

# THE ENDANGERED ILOKANO TERMS

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## ABSTRACT

Today, Ilokano ranks third among the major languages in the Philippines based on the number of speakers. It is being used not only in Northern Luzon, particularly in the Ilocos Region, where Ilokano is the lingua franca, but also by the Ilokanos who have migrated to Metro Manila, Visayas, and Mindanao as well as abroad, like in Canada, in the United States of America, in Hawaii, in Italy, in the United Arab Emirates (UAE), in Dubai and other parts of the world. Even some ethnic communities in the provinces within Northern Luzon is so rich that it embodies the cultural heritage of the Ilokanos, their identity and pride. Today, with the advancement of technology and the impact of the social media and communication, there are a lot of Ilokano terms that have been endangered because the cultures they embody have been degenerated. This aimed to protect and preserve these endangered Ilokano terms before they degenerate gradually. Furthermore, this paper sought to enrich and promote this terms through the making of an Ilokano dictionary. The framework upon which this research endeavor has been based is obsolescence. This term refers to the extinction or degeneration of the vocabulary because the culture, tradition or custom the term carries has been impracticable. Since the main occupations in the region where the researcher resides are farming and fishing because topographically being the place agricultural and coastal, the terms being studied are basically related to farming and fishing. In addition, terms depicting Ilokano culture (kannawidan), traditions, customs and beliefs are also included. The informants and validators of this study are elderly whose ages range from sixty to ninety, although middle adults were also interviewed. Interview and focus group discussion were used as the data gathering instruments in this qualitative research.

## Background of the Study

In order to comply with the requirements of the degree, Doctor of Philosophy in Linguistic, the researcher took up two penalty courses from the Department of Filipino of the College of Arts and Letters (CAL), at the University of Philippines.

These courses were “Wika at Pulitika” and “Wika at Kultura”. The latter is being considered more interesting and challenging by the researcher, he, being a language, literature and culture teacher, although political science is also one of his interests.

Basing from his experiences and (observations) as a language teacher,

recently, most particularly having taught Translation and Editing of Texts and Ilokano Grammar and Orthography, the students' common problem is vocabulary. The students have difficulty on grasping the meanings and orthography of words included in class discussions, exercises and quizzes. They complain of the depth (kinauneg) of the vocabulary, a misnomer for the term, puro nga Ilokano.

The source of words being used is basically the Bannawag, a weekly Ilokano magazine. One consideration in the selection of the words is their cultural significance, the researcher, taking into account the interdependence of language and culture, and vice-versa.

Humans learn their culture through language; culture is transmitted through language. Anthropologists learn to communicate in another language in order to do field work. Such research endeavor is under the luster of ethno-science and ethno-linguistics.

Today, ethno-cultural-linguists (researchers who study language and culture) are concerned about the last 5% of the world's languages which are in danger of disappearing. A language becomes extinct (moribund language) because it is only spoken by a few older and unknown to children. Perhaps, as many as 90% of all the world's languages will become extinct or moribund within the next 100 years. An entire way of thinking is lost each time a language becomes dead. The language becomes extinct because the culture it embodies gradually dies down. Among them are the Pangasinense (Pangalatoc) and other dialects and languages of indigenous communities. Thus, there is an established relationship between language and culture. Culture is transmitted by language. It is clear

that the terminology used by a culture primarily reflects that culture's interest and concerns.

There are two types of conducting ethno-scientific researches, namely: emic and kinetic. The former relates to or involves analysis of cultural phenomena from the perspective of one who participates in the culture being studied. The latter is done from the perspective of the one who does not participate in the culture being studied (Merriam- Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, Eleventh Edition, 2009).

Since the researcher is a native Ilokano, thus he endeavors to study the Ilokano language and culture. Consequently, this research is emic ethno-cultural-linguistic.

Today, Ilokano ranks third among the major languages in the Philippines based on the number of speakers. It is being used not only in Northern Luzon, particularly into the Ilocos Region, where Ilokano is the lingua franca, but also by Ilokanos who have migrated to Metro Manila, Visayas and Mindanao as well as abroad, like in Canada, in the United States of America, In Hawaii, In Italy, in the United Arab Emirates (UAE), in Dubai and other parts of the world. Even some ethnic communities in the provinces within Northern Luzon where they have their own mother tongue, they also use Ilokano, instead of their indigenous languages.

The Ilokano language is so rich that it embodies the cultural heritage of the Ilokanos, their identity and pride. Today, with the advancement of technology and the impact of the social media and communication there are a lot of Ilokano terms that have been endangered because the culture they embody have been degenerated.

## Statement of the Problem

Initially this paper attempted to determine the vocabulary skills of the 3rd year Bachelor in Elementary Education (Beed) students of the College of Teacher Education (CTE), University of Northern Philippines, Vigan City. The focus of which were word which embody Ilokano culture. Further, I sought to investigate and analyse some selected words to determine their etymology (origin), derivation, and meaning, and their cultural significance.

It also attempted to make corpus of vocabulary of cultural significance and occupational terminologies. Furthermore, this paper sought to enrich and promote these terms through the making of an Ilokano dictionary.

The framework upon which this research endeavor has been based is obsolescence. This term refer to the extinction or degeneration of the vocabulary because the culture, tradition or custom the term carries has been impracticable.

## Methodology

In the Ilokano Grammar and Orthography class of the researcher, spelling and vocabulary quizzes were given regularly. Words were personally chosen by the researcher from selected new articles and literary texts from Bannawag, (Kangrunaaan a Magasin Dagiti Ilokano), and some dramas and commentaries from Bombo Radio Vigan, in consideration of their difficulty and their cultural significance. The Basis of the selection was cultural and occupational. From the long list of terms utilized in the quizzes, these were trimmed down to 15 words which were subjected to analyses

with the aid of the informants selected fishermen-farmer-informants from Pug-os, Cabugao, Mindoro and Pagburnayan, and Puroc-a-Bassit Vigan City, and Balaleng, Sagpat and Guimod, Bantay. In addition, the local chief executives from the aforementioned selected barangays were employed as validators.

This research employed the phenomenological-qualitative type of research. The Informants and validators are the elderlies in the selected barangays in the municipalities of the First District of Ilocos Sur. However, there were also interviewed to validate the usage of the terms which have personally chosen by the researcher.

Focused group discussions and interviews were the main data gathering instruments. Video shots were also taken to further enrich the results of this study.

## Significance of the Study

This paper contributes to the furthermore of Ilokano linguistics and language and culture education, especially in the ethno-science and ethno-linguistics focusing on morphological and socio-cultural analyses of the selected vocabularies.

## Scope and Delimitation

Since the main occupations in the region where the researcher resides are farming and fishing because topographically being the place agricultural and coastal, the terms being studied are basically related to farming and fishing. In addition, terms depicting Ilokano culture (Kannawidan), traditions, customs and beliefs are also included. Originally, there were fifty vocabularies listed, but the shortlist has been trimmed down to fifteen because of the limited time allotted for the researcher to

complete the study. In addition, some of the terms are not being used anymore by the informants such as basingkawel, dangadang, anansata, let-ang, buribor, balludong, batonlagip, etc.

The informants and validators of this study are elderly, whose ages range from sixty to ninety, although middle adults were also interviewed. Interview and focused group discussion were used as the data gathering instruments in this qualitative research.

### Presentation and Discussion

Here are the fourteen words that have been chosen to be investigated and analysed:

1. KANNAWIDAN- The root of the term is *tawid* which means heritage or inheritance, the stem of which is *nakannawidan*, synonymous to *nakairuaman* (Something habitually or repeatedly done or practiced, in Filipino, It is *kaugalian o kultura*). It includes the traditions, customs, beliefs or practices of a certain of people. A pangngalan sa ngayon ang salitang ito ay siyang ginagamit na pantawag sa kapistahan ng buong lalawigan ng Ilocos Sur ( Ylocos Kannawidan Festival). Salitang ugat nito ay TAWID, na ang ibig sabihin nito ay pamana.
2. LAMUSA- This term originates from the Spanish word, “la mesa”, which means table. *Lamusa* is a celebration after the planting or harvesting season wherein each family in the entire neighborhood shares one food specialty in the form of potluck (balon) but this shall be served all together on the table. It is

act of thanksgiving of the work done or the bountiful harvest. In addition, the farmers petition to God Almighty for a more bountiful harvest in the next season. Nowadays, this practice together with the *agpadigo*, has been lost. The *tagnawa* system has also been lost because everyone is paid as to the labour he renders in the construction of relative's or neighbor's house or the *amoyo* as in the case of planting rice or the *daklis* as being practiced by a group of fishermen. The term now may mean as to the context of the Last Supper as being used in this situation, Those who served in a *pasken* or *punsyon* will eat only after everyone or all the guests will have eaten before they have put away everything which were used in the celebration like washing the plates, putting the forks and spoons in bundles, *isuda ti manglamusa* or the last guest to arrive in a *punsyon* intentionally, *tapno isuda ti manglamisaan* or *manglamusa*.

3. TAGNAWA- The term, *tagnawa*, originates from the word ‘*tawa*’, which means window, the stem of which is *agpatawa*; *tawa* being symbolic of the *kalapaw* (*bahay kubo*), as in synecdoche, a figure of speech where a part represents the whole. This is synonymous to the farming terminology, *amoyo*, or *daklis* in fishing or the popular term, *bayanihan*. This term is suggestive of the spirit of cooperation and solidarity among Ilokanos. The sense of helpfulness shall be compensated in the form of *bulibol* in *amoyo* and *raong* in *daklis*. *Pecuniary reward* is discouraged.

4. TAGIPATGEN- This noun is derived from the verbal prefix, *tagi*, meaning consider and *patgen* from the root *pateg*, which means worth or value. It means to values, treasures or cultural heritage, which may either be tangible or intangible.

5. PINAKBET- the stem of the term *pakbet* plus the verbal infix, *in*, while the root is *kebbet*. *Pinakebbet*, through assimilation, it has become *pinakbet*. This is a popular Ilokano dish which is present in every *padaya*. The main ingredients are eggplant, *ampalaya*, *okra*, *sili*, *utong patani*, (*karabasa*) and the common spices such as onion, garlic, ginger, tomatoes. The term suggests the multiplicity of the Ilokano identity and bis ingenuity and simplicity. It should be noted that the original main ingredient was not the *bagnet* but the *daing* or *dilis* (dried fish), that because it is salty adds up to the delicacy of the *pinakbet* plus the *boggoong* or *bagoong*.

The tastes of the main ingredients are suggestive in meaning: *ampalaya*- bitter, *sili*-pungent, *kamatis* and *karabasa*-sweet, *eggplant*- tasteless, implying the various experiences of the Ilokanos.

6. PALA-PALA- This term is synonymous to *abong-abong*, *balaw-baw*, or *salpaw*. It serves as shades in the yard during feasts and other happenings within the neighborhood and the family. The term, *pala-pala* is usually prepared at least to days before the celebration as in the case of wedding, graduation, or other merry-making activities. The word,

*abong-abog*, instead is used when there is a dead member of the family. The preparation of this kind of shelter suggests the sense of cooperation and solidarity of the neighborhood and strong family ties and extended family members.

7. SALUYOT- The term refers to the green, leafy, slippery vegetable which is a common ingredient in the Ilokano *dinengdeng*, in addition to *ampalaya*, or *malunggay* leaves. The purpose of which is for digestive purposes because of its slippery nature, it is believed to facilitate digestion. Thus, in the sentence, '*Saluyot ni Ilokano*', which is '*nagalis ti biag ni Pedro*' idiomatically. Or in another sentence, '*Sinalsaluyot na dagidiay kalaban*'. In both sentences, the term *saluyot*, suggests facility. Culturally, the term suggests that an Ilokano, nothing is hard or difficult, through patience and strong determination, in the end, he shall succeed.

8. DUMANON- The term is derived from the verb, *danon* 'arrive' and infix, *um*. It means welcome, which suggests the hospitality of the Ilokaos.

It also refers to a marriage arrangement where the husband-to-be and his parents, together with some elderly relatives talk to the parents and relatives of the bride-to-be to discuss the wedding. This tradition has been gradually disappearing because of the practices of premarital sex and live-in. Instead of the term, *dumanon*, it's already *umapon* because the bride to be is pregnant. The term, *danon-danon*, as

in the sentence '*Gapu ti danon-danon, nadadael ti pnaggayem da Juan ken Pedro*' means a tell-tale (*tsismis*). The term is a derivation of *dumanon*.

9. GULGOL- This word is a variant of the term, *luglog*, when patterned after *suysoy becoming yusyos*. Originally, it meant shampooing, using *arutang* (rice upper stalks being burned placed in a coconut shell the eye of which is drilled to serve as passage of water).

This term also refers to the custom where the family and relatives after the funeral rites go together to a nearby river or to the seashore to have their faces washed with the river or sea water, after which, they go home, their backs turned. This custom is practiced to commence the forgetting of the tragedy brought upon by the death of a loved one.

This also refers to a ritual done by a pregnant woman after an earthquake, washing the face or the womb with vinegar so the fetus grows healthy.

This is believed to be a ritual performed for a sick relative the cause of which is the disorder of the intestines. A pair of pure white feathered and yellow-legged rooster and hen (*karurayan*), butchered, their blood being used to wash the face and abdomen of the sick member of the family, including the other family members. In addition, this ritual, *aggulgol*, is performed to drive away bad luck.

10. SIRMATA - The etymology of *sirmata* comes from the words, *sirip*, 'to gaze' and *mata*, 'eyes'. This term

is synonyms to *tarigagay*, *tagtagainep*, *dardarepdep*, or *parmata*. It has been gradually banishing because of the adaptation of the term, vision, which has been used in setting up organizational strategic planning.

11. ILOKANISTA - This word is derived from the words, Ilokano and artista, but morphologically it is the erbal suffix, -ist, such as chemist, Ilokanoist, which means an Ilokano scholar, linguist translator, literary writer, painter, poet or scriptwriter.

12. BALDI - Etymologically, it comes from the words, *balay* and *padi*, (house of the friars), believed to be the deep well, but it is not. This is a group of at least three shallow wells, called *kalaki*, *kababai* and *kaadi*. These were used for the fermentation of legumes which were manufactured as dye (bluish or violet color, which was called *aniel*, used as medicine for mumps. However, the dye produced was imported through the Acapulco Trade during the Spanish time.

13. SELLEPET - Morphologically analysed to have originated from *selletong* (male reproductive organ) and *pepet* (female reproductive organ), which means the act of sexual intercourse. This term is synonymous to *agyot*, or *agnaig*. It has been used today to mean a prostitute or a paramour. The etymology, being *selsel* (insert the penis into the female organ, *pepet*). Another meaning attributed to the term is a sexual intercourse between two male lovers (selling a *kasla pepet ti bakla*). Thus, the term may

refer to the male lover of a gay, as being understood by the LGBT's.

14. UDONG – This word is synonymous to *surong*, referring to the interior towns. It connotes the far-flung areas where life is so simple and frugal.

Gradually, it is going to the town to sell the local or native produce in exchange for prime household commodities. There is a designated market day for every town, such as, Monday for Magsingal, Thursday for Sto. Domingo, etc.

On the other hand, it may be paradoxical when in the sentence, Mapanak agudong, signifying, from the farm (away) to the town market, but Agpasurong, from the patag, such as Vigan to a certain interior town of Abra or Ilocos Sur.

Now, this means badoy or old fashioned outmoded in lifestyle.

16. BULIBOL – The term *bulibol*, is a noun which is synonymous to *bulnos* but not similar to *abang*, though, generically, it may mean *tangdan* (reward in kind not pecuniary for manual labour) or *bingay*, *apag* or *bettek* (share). It is the share of the harvester (*nakipagas*) from the farmer, not necessarily the landlord because the share of the owner of the land or landlord given by the farmer or sower which is generally  $\frac{2}{3}$  or  $\frac{3}{4}$ , the remaining is to the farmer or grower. In communal fishing (*daklis*), the term for bulibol is *raong*.

## Conclusions

The vocabulary skills of the third year Beed students of the College of Teacher Education of the University of Northern Philippines is generally at the average level.

The extinction of some Ilokano terms is caused by culture degeneration, not otherwise.

## Recommendations

In addition to Ilokano Grammar and Orthography, there should be an additional subject in Ilokano, probably Ilokano literature or culture the medium of instruction should be Ilokano.

A more extensive study on Ilokano morphology and dialectology should be conducted on a wider scope.

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### The List of the Words

1. damili – potteries
2. alimpatuk – climax
3. dardarepdep – desire
4. kamarin – granary
5. sakaan – footage
6. bugaw – drive away, middleman, agent
7. basingkawel – battle
8. tarumpingay – emotional pain
9. dingnguen – livestock, cows, goats
10. minuyongan – orchard
11. tagipatgen – values, valuable
12. bulibol – share
13. dadapilan – sugar cane mill
14. kalastraad – character
15. daklis – communal fishing
16. amoyo – communal farming
17. tagnawa – sense of cooperation, solidarity
18. baluarte – bailwick
19. supapak – price
20. saranay – financial aid for the dead
21. alintatao – shadow
22. saltek – sound produced by the lizard
23. agpadigo – share
24. batonlagip – memento, token
25. daliasat – journey
26. balangkantis – fake, not genuine
27. bannawag – sunrise
28. lamusa – feast
29. bala-bala – plan
30. pinakbet – vegetable dish
31. dumanon – marriage arrangement
32. sirmata – vision
33. padaya – celebration
34. tilar – weaving instrument
35. rakem – tool for harvesting
36. gulgol – shampoo, cleansing
37. binatbatan – seggrating the seeds
38. udong – go to the public market
39. sellepet – sexual intercourse
40. dap-ayan – assembly
41. pala-pala – trellis
42. tawid – inheritance
43. saluyot – green, slippery, leafy
44. baldi – well
45. almidor – starching
46. kapasanglay – cooton tree
47. kannawidan - culture