

A QUALITATIVE LINGUISTIC ANALYSIS OF HILIGAYNON
CODESWITCHING STRUCTURE IN KIDAPAWAN CITYMarialou O. Quinding¹, Rowena V. Sosas^{2*}^{1,2}University of Southern Mindanao-Kidapawan City Campus, Kidapawan City, Cotabato, Philippinesmoquinding@usm.edu.ph¹, rvsosas@usm.edu.ph²

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Abstract: Ilonggo people in Kidapawan City, Philippines, code-switch for various social and practical reasons. However alive the Hiligaynon language is, there has not available a study on its codeswitching and its predominant structure. This qualitative research study employing linguistic analysis determined how codeswitching is structured and what dominant type of codeswitching is used in Hiligaynon language in Kidapawan City. The participants were Ilonggo individuals who are at least 18 years old and residing in Kidapawan City, Philippines. They were selected using Fishman's (1972) five language domains of language use, which include school, home, church, market, and neighborhood. This study employed overt observation conducted in multiple sessions, with participants observed individually in their natural settings. The interactions ranged from formal to informal, depending on the context in which the observation took place. The study analyzed 50 instances of codeswitching, which were analyzed based on McArthur's (1998) codeswitching theory. The study found four structures of codeswitching in Hiligaynon: inter-sentential switching, where languages switch between sentences; intra-sentential switching, where languages mix within a sentence; intra-word switching, which happens within a single word; and tag switching, where a tag or interjection from one language is added to a sentence in another language. Results also revealed that Hiligaynon speakers predominantly use intra-sentential switching. Findings imply that Hiligaynon speakers are highly proficient in both their native and second languages, allowing them to switch between languages to adapt their speech for social acceptance and find precise words to facilitate conversations more effectively across multilingual contexts.

Keywords: Codeswitching structure, linguistic analysis, Hiligaynon, Philippines

INTRODUCTION

The Philippines is a linguistically diverse country with over 187 existing languages (Metila et al., 2016). It recognizes Filipino and English as its two official languages, alongside a multitude of native tongues, including Tagalog, Cebuano, Ilocano, Hiligaynon, Bicolano, and Waray, to name a few (Alcudia et al., 2016). Due to this, people intentionally learn and adapt different languages to facilitate communication across different cultural contexts (Candra & Qodriani, 2019). Oftentimes, due to the knowledge of different languages, people cannot help but code-switch.

Linguistically, codeswitching is a general term for the alternative use of two or more languages, types of language, and speech styles (Ameliza & Ambalegin, 2020). It means putting words, phrases, or even whole sentences from one language to another (Hutauruk, 2016). It is commonly practiced by bilingual or multilingual people

as it leads to various benefits in the aspects of education, trades and businesses, culture, commerce, and the like.

Ilonggo people code-switch for various reasons, often shifting between languages to express themselves more clearly or adapt to different situations. In many cases, this behavior is influenced by feelings of shame when speaking their native language, often due to discrimination. To gain acceptance and access better opportunities, they tend to adopt the dominant language spoken in their environment. This pressure to fit in frequently leads to self-protective codeswitching, which, according to Johnson et al. (2022), serves as a response to linguistic discrimination that limits authentic self-expression and adds emotional stress. Over time, the constant use of a second language has become so dominant that many Ilonggo speakers are starting to forget their mother tongue, potentially leading to the loss of their

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native language.

Over the years, several studies have examined code-switching, particularly between Tagalog and English (Taglish), Bisaya and English (BisLish), and Cebuano and English (Ceblish). For example, Bravo-Sotelo (2020) investigated Tagalog-English code-switching in mathematics classroom discourse using non-participant observations and interviews. Roxas (2019) focused on the factors, forms, and functions of Filipino-English codeswitching among senior high school students. Likewise, Mangila (2018) conducted a case study on pedagogic code-switching, specifically examining the language practices of Filipino teachers in English language classrooms. Meanwhile, Abastillas (2015) explored the differences in Cebuano-English code-switching practices within Cebuano-speaking communities in Central Philippines.

Despite these contributions, only a few studies have examined codeswitching in the Hiligaynon language. One such study is by Abrera (2023), which focused only on pedagogic codeswitching among teachers and students in virtual classes. Similarly, Kuning and Haq (2024) explored the perception of English teachers about using translanguaging, especially using English and Hiligaynon. Thus, this qualitative study is significant as it adds to the limited literature on Hiligaynon codeswitching, particularly in relation to English and to other Philippine languages such as Tagalog and Cebuano. It aims to explore how codeswitching is practiced, identify the dominant types used, and provide insights into how language use is evolving in daily interactions and supports language preservation efforts in the face of increasing preference for more dominant or widely spoken languages in multilingual areas, particularly in Kidapawan City, Philippines.

This study analyzed the codeswitching in Hiligaynon language spoken in Kidapawan City with the following research questions:

1. How is codeswitching done in Hiligaynon?

2. What dominant type of codeswitching is used?

Codeswitching

Codeswitching has been widely examined and defined by numerous researchers and scholars. Initially introduced by sociolinguists, the term *codeswitching* refers to the practice of alternating between two or more languages by multilingual speakers (Albarillo, 2018). Lianda et al. (2022) also stated that codeswitching serves as a communicative strategy that enables individuals to transfer linguistic features from one language to another. This phenomenon is marked by fluid shifts between languages, which may occur either between sentences or within a single sentence (MacSwan, 2022). Similarly, Hutaaruk (2016) described codeswitching as the integration of words, phrases, or entire sentences from one language into the structure of another.

Scholars emphasize that bilingual individuals engage in codeswitching to fulfill specific communicative purposes during interactions. Heller (2020) observed that codeswitching is a natural outcome of bilingualism, allowing speakers to draw upon their complete linguistic repertoire to convey meaning more effectively. Far from being random, it adheres to distinct linguistic and cognitive patterns that align with both social norms and individual communicative strategies (Beatty-Martínez et al., 2020).

Furthermore, Chen and Rubinstein-Avila (2015) defined codeswitching as the alternating use of two languages or language varieties within a conversation, a practice that requires proficiency in both. Bokamba (2015) noted that in many multilingual regions, it is common for individuals to communicate using more than two languages. Nazri and Kassim (2023) further explained that codeswitching enables speakers to express aspects of their identity and to convey meaning within cultural contexts, particularly in popular culture. While language choice is often deliberate, speakers may maintain one language, shift to another, or blend them—resulting in a

distinctive communicative style known as codeswitching (Candra & Qodriani, 2019).

Functions and Reasons for Codeswitching

Codeswitching has become increasingly recognized as a valuable tool across various social settings (Cross, 2023). It allows for clearer engagement, strengthens social relationships, and improves language development, making it an essential skill for bilingual people (Cross, 2023); allows speakers to express emotions more effectively and enhances the delivery of messages across different cultural and social settings (Belani & Flanigan, 2023); helps bridge gaps and promotes effective learning in the academic setting (Temesgen & Hailu, 2022); serves to clarify concepts and to highlight important information, thereby supporting comprehension and enhancing the communicative competence of both teachers and learners (Estremera & Gilbas, 2022); fosters solidarity among students and improves task completion, ultimately contributing to more fluent classroom interactions (Kemaloğlu-Er & Özata, 2020); facilitates comprehension of new content (Mangila, 2018); plays a vital role in helping learners understand subject matter more effectively (Roxas, 2019); involves the use of terms from another language to express emotions and ideas, clarify meaning, demonstrate proficiency in language, convey speaker perspectives, show ethnic identity, promote solidarity, and maintain social roles such as authority, pride, and prestige (Dewi, 2021); addresses specific receivers, cites speech, indicates shifts in perspective, refines messages, reiterates for emphasis, and adds interjections (Jan-Petter & Gumperz, 2020); plays various functions, as quoting, specifying addressees, indicating emotions, emphasizing points, and ensuring efficient communication (Jones et al., 2024); clarifies, repeats, explains, questions, translates, comprehend, checks, highlights language features, makes inferences, expands vocabulary, engages discussions, gives feedback, supports memorization, manages classroom, and provides entertainment or general communication (Fachriyah, 2017).

Codeswitching in the Philippines

Codeswitching is not only a global linguistic practice but also widely observed in the Philippine context. The scholarly examination of codeswitching in the country can be traced back to one of the earliest documented studies by Azores (1967), as cited by Lising and Bautista (2022). In this pioneering work, Azores analyzed the frequency of English and Tagalog elements in *The Sun*, a biweekly newspaper, which is now recognized as the first print medium to capture Tagalog-English codeswitching in published form.

In contemporary times, the prevalence of codeswitching continues to expand across various domains, including advertising. Banatao and Malenab-Temporal (2018) observed that Filipino brands predominantly employ intra-sentential codeswitching—combining Filipino and English within the same sentence—in their advertisements. This linguistic strategy is used to advise, describe, explain, and illustrate concepts while simultaneously appealing to consumers' aspirations for modernity, efficiency, and self-expression. Notably, such advertisements often target young Filipino men by promoting images of hygiene, intellect, health, and an appealing lifestyle.

Furthermore, Liwanag and Labor (2016) reported that *Taglish*, a hybrid of Tagalog and English, is commonly used in everyday conversations, including academic discourse and classroom interactions. This linguistic blending is rooted in the historical positioning of English as a prestigious language, a lingering consequence of American colonial influence (Valerio, 2015). In a more critical perspective, Perez and Perez (2023) argued that codeswitching and language mixing, as influenced by Western culture, have led to a gradual erosion of Filipino cultural and linguistic identity. They noted that this transformation often reflects a rejection of traditional Filipino values and the diminishing use of native languages.

On a more favorable note, Masagnay (2020) emphasized that codeswitching serves

as a means for Filipinos to express their thoughts and emotions—whether intentionally or unconsciously. It has become so deeply embedded in everyday communication that avoiding it is often impractical, as it is now regarded as a normative linguistic behavior. *Taglish* represents a sociocultural evolution that continues to shape Philippine society. Supporting this view, Lesada (2019) pointed out that Filipinos frequently borrow terms, invent new words for emerging concepts, and incorporate local expressions in daily speech. This linguistic adaptability is generally viewed positively, as it reflects the nation's openness to diversity. However, some critics still perceive codeswitching as an indication of a limited vocabulary, despite its underlying creativity and cultural hybridity. Notably, codeswitching allows speakers to navigate across different social settings, enhancing both relatability and communicative efficiency.

More recently, codeswitching has become an integral part of both spoken and written language for many Filipinos, especially in situations that require the inclusion of loanwords. Esnara (2022), in his analysis of Tagalog short stories and novels, found that codeswitching often appears in informal conversations, particularly when casual topics are discussed. He also identified several motivations for codeswitching, such as the absence of appropriate native vocabulary for emphasis or conclusion. Moreover, codeswitching helps bridge generational divides, enabling older and younger Filipinos to communicate with greater ease. Morton (2014) further noted that one's speech reflects cultural background, as many older and educated Filipinos often prefer to use English in domestic settings rather than exclusively speaking Tagalog.

Hiligaynon Language

The Philippines boasts a highly diversified linguistic landscape, with 186 languages and 184 of which are still spoken, two are extinct (Eberhard & Mangulamas, 2022). Out of the languages in use, 175 are indigenous and 9 are non-indigenous. Hiligaynon is one of the

indigenous languages, an Austronesian language that is widely spoken in Western Visayas, and it serves as the major mode of communication (Deriada, 2015).

Hiligaynon is officially known as one of the eight major languages in the nation (Sales, 2022). The non-native speakers call Hiligaynon Ilonggo, although this is not the generally accepted term by native speakers (Pandapatan, 2022).

Outside the Western Visayas, Hiligaynon is also spoken extensively in the SOCCSKSARGEN region that comprises Sultan Kudarat, General Santos, Sarangani, Cotabato, and South Cotabato. It is the lingua franca in provinces like Negros Occidental and Iloilo, and it is spoken widely in media and public education (Martin, 2015). The language continues to have a strong presence in local media, such as local news, print media, and an active literary community of stories, poetry, and songs (Pilar, 2017). Hiligaynon belongs to the Bisayan subgroup of the Central Philippine languages and has linguistic affinities with Romblomanon (Romblon and Tablas Islands), Masbateño (Masbate), Samar-Leyte, and Waray (Lavalle-Alcudia et al., 2019). It is estimated that over nine million individuals within and outside the Philippines speak Hiligaynon as a native language, while another five million speakers have a high degree of fluency. This positions Hiligaynon as one of the country's largest ethnolinguistic groups, ranking after Ilokano, Cebuano, and Tagalog (Pilar, 2024).

Hiligaynon also has linguistic affinity with regional languages such as Kinaray-a (in Western Panay), Aklanon (Northern Panay), Capiñon (Eastern Panay), and Cebuano (Eastern Negros and the majority of Mindanao). In addition, it is marked by discernible English and Tagalog influence, the official languages of the Philippines (Gonzales, 2021). This multilingual environment influences how Hiligaynon is utilized in everyday life. Most Hiligaynon speakers are bilingual, often using English in their mother language to form hybrid words needed to explain different acts (Abrera, 2023). This integration of languages shows

the versatility of the speakers, illustrating their cultural adaptability and linguistic creativity.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Codeswitching in Hiligaynon Language

Table 1. *Inter-sentential Codeswitching in Hiligaynon Language*

Types of Codeswitching	Emblematic Quotes
Inter-sentential Switching	“Siling ni Nanay na magpuli ko dayun kag indi magpagab-e. Wala sya kabalo ugma pako sa buntag muuli.” [CS1] <i>(My mother told me that I should come home right away and not stay out late. She does not know I'll be coming home tomorrow morning.)</i>
	“Hulaton ta na maluto ang durian. Unahon nalang nato ug kaon ang mangga.” [CS8] <i>(Let's wait for the durian to ripen. We'll just eat the mango first.)</i>
	“Hiposa baba mo kay basin mabatian nila. I don't want any trouble.” [CS33] <i>(Keep your mouth shut, or they might hear you. I don't want any trouble.)</i>

Table 1 shows one type of codeswitching in Hiligaynon, the *inter-sentential switching*. Findings reveal that Ilonggo people code-switch through *inter-sentential switching*, which refers to the alternation of two languages in two separate sentences, where each sentence is in a different language.

The following shows inter-sentential switching in Hiligaynon:

“Siling ni Nanay na magpuli ko dayun kag indi magpagab-e. Wala sya kabalo ugma pako sa buntag muuli.”

[CS1]

(My mother told me that I should come home right away and not stay out late. She doesn't know I'll be coming home tomorrow morning.)

“Hulaton ta maluto ang durian. Unahon nalang nato ug kaon ang mangga” [CS8]

(Let's wait for the durian to ripen. We'll just eat the mango first.)

“Hiposa baba mo kay basin mabatian nila. I don't want any trouble.” [CS33]
(Keep your mouth shut, or they might hear you. I don't want any trouble.)

The first example illustrates inter-sentential switching between Hiligaynon and Bisaya/Cebuano. The initial sentence, “*Siling ni Nanay magpuli ko dayun kag indi magpagab-e*,” is in Hiligaynon, translated in English as - *My mother told me that I should come home right away and not stay out late*,” while the switch to Bisaya/Cebuano happens in the next sentence, “*Wala sya kabalo ugma pako sa buntag muuli*,” translated in English as -*She doesn't know I'll be coming home tomorrow morning*. The first example bears two languages with one complete sentence spoken in Hiligaynon, followed by a complete sentence in Bisaya/Cebuano.

More so, the second example demonstrates inter-sentential switching as it still seamlessly blends Bisaya/Cebuano and Hiligaynon in two distinct sentences. The first sentence, “*Hulaton ta na maluto ang durian*,” is in Hiligaynon, translated in English as “*Let's wait for the durian to ripen*,” while the second, “*Unahon nalang nato ug kaon ang mangga*,” is in Bisaya/Cebuano, translated in English as “*We'll just eat the mango first*.”

The third statement is also an example of an inter-sentential switching since the speaker uses Hiligaynon in one sentence and then switches to another language in the next sentence. The first sentence, “*Hiposa baba mo kay basin mabatian nila*,” is a complete sentence written entirely in Hiligaynon, translated in English as “*Keep your mouth shut, or they might hear you*,” while the second sentence, “*I don't want any trouble*,” is spoken in English.

Based on the statements, Hiligaynon speakers used inter-sentential switching to express ideas effectively, especially for emphasizing points, clarifying speech, or maintaining privacy. Danaparamita (2016) stated that this switching enhanced speech

clarity. Muthusamy et al. (2020) noted that it helped manage social interactions and protect conversations from unintended listeners. Mabule (2017) added that inter-sentential switching was used in daily conversations to improve clarity, exclude certain listeners, and demonstrate multilingual proficiency.

Table 2. *Codeswitching in Hiligaynon Language*

Types of Codeswitching	Emblematic Quotes
Inter-sentential Switching	Bakal anay sang cheese didto sa tindahan. [CS4] (Buy some cheese at the store first.)
	Durupan mo ka cellphone da kag mag reklamo nga ga sakit ulo mo. [CS3] (Go ahead and use your cellphone and complain that you have a headache.)
	Buot gid ang resellers sang ila nga mga products. [CS44] (The resellers of their products are very kind.)

Table 2 shows another type of codeswitching in Hiligaynon -the *intra-sentential switching* which happens within a sentence, where a word or phrase switches to the speaker's secondary language. This is often done by Hiligaynon speakers to create semantically and syntactically coherent sentences.

The following statements exemplify intra-sentential switching in Hiligaynon:

“Bakal anay sang cheese didto sa tindahan.” [CS4]

(Buy some cheese at the store first.)

“Durupan mo ka cellphone da kag mag reklamo nga ga sakit ulo mo.” [CS3]

(Go ahead and use your cellphone and complain that you have a headache.)

“Buot gid ang resellers sang ila nga mga products.” [CS44]

(The resellers of their products are very kind.)

The first statement above is an

example of intra-sentential switching. The highlighted word *-cheese* is in English, while the rest of the words were in Hiligaynon. The switch is done at a lexical level only and happens without interruptions, like a pause or a comma.

The second statement also demonstrates intra-sentential switching. Notice that most of the words are in Hiligaynon, with the English term *-cellphone* added in the middle. This insertion of an English term in a Hiligaynon statement is referred to as an intra-sentential switching. This usually happens when there is no translation of the words in the other language/or to compensate for untranslatable vocabulary.

In the third example, the switching occurs twice in the sentence. The words *-resellers* and *-products* are English terms inserted among Hiligaynon words. This shows that intra-sentential switching can happen at different positions within a sentence, both in the middle, with *resellers*, and at the end, with *products*.

These examples demonstrate the dominance of Hiligaynon among its speakers, who typically switched only one or two words per utterance. This indicates that when speakers struggle to find the right words in one language, they switch to another to communicate their message clearly while keeping grammatical accuracy. For Suhardianto and Afriana (2022), a lack of vocabulary or exact translations prompted intra-sentential codeswitching when speakers could not find specific words in their native language. Moreover, Ningrum and Harida (2021) added that aside from the speaker's limited vocabulary, this phenomenon comes from the speaker's spontaneity in expressing ideas, as well as challenges related to sentence construction, pronunciation, fear of making mistakes, and the need for simpler expression of thoughts.

Table 3. Codeswitching in Hiligaynon Language

Types of Codeswitching	Emblematic Quotes
Inter-sentential Switching	Paki-off ko bala sang suga. [CS23] (Please turn off the light.)
	Gin-buksan ko na ang regalo. [CS25] (I opened the gift.)
	Na-delete ko to kay bal-an ko mangakig ka sakon. [CS34] (I deleted it because I knew you would be mad at me.)

Table 3 shows the third type of codeswitching in the Hiligaynon language - *intra-word switching*. It is a switching where the speaker mixes different language elements within a single word, typically at the morpheme boundaries. This switch involves blending elements (e.g., a root and an affix) from different languages within a single word to create a hybrid term. The following statements illustrate intra-word switching in Hiligaynon:

Paki-off ko bala sang suga. [CS23]
(Please turn off the light.)

Gin-buksan ko na ang regalo. [CS25]
(I opened the gift.)

Na-delete ko to kay bal-an ko mangakig ka sakon. [CS34]
(I deleted it because I knew you would be mad at me.)

In the first example, the term *paki-off* is an example of intra-word switching. It combines a Hiligaynon prefix *paki-* with the English word *-off*. The prefix *-paki* (*please*) is used in Hiligaynon to express a polite request or desire, while *-off* comes from the English phrasal verb *-switch off*, which indicates turning something off. This integration of English into the Hiligaynon prefix demonstrates how intra-word switching occurs on a lexical level in a bilingual context.

In the second statement, the term *gin-buksan* is an example of intra-word switching as it incorporates a

Filipino/Tagalog word, *'buksan'*, into a Hiligaynon construction. The prefix *gin-* is from Hiligaynon, while *'buksan'* is a Filipino/Tagalog verb meaning *-to open*. By combining these elements within a single word, *'gin-buksan'* shows intra-word switching, where components from different languages are integrated to form a hybrid term that conveys action.

In the third example, the term *-na-delete* in the statement exemplifies intra-word switching as it blends Hiligaynon and English elements within a single word. The prefix *-na* is in Hiligaynon, indicating a completed action in the past, while *-delete* is an English word incorporated into the same word or at a lexical level. This switching occurs within a word, merging Hiligaynon prefix with an English word to create a hybrid expression.

The sample statements above show that intra-word switching is also practiced by Hiligaynon speakers for factors or reasons to emphasize an action or to convey specific meanings more effectively. Hiligaynon speakers create hybrid terms that blend familiar grammatical structures with words from another language for functional purposes. This allows for smoother communication and a more flexible expression of ideas.

Moreover, this switching of languages is often influenced by context, helping speakers to express actions or intentions more clearly (Stefanich et al., 2019). Lopez-Banuag (2020), who studied forms and reasons of codeswitching in Facebook posts, stated that intra-word switching occurs when a vernacular prefix is combined with an English base word, typically a verb or noun, to make it function as a verb or express action.

Table 4. Codeswitching in Hiligaynon Language

Types of Codeswitching	Emblematic Quotes
	Relax! Indi pa katapusan sang mundo kung mabagsak ta sa quiz. [CS26] (<i>Relax! It's not the end of the world if we fail the quiz.</i>)
Inter-sentential Switching	Nagkadto kamo sa banwa ligad adlaw, right? [CS27] (<i>You went to town yesterday, right?</i>) Wow! Nami-nami bayo niya ba. [CS29] (<i>Wow! Her dress is really nice.</i>)

Table 4 shows the fourth and last type of codeswitching in Hiligaynon language - *tag switching*. It is where tags, fillers, or interjections from one language are inserted into sentences in another language. This type of codeswitching is extremely common and often perceived as trendy, particularly among younger generations, who adopt this practice to align with contemporary linguistic norms. These switches are very brief and often involve adding tag questions or exclamations. Such tag phrases can be freely removed without affecting the overall meaning of the statement or breaking the syntactic rules of the sentence.

Tag switching in Hiligaynon is demonstrated in the following statements.

Relax! Indi pa katapusan sang mundo kung mabagsak ta sa quiz. [CS26]
(*Relax! It's not the end of the world if we fail the quiz.*)
Nagkadto kamo sa banwa ligad adlaw, right? [CS27]
(*You went to town yesterday, right?*)
Wow! Nami-nami bayo niya ba. [CS29]
(*Wow! Her dress is really nice.*)

The first example above is tag switching. It incorporates the English exclamation -*Relax!* Into the Hiligaynon sentence. The word '*Relax!*' serves to add an exclamatory tone, which can be freely removed without altering the core message of

the statement.

The second example shows Hiligaynon-English tag switching, where the English tag '*right?*' is used for seeking clarity or confirmation from the listener. This adds an English element to the Hiligaynon sentence, functioning like a tag question. It is commonly used in spoken language to create an informal tone.

The last example demonstrates tag switching as it incorporates the English interjection -*Wow!* At the beginning of a Hiligaynon sentence. In this case, '*Wow!*' serves as a tag that adds emphasis or emotion, while the rest of the sentence remains in Hiligaynon, demonstrating how speakers use brief language switches to enhance expression.

The examples indicate that Hiligaynon speakers practice tag switching for various linguistic and sociocultural purposes, such as seeking confirmation or emphasizing a point. This practice also demonstrates the adaptability of bilingual individuals as they navigate different social contexts. Ameka and Wilkins (2016) noted that tag switching usually involves standalone interjections expressing emotions or reactions. Yunita and Suryani (2019) added that tags like -*so*-, -*wow*-, and -*right* serve a phatic function, highlighting key information. This blending makes communication more conversational and engaging.

These findings imply that codeswitching serves as a reflection of the complex linguistic environment in Kidapawan City, where Hiligaynon speakers or Ilonggo people navigate multiple languages to fulfill communicative needs. The consistent alignment with previous studies indicates that codeswitching is influenced by emotional expression, cultural identity, language exposure, and educational background. It highlights how bilingual and multilingual speakers adapt their language use based on context, audience, and purpose. This suggests that codeswitching is a natural outcome of linguistic contact and coexistence, particularly in settings where

multiple languages are present and carry varying degrees of prestige and function.

The results of this study on Hiligaynon codeswitching in Kidapawan City run parallel with the results of Jones et al. (2024), which revealed that Hiligaynon speakers commonly codeswitch to express emotions, emphasize points, and enhance communication. Bilingual Hiligaynon speakers used codeswitching to convey cultural nuances and emotions, highlighting its crucial role in achieving specific goals in various social contexts. Jones et al. (2024) also emphasized the importance of understanding codeswitching in language teaching and learning, as it reflects the dynamic and social nature of bilingual communication.

This study also aligns with the study of Smolak et al. (2020), which found that language exposure and proficiency influence codeswitching behavior. Based on the sample statements, Hiligaynon speakers naturally codeswitch due to the presence and exposure to various languages in the Philippines, including English, Cebuano, and Tagalog/Filipino. The switching is influenced by the context, comfort level, and lexical need. By using a second language, Hiligaynon speakers enhance their speech's impact and communicate more effectively.

The results of this study are also in conformance with Villanueva and Bert (2023), who found that continuing intellectualization of Philippine languages and the bilingual education policies contribute to the prevalence of codeswitching. This study shows that while Hiligaynon is the primary language of the Ilonggo people, the emphasis on Filipino as the national language and English for international communication may lead to more frequent codeswitching. As a result, in educational settings, Hiligaynon speakers may alternate between their native language, Filipino, and English based on the context or subject.

Dominant Type of Codeswitching in Hiligaynon Language

Table 5. *Dominant Type of Codeswitching in Hiligaynon Language*

Types of Codeswitching	Frequency of Occurrence	Number of Utterances	Percentage
Intra-sentential Switching	General	27	54%
Inter-sentential Switching	Variant	12	24%
Intra-word Switching	Variant	6	12%
Tag Switching	Variant	5	10%
Total		50	100%

Legend:

General 41% and above

Typical 26%-40%

Variant 25% and below

Table 5 presents the dominant type of codeswitching in Hiligaynon language. This qualitative study used NVivo to organize, code, and analyze interview data to identify the dominant types of codeswitching in Hiligaynon. NVivo, as explained by Dhakal (2022), is a software designed for managing and analyzing non-numeric data by creating nodes, managing metadata, and generating visual patterns and themes. A legend based on the Consensual Qualitative Research Categorization by Hill et al. (2005) was used to group observed patterns into meaningful categories. Codeswitching types were classified as general (41% and above), typical (26%–40%), and variant (25% and below) based on their frequency.

Results revealed that intra-sentential switching is the most dominant type of codeswitching, accounting for 27 utterances or 54% of all cases, and has a frequent occurrence. Subsequently, inter-sentential switching is the second most common, representing 12 utterances or 24%, and occurs occasionally. Intra-word switching follows with 6 or 12% and occurs less frequently. Finally, tag switching is the least frequent, comprising 5 utterances or 10%, and has a variant frequency of occurrence.

This dominance of intra-sentential switching reflects the prevalence of bilingualism among Hiligaynon speakers,

suggesting proficiency in both Hiligaynon and other languages like English, Tagalog/Filipino, and Cebuano. This fluency allows them to blend elements from different languages within a single sentence, influenced by cultural and social factors, to enhance communication. Additionally, this implies that for Ilonggo people, the flexibility and immediacy of intra-sentential switching make it a preferred choice in dynamic conversations, helping them overcome challenges in expressing ideas and addressing limited vocabulary.

The results of this study align with Abrera (2023), who also identified intra-sentential codeswitching as the most dominant type. Examining fifty instances of codeswitching in Hiligaynon, this study found that 27 (54%) were intra-sentential, often featuring English words seamlessly integrated into Hiligaynon sentences. Abrera further affirmed that this type is typical among speakers with high bilingual proficiency, as they skillfully alternate between languages while maintaining grammatical accuracy. According to her, key factors influencing this behavior include word loss, exposure to multiple languages, comfort, and unfamiliarity with equivalent native terms.

CONCLUSION

This qualitative study reveals that codeswitching is a common and significant linguistic practice among Hiligaynon speakers or Ilonggo people in Kidapawan City, Philippines. It is influenced by a range of social, cultural, and practical factors, allowing speakers to navigate various communicative situations and connect more effectively with diverse audiences. Through a qualitative-descriptive approach, this study identified four types of codeswitching structure in the Hiligaynon language: inter-sentential switching, intra-sentential switching, intra-word switching, and tag switching. These patterns show the bilingual or multilingual proficiency of the speakers and their ability to smoothly blend languages depending on context.

The findings reveal that Hiligaynon speakers or Ilonggo people code-switch to address gaps in vocabulary, emphasize ideas, clarify thoughts, and adopt a more natural or conversational tone. Beyond linguistic convenience, this practice also functions as a means of maintaining group identity, expressing emotions, and demonstrating adaptability in social interactions. The frequent integration of words or expressions from other languages, like English, Tagalog/Filipino, and Cebuano, shows how speakers draw from their linguistic resources to communicate more effectively and meaningfully.

Considering the aforementioned findings, researchers may focus on specific types of codeswitching, such as inter-sentential, intra-sentential, intra-word, or tag switching, to analyze their unique structures and social functions. Examining each type in depth and within distinct communication settings could uncover subtle patterns and contribute to a more focused understanding of how and why language shifts occur.

Additionally, future studies may explore intergenerational codeswitching by comparing how older and younger Ilonggo speakers use Hiligaynon alongside other languages. Such comparisons could provide insights into shifting language preferences, fluency levels, and expressions of identity across generations. Expanding the scope of research beyond Kidapawan City and into other ethnolinguistic communities may also help identify regional variations in codeswitching practices.

Finally, investigating codeswitching in diverse contexts such as digital communication, education, workplaces, or religious activities can reveal how language choice aligns with purpose and audience. Pursuing these directions can enrich our understanding of codeswitching as both a linguistic phenomenon and a reflection of cultural and communicative adaptability.

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