

The Age of Screens: Investigating the Influence of Screen Media on the Language Choice and Identity Construction of Primary Grade Learners

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Abstract. This study aimed to explore the impact of mobile screen media on the language choice and identity construction of primary-grade learners. A descriptive research design was used, and five primary-grade students aged 6-11 from Iligan City were interviewed. One-on-one interviews were conducted to gather data. Findings indicate that the language profile of the participants included a mix of English, Tagalog, and Bisaya languages, with English being the primary language used at school and home. Factors influencing language choice included the languages spoken by those around them, the prestige of English, and exposure to media and gadgets. Screen media exposure positively and negatively affected children's self-perception: it enhanced their understanding of different cultures and sense of worth. It fostered cross-cultural identities and made some feel estranged from their families and peers. The findings underscore the importance of recognizing the quality and nature of interactions between children and screen media.

Keywords: Identity construction; Language choice; Primary grade learners; Screen media.

1.0 Introduction

In recent years, the introduction of mobile screen media into everyday life has significantly impacted primary-grade learners' language use and identities. This phenomenon has had far-reaching consequences on how children learn and interact. Mobile devices have allowed children to access information more quickly and efficiently. This prompts them to adopt new language practices that are often at odds with traditional practices and educational methods. For example, children learn through in-person lectures, textbooks, and assignments. However, with the introduction of mobile devices, children have adopted new language practices. These include language learning platforms and mobile apps. As such, it is essential to consider how these changes may influence the development of a child's language choice and identity formation.

According to (Neumann & Neumann, 2013), students in this age group are increasingly exposed to digital devices such as tablets, computers, smartphones, and video games. Hence, mobile technology is transforming how learners interact and express themselves linguistically (Hutchison et al., 2012). Moreover, mobile screen media's influence on young people's language goes beyond its use for entertainment purposes. For example, many children are developing their literacy skills by writing stories and creating content with the help of apps such as iMovie or Toontastic 3D (Sullivan et al., 2019). Furthermore, mobile devices provide access to social networks where users can converse with their peers (Phuangsuwan et al., 2023). As a result, these digital platforms may affect language use by primary-grade learners due to their constant exposure.

According to one study by Hu (2018), there is a growing trend for young people aged 8-13 to develop multiple online personas across social networking sites such as Facebook and Twitter. As a result, this age group develops an awareness of how words can be used differently on different platforms to shape their identity according to their desired audience. For example, Maurya et al. (2022) mention that excessive exposure to digital media may lead to increased communication use of abbreviations or short phrases. Likewise, Wilson (2018) notes that overuse of social media affects students' conventional way of writing. His research found that students' excessive usage of social media platforms such as WhatsApp, Twitter, and Facebook affects their spelling ability, especially when writing examinations and letters.

Furthermore, mobile screens may also influence how children create and perceive their identities. Children may be exposed to images or messages that inform how they view themselves and others as they explore different media types on their devices (Dezuanni, 2018). For instance, a child's slang words or phrases could be influenced by what they see or hear from apps or videos online (Hilton et al., 2016). In addition, Thomas and Laycock (2018) found that media consumption can shape gender roles. They further argued that through mobile devices, adolescents often engage in activities such as playing mobile games, which emphasize traditional gender stereotypes.

Shibuya et al. (2017) found that increased access to technology allows young people to experiment with various aspects of identity through role-playing games or creating avatars in virtual worlds. This exploration allows children to express themselves freely without being judged or constrained by traditional expectations from family or peers, which may have previously limited them. Digital media can certainly have its downsides, mainly when it is used indiscriminately by young people. Although research has demonstrated that mobile screen media can improve literacy skills among children (Furió et al., 2014), studies have found that too much time spent on smart devices is causing problems in several areas of children's development. For instance, according to Mackson et al. (2019), children may experience inappropriate behaviors such as cyberbullying or trolling as they interact with each other. As such, these activities may lead to a negative self-image among primary-grade students, which can affect their use of language.

It is clear from these studies that media exposure can have a significant impact on primary-grade learners' choice of language and identities. This impact can be seen in language skills and how children define themselves. The dualistic effect of computerized screen media and its relationship with language use and identities have prompted exploration. It is jarring to see children suddenly glued to mobile screens that fit into their hands due to its ubiquity and accessibility. Likewise, it is also alarming to see children navigate the digital space with little to no parental supervision. Specifically, this research focused on how screen media shapes primary-grade learners' communicative behavior in terms of their choice of language and the factors of such choice. At the same time, this study also examined how these choices affect the children's construction of their identities.

This study is significant because it timely explores the dualistic effects of screen media on primary-grade learners' language use and identity formation. This research addresses an urgent need to comprehend how these digital tools are reshaping fundamental aspects of children's development. Such understanding is essential for parents, educators, and policymakers to develop informed strategies that support healthy language acquisition and positive identity construction in an increasingly digital world.

2.0 Methodology

2.1 Research Design

The study used qualitative descriptive research to explore how mobile screen media shapes primary-grade learners' language choices and identities. To accomplish this, one-on-one interviews with primary-grade learners were conducted. The interview audio recordings served as a tool for collecting data about how mobile screen media has influenced the participants' language choice and identity formation.

2.2 Research Locale

Five primary-grade learners aged 6-11 from Iligan City participated in the study. They were selected using convenience non-probability sampling, precisely the snowball technique.

2.3 Research Participants

Before selecting the participants, a thorough selection process was conducted to ensure that only those individuals who met specific criteria were chosen for inclusion in the study. Participants should have access to a touchscreen device like a tablet computer or smartphone for at least 2 hours daily. The study only applies to children who use touchscreen devices for more than the recommended maximum amount of time (i.e., two hours for older children) set by the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP). Participants must not have any known cognitive disability that would impair their ability to understand or respond accurately to interview questions.

Guardians must also provide consent for their children's participation in this study. The researcher requested that the guardians be present during the interview so their children would feel supported and comfortable. In addition, all participants need to possess sufficient language skills to comprehend questions and express meaningful responses without hesitation or difficulty. This is necessary for the participants to provide clear answers during the study about how mobile screen media influences their language choice and identity formation.

2.4 Research Instrument

The researcher conducted one-on-one interviews with students in primary grades. The data collection focused on exploring how participants' language choice is affected by their experiences with mobile devices such as tablets and smartphones. During these interviews, participants described their typical experiences interacting with mobile devices.

2.5 Data Gathering Procedure

Before the interview, the researcher introduced herself to the children and explained why she was conducting the study. Then, the researcher asked the participants open-ended questions about their mobile screen media use. Likewise, the researcher asked more specific questions to probe further and explore any particular points that arose during the interview. Questions were asked in English. Moreover, some questions were modified and adapted according to the participant's level of understanding, age, preference, and other factors determined by the researcher to ensure comprehension. Each interview lasted approximately 30 minutes over one day to maximize accuracy and obtain meaningful information. During the interview, the researcher refrained from imposing her views upon the participants and allowed them to express themselves freely. Lastly, all interviews were audio recorded so that responses could quickly be transcribed and reviewed later for further analysis.

2.6 Data Analysis

The researcher employed thematic analysis outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006) to ensure a rigorous analysis of the qualitative data collected from the interviews. All audio-recorded interviews were transcribed verbatim to capture the participants' exact words. Non-verbal cues and pauses were also noted where relevant. The researcher thoroughly read and re-read the transcripts to familiarize the content. Notes and observations were also made in the margins to capture early impressions and significant points.

Afterward, data were significantly coded by identifying meaningful segments of text related to the research questions. The codes were examined for patterns and grouped into potential themes that reflected the emerging ideas from the data. The initial themes were reviewed and refined by checking them against the coded data extracts and the entire data set. Based on this review, some themes were combined, separated, or discarded. The researcher ensured that each theme specified what aspect of the data it captured and how it related to the research questions. Likewise, sub-themes were also identified to provide a detailed understanding. The final themes were used to structure the findings in the Results and Discussion sections. Direct quotations from participants were included to illustrate each theme and were used to provide evidence for the interpretations. Such analysis was linked to the research questions and existing literature to contextualize the findings.

2.7 Ethical Considerations

The researcher endeavored to adhere to ethical considerations. Entry protocols, such as disseminating letters and informed consent forms, were sent to the participant's parents or guardians. Their participation was voluntary, and they were informed of their right to withdraw should they feel uncomfortable. They were also assured that the audio recordings would be kept confidential and that their names remain anonymous. To ensure privacy, no

real names were used in this study. Lastly, the researcher made earnest efforts to prevent physical or psychological harm to the child participants.

3.0 Results and Discussion

3.1 The Language Profile of the Participants

Table 1 summarizes the participants' demographic information and language use.

Table 1. Participants' demographic information and language use

Participant	Age	Gender	Languages Spoken	Language Used at Home	Language Used at School
Catalina	7	Female	English	English	English
Inigo	10	Male	English	English	English
Sam	9	Male	English	English	English
Dani	7	Female	English, Bisaya	English, Bisaya	Bisaya
Lexi	11	Female	English	English	English

The Languages Spoken

Most participants in this study were exposed to both English and Bisaya, their primary languages. Bisaya is commonly spoken in their locale, while English is an educational requirement. The participants used these languages interchangeably depending on the audience and context. It should be noted that some participants also had limited exposure to either language due to certain social and cultural factors. These include living with non-English-speaking relatives or attending schools where regional languages (e.g., Bisaya) predominate.

Regarding literacy, most participants have basic reading abilities in Tagalog and English, although they vary between grade levels. Notably, some need help reading and speaking the Bisaya language. At home, most participants read more often in English than in Tagalog books. However, it should be noted that television shows, books, mobile applications and games, and movies that feature content from English and Tagalog languages were part of their daily lives. Additionally, there were significant differences between genders. Male children used more direct phrases with less sophisticated words, while female participants used more complex syntaxes and sophisticated vocabulary. Overall, the language profile of primary-grade learners reflects an environment influenced by multiple languages, which can impact their identity formation and language choice.

The Language Use at Home

For 7-year-old Catalina, her mother proactively encourages and strongly emphasizes speaking English. Catalina studies in a private school in Iligan City, where most subjects are taught in English. It could be argued that the mother sees English as having a higher prestige or utility than other languages spoken at home.

"Mom always speaks to me in English. She also wants my baby brother to speak in English."

In the Philippines, using English in the home setting is becoming increasingly popular. According to Chavez (2022), proficiency in English is believed to lead to better educational opportunities and greater social mobility. English is also seen as a status symbol and means of upward social climbing within Philippine society (Tollefson, 2000). As such, many parents, including Catalina's, may encourage their children to use English at home to gain access to these potential benefits.

It might also be argued that using English at home allows for more effective communication between family members with different native languages (Puripunyanich & Soontornwipast, 2018). With so much ethnic diversity among Filipinos, dialects and even unique vocabularies across different regions often vary. Therefore, having everyone speak the same language—in this case, English—may be beneficial as it allows for more efficient communication without confusion.

The Language Used at School

Inigo, a 10-year-old boy, attends a private school. His teachers communicate with him in English, highlighting the importance of language use and fluency in determining a student's academic success.

"My teacher speaks to me in English all the time."

The use of English in schools is a prominent issue among Filipino children. The language has a long history of being used as a tool for social mobility and economic success in the country. English has been grafted into local customs, creating an ever-changing internationalized version unique to the Philippines. Moreover, it has also become a symbol of national pride and identity, allowing Filipinos to conduct business and communication on a global level. This is especially true for 10-year-old Inigo, who is at the forefront of this shift. However, despite the perceived benefits of learning English, there are also some drawbacks. For instance, this may negatively impact other language subjects, such as Filipino. Inigo mentioned that he finds the Filipino subject difficult.

"I find Filipino subjects difficult. Sometimes I get confused."

Inigo's statement, "I get confused," may suggest that he does not fully understand the material being taught in class. This can negatively affect his academic progress and overall success in school. It considers the importance of promoting English proficiency and preserving the national Filipino language.

Using English as the primary language of school instruction has long been a contentious issue in the Philippines. While some individuals argue that children must learn English to gain an advantage in the globalized world, research suggests that frequent use of English by young Filipino children can have a variety of adverse effects.

First, the extensive use of English at school may limit the development of fluency and proficiency in Filipino languages, especially in Inigo. Quoting Chureson (2013), "The more time students spend using English at school, the less time they spend learning and using Philippine languages." This phenomenon is relevant for Bisayan speakers who are already disadvantaged regarding access to formal education due to their limited fluency in Filipino languages (Magno & Veloso-Lorenzo, 2017). Furthermore, even among those who do not have difficulty speaking Tagalog, native speakers still have fewer opportunities to practice their language skills, mainly when teachers use exclusively English instruction (Martin, 2018).

3.2 Factors Affecting Language Choice

Language is an integral part of a child's development. Children begin developing their communicative and language capabilities from the earliest stages. However, what are the primary factors that influence a child's language choice in these early years? This question forms the basis for exploring the factors that can shape a child's language ability during primary school. Table 2 provides a detailed summary of these factors and the participants most influenced by each.

Table 2. Factors Influencing Participants' Language Choice

Factor	Description	Participants Affected
Languages Spoken by Surroundings	Children adopt languages used by family and peers	Sam, Dani
Prestige of English Language	English associated with social status and opportunities	Sam, Inigo
Exposure to Media and Gadgets	Media consumption in English influences language acquisition	Catalina, Lexi
Personal Language Preference	Individual motivation or readiness to learn a language	Sam

The Languages Spoken by the People Around Them

This quote is from a 9-year-old boy named Sam. He was raised by his single mother, who is an English teacher. Sam may have grown up in an environment where the Bisaya language was not prevalent or hardly spoken. Bisaya is widely spoken in Mindanao, especially in his locale, but it is interesting to note that it was not prevalent in Sam's environment in his early childhood. This could also be explained by his mother's upbringing, noting that she is Sam's primary English teacher and caregiver.

"Nobody spoke Bisaya next to me when I was a kid."

Jackson and Hoff-Ginsberg (2005) argue that parental language plays a fundamental role in their children's cultural, linguistic, and cognitive development. Parents play a significant role in developing and maintaining their children's mother tongue and cultural identity. They further suggest that parents exposed to English use it when communicating with their children. This shows parents' pivotal role in influencing their children's language development.

It has been observed that many Filipino parents tend to prefer English over Tagalog or other regional languages when speaking with their children at home (Ledesma & Morris, 2005). One of the driving forces behind this trend can be attributed to the rise in immigration and globalization in recent decades. This has reinforced the value of English as a global lingua franca (House, 2012). Another factor contributing to this shift is that English is used as a medium of instruction in schools and universities throughout the Philippines (Gonzalez, 1998). This incentivizes parents to speak English at home so their children's education may be supported early.

In addition, Lim-Ramos et al. (2020) argue that Filipino parents believe that teaching their children English is a ticket and an investment to their future academic and economic success. Since knowing multiple languages can open up new opportunities for employment and financial stability, many Filipino families want to give their children these advantages by introducing them to English during the early stages of development. Furthermore, speaking Tagalog and English could give Filipino youth an edge when pursuing higher education or professional development outside the Philippines (Watzke et al., 2022).

The Prestige of the English Language

The monolingual Sam spends much of his time playing mobile games and watching movies in English. This indicates a deep connection to the language and cultural content. Sam values the prestige of the English language over his heritage. The quote shows that he may identify more with English culture or values than his ethnicity. This reflects how English has become a symbol of pride and identity.

"Even if I have black hair, I have an English soul inside me."

Several factors can affect the language chosen by Filipino children. One of the most significant is the prestige associated with different languages. Schroeder et al. (2022) state that prestige is essential to language choice. It can determine whether or not a given language is considered socially desirable. For example, it is believed that English generally carries more prestige among Filipino children than other languages due to its status as an international lingua franca. Further, it is also used in many domains, such as education and business (Lopez-Carranza, 2010). Filipino children are highly motivated to learn and use English (De Guzman et al., 2017).

Furthermore, the government and educational institutions in the Philippines have heavily promoted English. The government has invested significantly in English language teaching and learning initiatives over the last few decades (Tupas, 2003). Likewise, educational institutions have adopted an 'English First' policy, which privileges English over other languages (Kirkpatrick, 2012). All in all, these factors have made English more accessible and desirable among Filipino children.

Exposure to Media and Gadgets

Catalina, a grade one student, grew up in a household where Western TV shows, news, songs, and movies are the norm. Even at a young age, she can access smartphones and tablets, and she frequently watches TikTok and YouTube in English. The quote shows how Catalina acquired the English language primarily through exposure to English-language media during her early childhood. This highlights the role of media in facilitating language acquisition and development.

"I never knew it [Bisaya or Filipino language]. Because, as a baby, I only watch English stuff. That is why I learned about the language, English."

Children's exposure to different languages, particularly media and gadgets, is far-reaching. According to González (2001), children are often more receptive to the language they hear constantly. This means they are more likely to absorb the language when they hear it frequently. Hence, the language children are exposed to through these mediums can heavily influence their choice of language.

When children are exposed regularly to a particular language, such as television programs or mobile applications, their ability to comprehend and use that language increases; such is the case for Catalina. The widespread use of media and gadgets featuring English as the primary language presents benefits and drawbacks for these young learners. The increased exposure indeed ensures that Philippine youth obtain a high level of proficiency in English.

However, without sufficient input from other languages – such as Tagalog or Bisaya – there is a risk that these languages could become minimized or even neglected within Philippine culture (Melanie et al., 2022).

A Preference for One Language over Another

Even though the Bisaya language is commonly spoken in his locale, Sam has had limited exposure to it. Although he shows interest in learning the said language, he feels he is not yet ready or prepared. For some, learning a new language can be an exciting experience. However, for others, it can be challenging. Regardless of the reasons, this statement shows the role of preference and motivation in language learning.

"Because I never know the language (Bisaya). I want to learn it, but I do not think I am ready yet."

Language preference among children is a significant factor that affects language choice. This also leads to the development of an individual's identity. According to Alshehri (2023b), an individual's language skills and usage development can impact his sense of self and ability to express his identity and ideas. Hence, when presented with multiple languages, an individual will tend to gravitate towards certain ones due to comfort level or perceived difficulty in learning. Hence, preference for a particular language over others plays a critical role in influencing Filipino children's choice of language.

3.3 Children's Perceptions of Identity and Screen Media Influence

With the rise of mobile phones, tablets, and other digital media devices, children are exposed to more screen time than ever before. While these devices can offer various educational opportunities for young learners, there is growing concern about how these technologies may affect and shape children's identities. Table 3 summarizes how participants' interaction with screen media has shaped their perceptions of their identities. The table aims to provide a concise overview of the dual role of screen media.

Table 3. Children's Perceptions of Identity and Screen Media Influence

Participant	Influence of Screen Media	Perception of Identity
Dani	Exposure to Bisaya through family	Feels prettier when speaking Bisaya; desires to conform
Lexi	Interest in Korean media	Drawn to Korean culture; adopts cultural elements
Inigo	Association of English with success	Feels proud and intelligent due to English proficiency
Sam	Identification with English culture	Views language as core to identity; may feel isolated

Shapes Understanding of their Own and Different Cultures

Dani is a 7-year-old first grader at a public school. Born and raised in a multilingual household, Dani was exposed to both English and Bisaya languages by her parents. However, with both parents working, she spends most of her time with her grandmother. Dani shared that her grandmother uses both languages but uses Bisaya most of the time, especially when scolding her. Dani is surrounded by teachers and classmates who speak in Bisaya. They also have other language subjects, such as Mother Tongue and Filipino. This makes Dani aware that speaking Bisaya is considered the norm or the typical behavior in her community. The quote shows that Dani wants to conform to this norm and actively chooses what language to use based on social cues and expectations. This highlights the dynamic nature of a child's sense of self, shaped by the social and cultural context in which they live.

"I sometimes speak in Bisaya because I want to act like normal people do."

Dani grew up in a multilingual environment, with her grandmother primarily caring for her. Dani likewise mentioned that when her grandmother is happy with her, the latter showers her with praises in Bisaya, such as "*gwapa*" (beautiful) and "*nindot*" (nice). Dani's close relationship with her grandmother has led her to see her as a role model, which may have impacted Dani's self-identity and language preferences. The quote shows that Dani has formed a positive emotional association with speaking Bisaya. Moreover, that she perceives herself as more attractive when speaking the language. This may be due to her being close to her grandmother and constantly hearing praises from Bisaya. Further, the quoted statement shows that Dani may prefer speaking Bisaya but speaks in English because it is her dominant language, which is spoken in her upbringing.

"But when I speak in Bisaya, it makes me feel that I am even prettier. I love Bisaya. I like speaking Bisaya a lot, but most of the time, I speak English because I grew up speaking in English."

Gal (2021) and Gumperz (1982) note that language and identity are closely related. They further argue that individuals have multiple identities associated with different languages. In the case of Dani, her identity appears to be shaped by her experiences with different languages. For example, her experiences in speaking Bisaya are associated with positive emotions. Likewise, her experiences in speaking English are tied to her upbringing. This implies that identity construction is complex and multi-faceted, as many factors influence it. Moreover, the statement forwards the complexity of the language-attitude relationship, which explains the relationship between individuals' language use and their attitudes toward the language (Giles et al., 1977). Dani may have a positive attitude towards Bisaya and may feel more attracted to speaking it, but the fact that she grew up speaking in English makes her use it more often than Bisaya.

Lexi is an 11-year-old girl and a fifth grader. She is an avid fan of Korean dramas and enjoys watching Mukbang videos on YouTube in her free time. She has learned some Korean phrases and often gushes over her favorite Korean dramas on Netflix. Although she grew up in a different cultural background, Lexi is drawn to some unique aspects of Korean culture, such as Mukbang. The quoted statement shows that Lexi is interested in the cultural phenomenon of Mukbang, a popular trend in South Korea where individuals record themselves eating large amounts of food. This also implies that she recognizes that Mukbang is particularly popular in South Korea and that the trend is associated with that culture.

"I love watching Mukbang videos on YouTube. The Koreans are fond of doing it."

The research of Elseewi (2015) and Cho (2017) shows that media consumption can impact individuals' perceptions of other cultures and how this can encourage them to adopt specific trends. This can also play a role in shaping their cultural identity. In Lexi's case, she became interested in learning more about South Korean culture through watching Mukbang videos and Korean dramas. This is consistent with "cultural proximity," which suggests that people tend to be more interested and attracted to cultures they perceive as similar (Phinney, 1990; Triandis, 1989).

A Greater Sense of Worth and Confidence

Inigo may associate his proficiency in the English language with a sense of pride and intelligence. His belief in his ability to understand and speak English well contributes to this positive self-image. This statement underscores the role of language as a marker of one's sense of identity and self-esteem.

"I feel proud and smart. I think because I can understand English so well."

Research has shown that language proficiency is closely related to self-perception, self-esteem, and self-efficacy (Dörnyei, 2013; Pekrun et al., 2009). In this context, Inigo's English proficiency contributes to his sense of pride and intelligence. Several studies show that mobile screen media can be critical in developing a sense of worth and confidence among primary-grade learners. For instance, research conducted by Finley and Ostenson (2019) indicates that the use of educational gaming apps, such as Prodigy Math Game, has positively affected primary learners' feelings of self-worth and self-confidence. Participants noted feeling more motivated to learn when using the app and felt proud when they achieved success.

Develop a Cross-cultural Identity

Sam views his English identity as tied to his ability to speak English. Despite not being of English descent, he has a solid identification with the English language. This shows that language can be a marker of social identity. It also implies that regardless of one's origin and ethnicity, language can shape one's cultural experiences and beliefs (Barrett & Dovchin, 2019).

"I am English. I have black hair. Nevertheless, the only soul I have is English. What I meant was this soul. I referred to that as language."

Furthermore, the quoted statement suggests that Sam significantly emphasizes language as a identity marker, even excluding other characteristics such as physical appearance. This is consistent with Barrett and Dovchin's (2019) contention that language is a tool for constructing and maintaining social identities. This also aligns with

the notion that language and culture are closely intertwined and shape how we understand and interact with the world. This statement was uttered when Sam was asked about his response or reaction when he could not understand the language. Sam prefers to avoid or disengage from conversations rather than to engage or respond actively.

"I would say nothing and walk away."

It is vital to consider some potential risks associated with prolonged smartphone exposure. Specifically, individuals may become overly reliant on technology, leading to feelings of isolation or disconnection from others (De Ramos, 2023). Moreover, exaggerated smartphone use may also lead to low self-esteem, inappropriate social behaviors, fear of relating, social anxiety, lack of self-confidence, and shyness. As a result, children may struggle to form meaningful relationships outside their digital personas – a problem that could further complicate existing struggles around identity development.

Accordingly, Livingstone and Helsper (2007) argue that substantial exposure to mobile screen media causes children to become desensitized towards human emotions, including empathy for others. In other words, regular engagement with technology may lead learners away from understanding the feelings and needs of those around them, making it difficult for them to interact effectively with people in their physical environment. Consequently, this could result in negative social experiences that further reinforce feelings of isolation or alienation from peers.

4.0 Conclusion

This study proves that mobile screen media significantly impacts language choice and how primary-grade learners perceive their identities. Using mobile screen media has both positive and negative impacts. The participants of this study primarily used English at home and in school, which indicates that English has become the leading language among the participants. Several factors affected the language choice of the participants, such as the languages spoken by people around them, the prestige of the English language, and exposure to media and gadgets. In addition, it was evident that screen media positively and negatively impact how children perceive their identities. They were more likely to understand different cultures, have a greater sense of worth and confidence, and develop a cross-cultural identity. Due to this, some children also felt estranged and disconnected from their families and peers.

For further research, a bigger sample size may be used to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the influence of screen media on children's language choice and identity perceptions. Parents should also ensure their children have healthy media diets and incorporate language-rich activities like reading, storytelling, and conversation into their daily routines. They should also use varied languages such as Tagalog and Bisaya when engaging in these activities with their children. Furthermore, educators should strive to create a classroom environment where multiple languages are recognized so that all students, regardless of whether they speak Tagalog or Bisaya, can feel included and respected.

Despite its insight, the study has several limitations that warrant caution in interpreting and generalizing the findings. The small sample size of only five participants from Iligan City limits the broader applicability of the results. It suggests a need for studies with larger and more diverse groups to enhance reliability. Moreover, convenience non-probability sampling, precisely the snowball technique, may introduce selection bias and potentially affect the results' representativeness. Lastly, the study only provides a snapshot of participants' experiences without a longitudinal perspective, which could offer deeper insights into the enduring effects of screen media on language and identity over time. Acknowledging these limitations highlights areas for further exploration to deepen our understanding of how screen media shapes children's linguistic and identity development.

5.0 Contributions of Authors

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7.0 Conflict of Interests

There is no conflict of interest to declare.

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