zamboanga City have recourse to Tagalog and are even proficient in Tagalog. This language is learned at school and via the disgorgement of state-of-the-art technology that allows the language to be obtained through the local entertainment industry. The mainstream media—as these are yet found in some households, albeit dwindling at a snail's pace—contribute to learning this language, the few children included. Mirroring the favor afforded to the English language (Somblingo & Alieto, 2019) <sup>[27]</sup>, the same holds true for this language in particular. This is learned by children at a relatively young age, as they are provided with gadgets at an extremely early age. Some children are known to speak exclusively in English; hence, Philippine English becomes their L1; in contrast, there are still ones who, although seemingly acquiring English via technology early in life, do manifest plentiful signs of obtaining the Chavacano language as their mother tongue. Similarly, other languages may relish this linguistic situation.

To encapsulate the multilingual situation premised on our own observations, perspectives, and experiences interwoven with the findings from the interviews, the following may be deemed common among the qualitative data engendered: (1) Code switching. This is a common practice, especially when both interlocutors possess some proficiency or are highly proficient in the languages that two indi-

viduals share. (2) *Lingua Franca*. The most common *lingua franca* in the city is Tagalog, but Chavacano likewise plays this linguistic role in the provision of communication, akin to the previous observation (Delos Reyes, 2019) <sup>[23]</sup>. (3) *Intermarriages*. These phenomena undoubtedly contribute to maintaining the multilingual situation in the city where both languages or the entire linguistic repertoire of both families may be passed down to the children. (4) *Languages in Socmed Platforms*. The linguistic repertoire of the language users finds its way into social media platforms, where English and Tagalog are the common languages for postings, and Tagalog, a *lingua franca* in group chats; (5) *Language Acquisition by Children*. Children are also reported to learn the English language via technology, media and Tagalog, to some extent. That is not to say that the children no longer acquire community language; they still do. (6) *Ways to learn and use the languages*. Languages are learned via socials, through relatives, friends, and classmates. Some of the languages, especially English and Filipino, are likewise learned in a formal context. (7) *Language used in the community*. The language that is used in the community is based upon the major ethnicity in the community. Some communities in Zamboanga are intact with respect to the common language used, whereas others are highly amalgamated.

## 6. Conclusion

The state of affairs related to the multilingual status of Zamboanga city is fertile ground for scientific investigation, but this remains underexplored, as noted in previous works ranging from MTB-MLE, translanguaging, linguistic landscape, and linguistic description to a rather generic description of Zamboanga city's polyglossic status (Lucas et al., 2023; Grant, 2011) <sup>[42-43]</sup>. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to unearth the foregoing investigative fertility. This paper aimed to describe the multilingual situation of Zamboanga city among three ethnic groups: Muslims, Visayans, and native speakers of Zamboanga Chavacano. Premised on the findings of the research, various but similar themes emerged in the investigation. Generally, the languages spoken in Zamboanga city are the Chavacano, Bisaya, Tausug, Yakan, and Sama dialects,

as some of these languages have been attested to by previous scholars (Anudin, 2018) <sup>[19]</sup>. Some likewise observed Illonggo and Subanen as spoken languages (Delos Reyes, 2019) <sup>[23]</sup>. There are different themes for each of the ethnic groups interviewed; conversely, some are deemed quite analogous: *Code-switching*, *Lingua franca*, *Intermarriages*, *Languages on social platforms*, *Language Acquisition by Children*, *Methods for Learning and Using Languages*, and *Language(s) Used in the Community*. All the preceding points, alongside the other ones that may not be quite common among the ethnic groups, furnish the multilingual state of affairs of the language. It appears that these languages are at war; in contrast, the diametrically opposing side of that premise is true; they keep each other's vitality and richness intact, which sharply resounds the language ecology theory of Haugen (1971) <sup>[46]</sup>, specifically the concept of interdependence, where languages exist within a system of communal and linguistic practices; they cannot be self-sufficient. They exhibit interrelatedness and ontological dependence upon one another. Furthermore, sustainability adheres to language ecology, which focuses on the sustainability of language practice over the long term for the survival and vibrancy of linguistic diversity.

The current research may be pertinent to consultants, as they were all young language speakers. A point to consider may be the inclusion of middle-aged and seasoned speakers of the languages. Thus, a more encompassing representation of the age groups should be obtained in that the state of affairs pertinent to age as a sociolinguistic correlate may vary. Similarly, in the metropolis of Zamboanga or elsewhere, there exists (a) flourishing Chinese communities or families, including these communities, which may be academically prudent. There may be some domains of language use that may have been unpremeditatedly overlooked; therefore, a thorough search and/or analysis of these domains may be consequential. Additionally, it has been observed that the languages that were reported by scholars—this paper included—in multilingualism vary to some degree. This necessitates a more in-depth investigation to infallibly identify, account for, and itemize the languages rightfully as a part and parcel of Zamboanga's polyglossia. Posing a laborious yet imperative task, it is likewise necessary to identify across the city

where the speakers of each ethnic group cluster, as it has been reinforced that wherever the community is, their language goes as well, and where these communities' cross paths, the intermixing comes into play, and more scientific investigation is called for.

The findings of the present study may have implications for language description, vitality, culture studies, and education. Owing to the linguistic description, any attempt at describing any of the languages attested in the Zamboanga city context may consider that these languages are in contact and may influence the morphophonological and morphosyntactic structures of any of them. This may especially hold true for the languages regarded as the dominant ones interacting with one another. By extension, this may impact any of the languages' vitality, be it contributory to their flourishing or otherwise; consequently, an inquirer must be adamant and cautious of any linguistic alteration that may come into occurrence. As language is inevitably intertwined with culture, the enmeshing of the cultures of the various ethnic provenances of Zamboanga residents either by inculturation (e.g., food and intermarriages) or tolerance and acceptance may continuously be the way forward. Furthermore, in the sphere of education, the utilization of languages in the city in the pedagogical sense is immensely emboldened, as voluminous research has attested to the favorable and advantageous impacts that L1s have on learners' academic standing. This indicates that the selection and distribution of teachers in different areas must be strategically carried out such that those assigned to an area are proficient in the community's language(s). The training of teachers in these languages may greatly contribute to the scholastic success of Filipino learners from a macro perspective and Zamboangeño learners from a microlens perspective. In essence, the preservation and equally consequential spread and fortification of all the languages are unquestionably of great benefit.

### **Author Contributions**

The conceptualization, formal analysis, and original draft preparation were carried out by A.M.E., E.O.A., and R.G.V., while the methodology was the brainchild of R.M.R. F.L.A.-K. was majorly in charge of the use of

the software for the raw data analyses. L.J.A. and S.K.G. worked on the supervision and project administration, and the portion of the task on the review and editing was M.R.T., L.D.S.L. and F.D.D.C.'s contribution. Finally, E.O.A. and M.R.T. ascertained the validation and data curation.

### **Funding**

This work received no external funding.

### **Institutional Review Board Statement**

On account of the very low risk involved for the participants, no ethical approval was sought.

### **Informed Consent Statement**

Written consent has been obtained from all subjects involved in the study both for the conduct of the data collection and publication.

### **Data Availability Statement**

The datasets generated during and/or analyzed during the current study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

### **Conflict of Interest**

The authors reported no conflicts of interest.

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