

Clicks and Conversations: Exploring the Factors Influencing Frequency of Ilokano Language Usage

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Abstract

Investigating the factors influencing the frequency of language usage in a community is crucial for understanding the vitality of its native language. This qualitative study investigated the health of the Ilokano language through an exploration of the factors that affect language use among selected Ilokano speakers in the municipality of Agoo, La Union. A written/mailed interview was used to capture relevant data for exploring this exploration. The findings of the study revealed a concerning trend, revealing two emerging factors significantly influencing language use: 1) generational shifts and 2) technological advances. Recognizing and addressing the factors contributing to the decline of Ilokano in Agoo is essential for fostering linguistic diversity and cultural richness and maintaining a vibrant local identity. This deficiency in research on language vitality is particularly concerning given the intricate interplay of sociocultural, economic, and technological factors that shape the linguistic landscape of diverse communities. While there are challenges due to generational shifts and technological advances, ongoing enhancement efforts offer hope for the future of Ilokano. Despite the challenges, the future of Ilokano is not predetermined. By acknowledging its importance, supporting enhancement efforts, and embracing technological opportunities, the Ilokano community can ensure the language continues to thrive for generations to come.

Keywords: *Ilokano language, language use, generational shift, technological advances*

Introduction

Language, the intricate web that binds human thought and communication, exhibits fascinating variations worldwide. The frequency of language usage in the Philippines is a dynamic phenomenon shaped by a complex interplay of factors. Tagalog enjoys a privileged position as the national language, while English remains influential due to its colonial legacy and its economic benefits. However, indigenous languages continue to thrive in many regions, fuelled by cultural identity, literary traditions, and their use within families and communities.

Language's role in every society is undeniable. Humans generally use it to communicate, establish a common understanding, interact with other speakers (Azar et al., 2020), and create and maintain relationships (Asuncion & Rañosa-Madrurio, 2017). For people worldwide, language is the entity that would identify them with their culture (Sampson, 2020) and nationality. A person's language is a component of their conceptuality. Therefore, losing a language would mean losing one's unique identity and the linguistic community as a whole. According to Professor Lindell Bronham (2022) of the Australian National University, users of a language lose a great deal of their human cultural diversity when the language they use is gone or they are sleeping.

Like tradition and culture, language reflects the community or nation's identity (Pascasio, 1999; Howard, 2010; Pérez-Sabater, & Maguelouk Moffo, 2019; Esteron, 2020). Some people define themselves based on their language. This is not surprising since language generally constitutes an influential factor in group identity (Fishman, 2001; Soria, 2016). Language is more likely than most symbols of ethnicity to become the symbol of ethnicity.

However, language cannot be contained in a vacuum. It is dynamic. It changes (Mufwene, 2004; Dressler, 2017; Azar et al., 2020). It morphs to adapt to the community's needs (Zou, 2020). However, the moment the community does not need the language, the language may disappear.

Literature Review

The 21st century is characterized by a double-edged sword of scientific and technological advancements. While these developments have undeniably improved lives, they also present challenges, particularly at the community level. The pervasiveness of technology and scientific innovation has profoundly reshaped every aspect of human life, including language use (Rivera, 2017; Olko et al., 2022). These changes often manifest as new language phenomena within communities.

The Philippines, which boasts a rich linguistic diversity of an estimated 120 languages with ten major languages, has been experiencing language shifting among its minor and major languages (Borlongan, 2009; Asuncion & Rañosa-Madrurnio, 2017; Dreisbach & Demeterio, 2020; Uriarte & Sperlich, 2021). Ilokano, categorized as an Austronesian language, ranked third as one of the Philippine languages with a significant number of speakers (probably over 8,000,000), still experiences such language phenomenon due to the lack of a widely available dictionary of the language (Rubino, 2000).

Even though Ilokano is widely used in the Northern part of the Philippines, different municipalities have their own unique dialects. The provinces of Ilocos Norte and Ilocos Sur are among the original Ilokano-speaking regions. The language is spoken in its purest form in these regions (Everyculture, 2024). However, much of northern Luzon has been greatly influenced by the Ilokano language and culture due to their migration southward and eastward. Ilokano speakers predominate in most regions in La Union and Pangasinan provinces. Agoo, La Union, for example, speaks the southern dialect of the Ilokano language, which differs significantly phonologically from the northern dialect but has few vocabulary differences. People in this area develop distinct characteristics because they encounter people who speak different languages. The municipality of Agoo serves as a host to people of different races and groups because of its scenic spots, religious places, and economic opportunities. Aside from this, the municipality serves as a crossway in which different people of different cultures come in contact. The contact of these cultures gives rise to the contact of the different languages in and out of the municipality and the province of La Union as a whole.

Moreover, culture is frequently, if not always, represented in the language spoken or the manner in which it is spoken (Torres et al., 2020). Differences are unavoidable no matter how physically near two cultures are, such as Ilokano and Tagalog belonging to the same nationality. The Filipino language entered the communicative domains of the Ilokano language when it was proclaimed as one of the official languages in the Philippines. Meanwhile, the English language, being the international lingua franca (Rao, 2019), also competed with the native language of the municipality and other languages in dominating the different communicative domains.

Language interaction can make learning other languages easier, but language attitudes have the most significant impact on how languages are used in specific contexts (Ko, 2021). In a speech community, language attitudes refer to the thoughts and preferences people have towards a language or a particular language speaker (Fishman, 2021). These attitudes are

related to the importance speakers place on a particular language, whether it is their mother tongue or a second language. Language attitudes influence the decisions made by members of a speech community (Lee & Lo, 2017) regarding how, when, where, and to whom they speak a particular language. These decisions also influence which language is chosen for different situations. These choices can lead to the emergence of diglossia (Fishman, 1967), multilingualism (Benzehaf, 2021; Diaconu, 2022; Thompson & Scherff, 2022), and bilingualism (Adriano et al., 2021) within a speech community. Prioritizing one language over another can strengthen the preferred language while weakening the less-used language. Language attitudes are comprised of three components: cognitive (thoughts), affective (feelings), and behavioral (action predispositions) (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975).

Hence, a language's strength lies in its being passed from the older generation to the younger generation or at least in some of the next few generations (Borlongan, 2009). This refers to language use or the communicative meaning of language in the community. Also, the use of a language in the different communicative domains ensures its transference and continuous vitality (McCauley & Christiansen, 2019). For example, the language used in a woman's connection with a close friend tends to have expressive speech patterns with pathic and expressive purposes. However, in a woman's relationship with regular friends, the conversational language is more representational and directive (Aziez, 2020).

In the Philippines, the vitality of minor languages is constantly being impacted by changes. The declaration of Tagalog as the national language of the Philippines is one illustration of these developments. The rush of non-Tagalog speakers studying the language was prompted by the declaration of Tagalog as Filipino, the nation's official language. During his presidency, President Ferdinand Marcos Sr. pushed the use of Filipino in all official correspondence. As a result, the Filipino language was propelled to the top of the Philippine language status pyramid, and English was the lingua franca of the business world (Holmqvist et al., 2019; Fatima & Qenai, 2021). The vernacular languages fell to the bottom of the linguistic status pyramid, while the Filipino language rose in the rankings. This makes it easier to enforce linguistic preference or choice among speakers (Wilenski & Demil, 2020). Minority languages have been pushed to the margins due to the focus placed on learning and using the Filipino language (Uriarte & Sperlich, 2021; Chikasha, 2021; Rabali, 2021).

Thus, given the overarching concern for their children's future, parents or the home environment shall continue transmitting their language to their children (Lam, 2020). This appeals to the symbolic value of language in a speech community.

A language depends on the people who use it. Time limits its use in people's lives. Eventually, a particular group would wake up and find themselves unspeaking the language they were born to speak. This claim is supported by Crystal (2007) and Professor Bronham (2022), who explained that a language is dead when no one speaks it anymore. It may continue to exist in a recorded form, but one will not talk of it as a living language unless it has fluent speakers.

Meanwhile, if parents and children use language in a reciprocal manner and if all living generations possess a high level of active language proficiency, language can endure. If this is not the case, there is probably a shift in cultural ideals at play. If younger speakers' proficiency begins to differ substantially from that of their parents, language change or contraction occurs, probably under the influence of neighboring languages of media in national or international languages (Ravanzo, 2006; Wicherkiewicz et al., 2018).

This is true for the Ilokano language. The population has been exposed to globalization (Mufwene, 2004; Osborne, 2015; Namanya, 2017; Sakellarios & Egitim, 2021; Savchenko, 2021), Filipinization, and intermarriages with neighboring towns and provinces. The subjugation of the Ilokano language is due to the interaction of the language with Tagalog (Sippola, 2021). However, Rambaud (2008), in his article on the marginalization of the Ilokano language and other regional languages in the Philippines, mentioned that it would have been impossible for students in Ilokano-speaking provinces to speak Filipino outside of their classes in the 1960s or early 1970s. Speaking in Tagalog was frowned upon at the time and was seen as a "clumsy" attempt to look cosmopolitan. Radio dramas and transmissions were either in Ilokano or had been adapted from Tagalog. Nowadays, more and more Ilokanos choose to speak Filipino over their native language (Fontiveros-Malana, 2018).

Even when a language does not die, it may change, and the situations in which it is used may change (Dal Negor, 2004). People can often choose which language to use. Their choice may depend on many things, including language proficiency (Jafarova, 2017), the prestige of the language or its users (McIvor & Ball, 2019), and the relationship between certain people in specific roles (Asia News Monitor, 2022).

People would gradually lose their first language as a result of migration, language learning, and exposure to other speaking environments (Nuñez, 2021). Moreover, there is no denying that many languages of the world are vanishing at an irrepressible pace (Okura, 2017; Hameed, 2022). According to Atifnigar et al. (2021), the most affective reason that endangers or ever extinct a language is the culture (Hameed, 2022), bilingualism (Kałamała

et al., 2022; Turdaliyevich, 2022), home literacy environment (Luo et al., 2021), and digital technology (Galla, 2018; Meighan, 2021; Sermonia, 2022).

The primary gap identified in this study is that there is a limited exploration of the Ilokano language (Sermonia, 2022; Sippola, 2021; Alterado & Jaramilla, 2019; Asuncion & Rañosa-Madrunio, 2017; Soria, 2016), particularly its current status and vitality. Existing literature highlights a scarcity of research on promoting the Ilokano language and maintaining its vitality within the Ilokano-speaking community. While some studies have touched upon these themes, a deeper understanding of the factors influencing language use and vitality in this context remains elusive. This research aimed to address this gap by exploring the factors that influence the frequency of Ilokano language usage of Ilokano speakers in Agoo, La Union.

Moreover, it identified the socio-cultural and linguistic factors that influence this usage. Early identification of language decline is crucial for implementing effective preventive measures. By contributing to the broader body of language research, this study hopes to empower communities to counteract language loss around the world.

Henceforth, this study aimed to explore the factors that influence the frequency of Ilokano language usage of Ilokano speakers in Agoo, La Union. Early identification of language decline is crucial for implementing effective preventive measures. By contributing to the broader body of language.

Method

This study utilized a qualitative research design through written/mailed interviews, which centered on exploring and capturing the factors that influence the frequency of language use by the participants. Qualitative research provides an interpretive and naturalistic view of a scenario. As mentioned in Lachica (2019), qualitative research design uses words and images to express research findings (Merriam, 2002; Corbin & Strauss, 2015) and allows access to determine and describe people's individual and collective social actions, beliefs, thoughts, and perceptions (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006). Particularly, this study used the descriptive qualitative design to capture the richness and complexity of the phenomenon under investigation using qualitative data collection and analysis methods.

Research Participants

The participants of the study are from the municipality of Agoo, La Union. The municipality has forty-nine (49) barangays (Agoo, La Union Profile – PhilAtlas, 2024). To

really make sure that the participants are speakers of the Ilokano language and are living in Agoo, La Union, the researcher used the following inclusion and exclusion criteria:

Table 1

Exclusion and Inclusion Criteria in Choosing the Primary Participants of the Study

Inclusion	Exclusion
The research participants' first language is Ilokano.	The research participants' first language is be Ilokano.
The research participants are using and understand the Ilokano language.	The research participants are not using or do not understand the Ilokano language.
The research participants are residents of Agoo, La Union.	The research participants are not residents of Agoo, La Union.
The research participants are 18 years old and above.	The research participant are 17 years old and below.

Purposive and snowball sampling were used to gather primary data sources and potential primary data sources as nominated by the primary data sources. In other words, the snowball sampling method was used as some participants may be based on referrals from initial subjects to generate additional subjects since other primary participants might withdraw from taking the interview. Purposive sampling is a random sampling methodology in which the sample group is targeted to have specific attributes based on the abovementioned inclusion criteria (Bisht, 2024). Purposive sampling was employed in this study to intentionally select participants who possess specific characteristics pertinent to the research objectives, thereby ensuring the sample effectively addresses the research questions. Mainly, residents of the municipality who are 18 years old and above, whose first language is Ilokano, and who speak and understand the Ilokano language were extracted from the total population (approximately 66,000 based on the 2020 Philippines Statistics Authority census) and served as the main data sources. A total of 50 valid interview responses were considered.

Data Gathering and Analysis

Written/mailed interview was conducted to know factors that influence the participants' language use and their preferred activities, strategies, and materials to increase the frequency of usage of the Ilokano language. The written/mailed interview was done primarily through virtual platforms (Google Forms or Facebook Messenger). However, since most of the participants were within the vicinity, the participants preferred face-to-face written interviews and health protocols were strictly observed. Prior to conducting the

interview, the researcher discussed the intent and nature of the research with the participants and provided them with the interview sheets (*Aide Memoire* of the study) based on the Interview Guide Compass.

The informed consent form was also explained to the participants to assure them of the confidentiality of their responses. It was made clear to the participants that taking the survey and taking part in the study is completely voluntary in nature, and that they have the right to withdraw anytime during the written/mailed interview. Additionally, the study was carried out by the researcher until the participants' participation had been confirmed.

After the agreement with the research participants, the researcher explained the topic to be discussed and the extent of their involvement. The transcriptions of the written/e-mailed interviews were coded and categorized and underwent thematization to capture the factors that influence the language use of the Ilokano speakers.

The interview was transcribed and coded. Extended texts from the interview went through coding. Coding is the process of labeling and segmenting text to form descriptions and themes in the data (Creswell, 2007). Then, the collected codes were summarized. In this study, the issue-relevant meanings of the gathered codes were determined by category aggregation. These codes were examined to identify patterns or themes that were subjected to descriptions (Hoyos & Barnes, 2012) in order to determine the factors influencing the participants' frequency of language usage. Only the researcher has access to the written interview transcripts, and once the researcher finished transcribing them, the researcher went back to the respondents for member checking. Transcriptions were deleted after the conduct of the study.

Moreover, the responses provided during the interview were also analyzed through a word cloud generator, specifically on the website jasondavies.com. This analytical approach was employed to discern the prevailing factors influencing the language utilization patterns among the Ilokano respondents residing in the municipality of Agoo.

Ethical Considerations

In this study, individual consent forms were given to all the participants. Every detail of the research was stipulated and discussed in the consent forms. Ethical standards were observed during the entire conduct of the study. Participants were informed that their participation in the study was voluntary.

Second, during analysis, the information was processed accurately and objectively according to the declared purposes of the study. The researcher ensured that any actions performed did not violate laws or public policy.

Additionally, the researcher practiced transparency by reporting any actions performed throughout the study. The respondents, their responses, and e-mail addresses were treated with confidentiality by not disclosing or assigning pseudonyms to each respondent during the conduct of the study. Anonymity was observed to protect their privacy in sharing their thoughts, ideas, and judgments.

Findings and Discussion

The usage and vitality of a language are intricately linked to many factors. Several interrelated factors contribute to the ebb and flow of Ilokano language usage, ranging from historical, socio-cultural, political, and economic factors to educational policies and technological advancements. This study unraveled these influences, shedding light on the intricate tapestry of elements that either bolster or challenge the continued prevalence of the Ilokano language. As this study delves into these factors, it becomes apparent that the trajectory of language usage is a complex interplay of tradition, modernity, and external forces that shape the linguistic landscape of the Ilokano-speaking community.

Moreover, the factors influencing the frequency of usage of the Ilokano language have been meticulously extracted through a systematic process of coding and categorization applied to transcribed written interviews. The richness of data collected from these interviews has been carefully analyzed, allowing for identifying and classifying key variables contributing to language usage dynamics. Through coding, patterns, themes, and recurring motifs have emerged, providing a nuanced understanding of the multifaceted influences at play. The saturation point, a critical juncture in the analysis, signifies the point at which new information ceases to introduce novel factors, indicating a comprehensive exploration of the data. The coding and categorization process serves as a methodological backbone, offering a structured approach to unraveling the intricate web of factors that shape the current landscape of Ilokano language usage.

The following are discussions of the main themes that emerged as factors affecting the language use of the respondents from the municipality of Agoo during the written interview.

Generational Shift

A language's strength lies in its being passed from the older generation. However, global trends, education in languages other than Ilokano, and peer interactions may have been influencing younger generations. This can lead to a shift towards using a different language at home, in school, and the community.

Generational shift in language use refers to the phenomenon where language preferences and proficiency change across different generations within a community or family. This shift is often influenced by evolving societal, cultural, and educational factors. Below are the generated sub-themes from the main themes in this study.

a. Language of Home and Neighborhood

The language spoken at home plays a central role in shaping individuals' linguistic identity and proficiency. The language used within the household is a key factor influencing frequency of language use, transmission, and maintenance within a specific community. For Ilokanos, using Ilokano at home can preserve and pass on their cultural and linguistic heritage to subsequent generations. However, in this study, it can be noticed from the respondents' answers that the parents have control over how their children can absorb the Ilokano language. Some extracts from the written interview present the lack of opportunity for the children to develop their native tongue because of their parents' choice of language at home.

Extract 1

“Generally, there is a lack of input from the immediate household members, even from extended family members. There are no opportunities that call for exercising the use of the language as well, given that they prefer a conversation in Filipino or English.”

The home is where the Ilokano language appears to be losing. Parents sometimes prefer that their children speak Filipino and English to prepare them for the language at school. The extracts below demonstrate this observation.

Extract 2

“According to stories of my sister (born in the 80s, affected by the trend), speaking English and Filipino to children at home put them in advantage in school.”

Extract 3

“Furthermore, my grandparents also talked to me in Filipino or English. It was them who adjusted, not me, even though they were much more fluent in Ilokano and Pangasinan.”

Extract 4

“Parents often choose not to speak the Ilokano language with their children.”

The language spoken by parents and older family members, as often mentioned code in the transcribed interview, significantly influences the language acquired by younger generations. If Ilokano is the primary language used by parents, children are more likely to learn and use Ilokano as their first language.

b. Language of Social and Educational Interactions

Children and adolescents tend to form close relationships with peers outside the family. If the dominant language among peers is different from the native language spoken at home, individuals may adopt that language more readily in their social interactions.

The language of school instruction, for example, can play a significant role in generational language shifts. Suppose the educational system predominantly uses a language different from the native language spoken at home. In that case, younger generations may become more proficient in the school language, leading to a preference for that language in various contexts.

Moreover, whether intentionally decided on, the seldom use of Ilokano at school has been influenced by the availability and more frequent use of a more dominant language, Filipino or English. The following extracts from the written interview substantiate how languages of social and educational interactions affect the language use of each Ilokano in the municipality of Agoo.

Extract 5

“Sharing some characteristics of my language use background with peers, we grew up speaking those two aforementioned languages given that school policies did not merit the use of Ilokano, chastised the use of Filipino, and placed English on the pedestal. That situation then alone places attention on Filipino and English, disregarding Ilokano or other local languages altogether.”

Extract 6

“There are instances, I remember, where teachers would deliver a litany or tirade in Ilokano when disciplining students, especially after unwanted behavior was displayed. Rare to not did I see, however, that teachers would instruct students in Ilokano.”

Extract 7

“It is not the language common in the workplace and not also used as medium of instruction.”

Extract 8

“I think I am not exposed and have not lent myself to be exposed in situations and contexts that call for the fluent use of Ilokano. The only times I hear and use Ilokano are in masses and transactions. Rarely do I get to attend in assemblies and other social gatherings (e.g., political campaigns) that communicate in Ilokano, even more that I am not pressured to interact in the same medium.”

How a respondent reacted to the use of the Ilokano language in masses and ceremonial events has also revealed the status of the Ilokano language in the municipality. Maintaining Ilokano as the language of choice during these events reinforces its importance within the community.

In a nutshell, understanding these generational shifts in Ilokano language use and how the language is transmitted across generations is still a challenge for Ilokano people. Given these overarching concerns for their children's future, parents or the home environment shall continue transmitting their language to their children (Lam, 2020). Mastering the Ilokano language shall always start at home, and be honed in school and in the community.

Technological Advances

The population of the Ilokanos has been exposed to globalization (Mufwene, 2004; Osborne, 2015; Namanya, 2017; Sakellarios & Egitim, 2021; Savchenko, 2021). Technology, such as smartphones and the Internet, has facilitated communication in multiple languages, and the Ilokano language is no exception.

Nowadays, younger generations may be more comfortable navigating and engaging with technology in languages other than their native tongue. The dynamic interplay between technology and language among the respondents reflects the adaptability of Ilokanos in the municipality of Agoo to the evolving digital landscape while posing considerations for maintaining their linguistic heritage. Below are the generated sub-themes from the main themes in this study.

a. Media and Materials Language

Younger generations are often more influenced by global media, including movies and music. Exposure to content in languages other than their native language may contribute to a preference for these languages in daily communication. In fact, the following extracts from the respondents' interview proved this claim.

Extract 9

“Exposures to other mediums using the language can also be cited [as one factor affecting his language use] since I grew up consuming programs and materials that did not use Ilokano.”

Extract 10

“I do note, however, that I have yet to encounter circulating Ilokano print media. Fortunately, some radio broadcasters still continue using the Ilokano language in their field.”

Extract 11

“Parents often choose not to speak the Ilokano language with their children, influenced by the emergence of technology, as children are frequently exposed to English language through digital media, including educational and entertainment content available online.”

Though radio broadcasts in the province are still in the Ilokano language, most people nowadays are exposed to televisions. Televisions have been an uncontested way of spreading information. Thus, this area of life has the competence to propagate the use of a certain language if needed, just like what happened in the spread of the Filipino language. When the Surian ng Wikang Pambansa announced that the national language of the Philippines is the Filipino language, television shows gradually shifted to using the Filipino language.

A normal Filipino child glued to the television every day can learn to speak Filipino because almost all shows on free television are in Filipino, something that Ilokano producers should keep in mind.

Exposure to many languages through films, movies, and music, often with subtitles or lyrics, catalyzes linguistic curiosity. People find themselves drawn to the cadence and expressions of foreign languages, creating a heightened appreciation for linguistic nuances.

b. Digital and Social Media Language

Social media platforms play a pivotal role in this linguistic evolution. The borderless nature of these platforms enables individuals to connect with peers from diverse linguistic backgrounds. Multilingual content, shared seamlessly across these virtual spaces, encourages users to experiment with and adopt foreign languages. Memes, trends, and viral content transcend linguistic barriers, fostering a sense of global camaraderie that transcends linguistic boundaries.

The following extracts reveal the impact of social media on the respondents and how these became a factor affecting the status of language use in the community.

Extract 12

“The social media is a big influence because we are now expose[d] to the modern and digital world.”

Extract 13

“We are more exposed to social media like Facebook. I read posts in English and Filipino. And I post English and Filipino instead of Ilokano because my audience will not understand my mother language.”

Extract 14

“For kids who have access in ICT, they acquire the English language almost naturally through their exposure to the language online or in their gaming.”

Furthermore, the accessibility of language-learning resources on digital and social media platforms empowers younger generations to embark on a journey of self-directed language acquisition. This self-driven language exploration is not just about mastering words; it's about embracing the cultural contexts embedded within each language, creating a more profound connection with the global community.

Conversely, technology can also play a role in language preservation. Efforts to create digital repositories, online dictionaries, and educational apps for learning Ilokano showcase the positive use of technology to sustain and promote the language. Digital platforms provide a space for Ilokanos to engage with their linguistic heritage, fostering a sense of pride and connection to their roots. The extracts below reveal how social media also helped develop the Ilokano language use and familiarization of the respondents.

Extract 15

“I see memes and words in Ilokano in Facebook that I do not use and understand. The memes show me the meaning of the words. I believe, the social media has also positive benefit.”

Extract 16

“Just the other day someone told me, “*Nagalas ta Ilokanom*”, after publicizing a phrase on my Facebook Messenger notes (admittedly, that person was not wrong and I'm just thankful someone pointed that out before other people got to see that shameful structure). This experience made me think that social media could also be a good platform to learn the Ilokano language.”

Moreover, the responses provided during the interview were also analyzed through a word cloud generator, specifically on the website jasondavies.com. This analytical approach was employed to discern the prevailing factors influencing the language utilization patterns

among the Ilokano respondents residing in the municipality of Agoo. The figures below present the extract and visual representation of the emergent codes in the study.

Figure 1

Factors Affecting the Language Use at Home



Figure 2

Factors Affecting the Language Use at School



Figure 3

Factors Affecting the Language Use in the Community



The findings in Figures 1, 2, and 3 derived from the analysis of the three identified domains consistently highlight a predominant influence of external factors on the language usage patterns among the Ilokano-speaking respondents in Agoo. The data underscores that most factors contributing to linguistic dynamics fall within external influences.

One salient external factor identified through the analysis pertains to the languages the surrounding people and community employ. The linguistic practices of individuals near the Ilokano-speaking respondents exert a discernible impact on their language usage. This finding suggests linguistic interconnectivity and influence emanating from the broader linguistic environment within which the respondents are situated.

Furthermore, the study reveals another significant external factor in social media. The pervasive influence of social media platforms on language dynamics emerges as a noteworthy aspect shaping the linguistic choices and expressions of the Ilokano-speaking population in Agoo. The prevalence of certain language patterns and terminologies within the digital sphere is identified as a contributing factor, indicating the considerable role that virtual platforms play in shaping linguistic trends.

In summary, the results consistently indicate that factors influencing language usage among Ilokano respondents in Agoo are rooted in external elements. The influence of people and their language and the impact of social media platforms collectively contribute to the intricate tapestry of linguistic dynamics observed within this community. Understanding and

acknowledging these external factors are imperative for comprehensively comprehending the municipality's linguistic landscape.

To counter those trends from the result of the survey to the results of the emerging factors that affect the frequency of language usage of the Ilokano language in the municipality of Agoo, initiatives to enhance the Ilokano language could focus on increasing its presence and utility in educational systems, community activities, and public domains. Efforts could include the development of Ilokano language resources, cultural programs that celebrate Ilokano heritage, and policies that encourage using Ilokano in official settings. Ultimately, the goal would be to foster a sustainable environment where the Ilokano language can thrive alongside dominant languages, ensuring its preservation and continued relevance for future generations.

Conclusion

Recognizing and addressing the factors contributing to the decline of the Ilokano language in Agoo is essential for fostering linguistic diversity and cultural richness and maintaining a vibrant local identity. The situation with the Ilokano language reflects a broader issue of language endangerment around the world. Many languages face decline due to various factors, and creative expression is often one of the first domains to be affected. This endangerment can take the extreme form of *linguicide*, the deliberate elimination of a language by a more powerful group. *Linguicide* can have devastating consequences, not only for the speakers of the language but also for the cultural heritage it embodies.

When a language dies, it takes with it a unique way of seeing the world, a rich tradition of songs, stories, and poems, and a deep connection to the land and community. *Linguicide*, the intentional destruction of a language, can be a tool of oppression used to erase cultural identity and history. It can happen through government policies that forbid the use of certain languages in schools or public spaces or through forced assimilation programs that pressure minority groups to abandon their languages.

In a nutshell, Ilokanos are navigating a complex situation regarding their language use. While there are challenges due to generational shifts and technological advances, ongoing enhancement efforts offer hope for the future of Ilokano. Despite the challenges, the future of Ilokano is not predetermined. By acknowledging its importance, supporting enhancement efforts, and embracing technological opportunities, the Ilokano community can ensure the language continues to thrive for generations to come.

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