



# HERITAGE LANGUAGE MAINTENANCE AND REVITALIZATION: EVALUATING THE LANGUAGE ENDANGERMENT AMONG THE INDIGENOUS LANGUAGES IN BUKIDNON, PHILIPPINES

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Several studies reveal that the extinction of diverse Indigenous languages is significantly increasing, and several maintenance and revitalization programs for endangered languages have been introduced to save the nonstop death of the languages. This paper reviews the existing academic literature to evaluate the language maintenance and revitalization programs of the Indigenous languages in Bukidnon, Philippines. This article focused on the growth of diverse language maintenance and revitalization. Also, this study stressed the encountered challenges and tests of the people who speak the Indigenous language and in maintaining and revitalizing the language. The result and discussion are generated over the progress of how the maintenance and revitalization programs manage to help the Indigenous people passed their language across generations, the concerns of the Indigenous people while maintaining and revitalizing their language, and the product of the language programs. Therefore, we envision how those intervention programs assist native speakers in maintaining and revitalizing their Indigenous language.

**Indigenous language, language endangerment, language maintenance and revitalization.**

## I. INTRODUCTION

A wide variety of aspects contribute to language loss and attrition, and this condition is rampant and acquainted across endangered language communities worldwide (Pine & Turin, 2017). Over the recent years, the concept of nativeness within linguistics recognized as problematic; however, the concern has been more recent in minority language research and language revitalization (O'Rourke & Pujolar, 2013). The languages are in danger of falling silent because natural transmission mechanisms have broken down, causing language to drop out of everyday use (McCarty, 2012). In connection, less attention has been given to non-native or the "new speaker" varieties and categories (O'Rourke & Pujolar, 2013).

Societal and individual loss in using a language implies replacing another language (Huss, 2017). Although more than half of all the world's languages estimated have disappeared over the years (Janse, 2003), the speakers or the community does not die; however, they just become a subset of another language (Ningsih, 2018). The loss of a language undoubtedly has been seen as a widespread phenomenon globally, and agreed that several languages are experiencing rapid endangerment (Alshehri, 2016).

The United Nations has strategy papers and approaches for governmental action plans (UNESCO 2003) and developed programs to validate languages as tools of education and culture and as effective means to contribute to public life (Aikawa, 2013). Among these programs was the project "The Red Book of Languages in Danger of Disappearing." Nevertheless, one critical goal is missing upon the program's implementation: working with the endangered-language communities on language maintenance, revitalization, preservation, and development. Every research in endangered language communities must be mutual and cooperative. It should involve researchers proposing their services interchange for what they receive from the speech community and actively engage with the community in implementing, planning, and evaluating their research projects.

Some of the progress in the intervention program by UNESCO causes unfavorable outcomes (UNESCO, 2010). Traditional research on minority languages emphasizes revitalization and language endangerment, language shift and language maintenance, language transmission in education, family, and language policies in other social fields, including the media. Nevertheless, literacy has become a vital issue for speakers of minority languages; much less attention has been given to the written displays of minority languages in the public space (Marten et al., 2012). Thus, it displays the need to evaluate the deficiency of the program.

Fernando et al. (2010) presented an intervention program to the local government unit (LGU) that raises the language's status and promotes language learning at home, public interventions to increase the use of minority language, and attention in teaching in

schools. The program identifies the parameters that determine which intervention works best under definite linguistic and societal conditions. However, extensive data are lacking in this field, and it needs a concrete proposal of parameters to be validated and lacks formal training in language teaching. Therefore, the project's result seeks to propose and implement another program as requested by the researchers.

With over 180 languages registered in the Philippines, linguistic power struggles are unavoidable, even if they are quiet. Based on Ethnologue, a global language database, 28 Philippine languages are endangered, up from 13 in 2016. Eleven languages are on the verge of extinction, with several already gone. More than 80 distinct dialects are reported, and the six or eight most common types of speech are thought to be as diverse as the other languages (Cruz, 2019). On average, one language becomes extinct every two weeks in the world, and that half of the about 6,000 languages projected to disappear within the end of the century, and the majority of those are indigenous languages (Flores, 2008).

The Philippines is one of the world's most linguistically varied nations (Uy, 2017). It has around 3% of the world's languages (wrongly called "dialects") but only 0.2 percent of the Earth's geographical area, with 175 native languages (wrongly called "dialects"). To put it another way, the Philippines is roughly 15 times more varied than the typical country. Thirty-plus Negrito languages are endangered, and governments, multilateral agencies, and development organizations must evaluate appropriate action concerning language and development to meet language maintenance and revitalization problems (Headland, 2010). Knowing that the languages of Indigenous groups are continuously under attack in a multilingual society, some language does not indicate if the language is being passed intergenerationally. The majority group's language increasingly, internationally famous/dominant languages are their principal competitors (Breton, 1998).

The Philippines has been named one of the top ten "language hotspots" globally by the Living Tongues Institute for Endangered Languages (2019), which implies that the Philippines has a diverse range of languages that are being lost at a faster rate than we can fully document them. This scenario has produced an almost unsolvable dilemma since it is impossible to spend much time in the Philippines without learning the language to utilize all the languages that existed and still existing. On the other hand, Indigenous languages nowadays are more likely to perish "naturally" rather than being systematically eradicated (Cruz, 2019).

Languages worldwide are vanishing at an unprecedented rate. Anderson and Anderson (2014) deliberated the indigenous language loss or maintenance relating to the decline of Pangasinan, the Philippines' eighth-largest language, and contains examining a scenario in which globalization may yield sudden language revitalization chances. Languages establish the massive diversity of human value systems, experiences, and insights. Significantly every language that dies signifies a loss of human culture and a loss of a way of shaping life (Ladefoged, 2004).

Language is considered the most vital aspect of culture, and it plays a pivotal role in communicating values, customs and beliefs, and forming identity. Therefore, the loss of a language is perceived as losing cultural heritage (Alshehri, 2016). Researchers have developed the research attentiveness in endangered languages and awareness of the need to contribute to their survival. Systematic studies have been initiated to present what has been done to limit language and clarify why particular languages survive, and others do not (Huss, 2016). Researchers have also pinpointed the most relevant factors and how they interact. However, further investigation and theorization are required to establish language revitalization more firmly as an independent field of study (Huss, 2016), and this study will supplement those desires. This research broadly targets understanding culture and language education concerning language maintenance mainly because of particular learning goals for language revitalization.

The study of Bodo et al. (2017) entitled Language Revitalization, Modernity, and the Csángó Mode of Speaking, findings shows how formal education and literacy have an impact within the practice of language revitalization that the movements following patterns of nation-state homogenization and standardization are not prepared for, and the activity cannot be treated successfully within their modernist framework. Thus, it suggests a more thorough understanding of these mechanisms based on empirical ethnographic research is required to allow minority language movements to evaluate the possibilities and limitations, namely the sustainability of their activity, more accurately (Budo et al., 2017).

The findings of O'Rourke and Pujolar (2019) research with the title From Native Speakers to "New Speakers" – Problematizing Nativeness in Language Revitalization Contexts display that the focus has been on language loss and concern with preventing potentially threatened languages from dying out. In minority language contexts, the protection of the native speaker community became the focus of attention for language planners, revitalization movements, and sociolinguists for revival (O'Rourke & Pujolar, 2019).

Current research indicates that 46% of the world's 7,000 language communities are in danger of undergoing a total break in language transmission (Rouvier, 2017), and communities are reacting to this situation by accelerating their efforts to relearn, revitalize reclaim their languages. However, the Philippines seems to have forgotten the importance of language maintenance (especially on minorities) and its severity in today's time because the regulating body of the Filipino language (KWF) and official government institutions tasked with developing, preserving, and promoting the various local Philippine languages did not create any valuable models to maintain and keep languages. The most recent Komisyon sa Wikang Filipino (KWF, 2021) held a free webinar covering the basics of indigenous language documentation. Moreover, local studies (e.g., Abiog and David, 2020; Gallego et al., 2017) have brought insights into gathering data, none of which had limited their scope in the minority languages in Bukidnon, Philippines.

The research primarily aims at evaluating the language maintenance and revitalization of the language endangerment of Indigenous languages in Bukidnon, Philippines. Also, the study targets to identify the causes of the language endangerment of the Indigenous languages in Bukidnon, Philippines. Furthermore, the researcher ascertains how the indigenous peoples maintain and revitalize their languages across generations. Determine the Indigenous peoples' encountered challenges in maintaining and revitalizing their languages in Bukidnon, Philippines, and assess the Indigenous peoples' solutions in maintaining and revitalizing their languages in Bukidnon, Philippines.

As a general guide, the literature review contains synthesized information about the research and studies related to the maintenance and revitalization of heritage languages and the endangerment of Indigenous languages. In methodology, the researchers used the descriptive research design and explicitly exhibited how the data was gathered, presenting steps to evaluate the works of literature that provide intervention programs concerning heritage language maintenance and revitalization. In the results and discussion, the investigated significance, meaning, and relevance of the results were offered. In this section, the researchers presented the discussions related to the literature review, research questions, and the argument to support the study's overall conclusion. Lastly,

the researchers clearly stated the answer to the crucial research question and summarized and reflected on the research and recommendations for future work on the conclusion.

## II. EARLY DEVELOPMENTS

When an indigenous group stops speaking its language, the language disappears, and the goals of a language revitalization program must depend on the situation in which the language finds itself (Hinton & Hale, 2001). The most extreme case of language revitalization is the reversal of a completed language shift. Fishman (1991) has designed eight steps toward reversing language shift (RLS). The eight stages are as follows:

1. Acquisition of the language by adults, who in effect act as language apprentices (recommended where most of the remaining speakers of the language are elderly and socially isolated from other speakers of the language).
2. Create a socially integrated population of active speakers (or users) of the language (at this stage, it is usually best to concentrate mainly on the spoken language rather than the written language).
3. In localities where there are a reasonable number of people habitually using the language, encourage the everyday use of the language among people of all age groups and within families and bolster its daily use through the establishment of local neighborhood institutions in which the language is encouraged, protected and (in specific contexts at least) used exclusively.
4. In areas where oral competence in language has been achieved in all age groups, encourage literacy in the language but in a way that does not depend upon assistance from the state education system.
5. Where the state permits it, and where numbers warrant, encourage the use of the language in lieu of compulsory state education.
6. Where the above stages have been achieved and consolidated, encourage using the language in the workplace (lower work sphere).
7. Where the above stages have been achieved and consolidated, encourage the language in local government services and mass media.
8. Where the above stages have been achieved and consolidated, encourage the use of the language in higher education and in the government.

## III. MAJOR DEVELOPMENTS

Documentation of endangered languages can provide critical linguistic resources to efforts to support endangered language (re)learning in community and institutional contexts (Rouvier, 2017). Further, the act of documentation can impact language attitudes and heighten awareness of language endangerment within communities and in the broader society. While some reclamation efforts have benefited from the resources produced by documentary linguistics and other branches of linguistics, for many reclamation efforts existing linguistic resources are not relevant to their needs (Rouvier, 2017). A study (Warner et al., 2009) addresses revitalizing an inactive language whose prospective speakers live in scattered geographical areas. In comparison to increasing the usage of an endangered language, revitalizing an inactive language (one with no living speakers) requires different methods to learn the language. The first step was to determine what documentation of the language was available, locate copies, and learn the transcription systems of all sources. Warner et al. (2009) also developed a practical orthography for Mutsun early in the project, although it has been revised several times at the instigation of community language learners. They developed a lexical database and eventually a sentence-level text database to encode and analyze all known data for the language and generate a dictionary (Warner et al. 2006). For any inactive-language revitalization project, at least one person must gain modest fluency in the language to teach it to others (Hinton 2001). A further step is to spread language and cultural knowledge through the community, and this may involve organizing summer camps, developing strategies to keep learners from switching to the dominant language, and involving a broad group of community members (Warner et al., 2009). In Mexico, the Mixtec people's language heavily revolves around the interaction between climate, nature, and what it means for their livelihood. UNESCO's LINKS (Local and Indigenous Knowledge) program recently underwent a project to create a glossary of Mixtec terms and phrases related to climate. UNESCO believes that the traditional knowledge of the Mixtec people via their deep connection with weather phenomena can provide insight on ways to address climate change. Their intention in creating the glossary is to "facilitate discussions between experts and the holders of traditional knowledge" (Morales, 2019). In Canada, the Wapikoni Mobile project travels to indigenous communities and provides lessons in film making. Program leaders travel across Canada with mobile audiovisual production units and aim to provide indigenous youth with a way to connect with their culture through a film topic of their choosing. The Wapikona project submits its films to events around the world as an attempt to spread knowledge of indigenous culture and language (Gomez, 2019).

## IV. MORE DEVELOPMENTS AND WORK IN PROGRESS

Recently, language activists and linguists have begun using new technologies in projects to revitalize the practice of Indigenous languages (Eisenlohr, 2004). The lack of support and protection of Indigenous peoples against a global economy reduces the visibility of actual cultural and linguistic diversity. The diversity on the Internet primarily reflects the major world languages that are spoken across countries or continents. In effect, exposing digital and knowledge divides digital technology inequities and the differential uptake of digital technologies (Galla, 2018). Meaningful linguistic policies established for the 'real world' must now also consider the 'virtual world.' Pimienta, Prado, and Blanco (2009) categorize different language groups, including main languages, official languages, local languages, languages of developing countries, languages at risk of disappearing, and so forth, indicating how the Internet affects various language communities. These distinctions help determine how language policies affect real-world and virtual environments and respond to languages of different status, sizes, and stature. For Indigenous languages to thrive in a contemporary society among world languages, the currently under-resourced languages themselves must also be supported in all domains of life (Galla, 2018). In order to achieve a greater understanding of language revitalization practices and outcomes, we must have appropriate and sustained funding mechanisms to support needed research. Language Revitalization is a highly collaborative, complicated, and long-term endeavor, and research must likewise be multifaceted, flexible, and longitudinal (Rouvier, 2017).

## V. CHALLENGES

In the current state, the problem of language endangerment is for over 500-years already where minor languages everywhere are under intense threat (Janse, 2016); moreover, some linguistic diversity, especially minor languages in the modern world, is distributed unusually uneven, Wolfram and Schilling (2016) discussed for the dialect endangerment that it is due to *Ethnologue* lacks population. The endangerment of language includes the loss of knowledge of prehistory and means of reconstructing words about the ancient culture (Evans, 2010), the loss of linguistic diversity losing the sum of human knowledge (Hammarstrom, 2016), the traditional and ecological knowledge (Crystal 2000), and the loss of the language itself, which compromises linguists' ability to understand the full range of what we can access in human communication and the language itself.

Most ancient speakers are in a difficult time maintaining a particular language, and in its simplest form, endangerment happens when slowly minority group members lessen the use of the language until the speakers can no longer access it and lose the language (Fase et al., 1992). One factor that native speakers encounter in maintaining and revitalizing a language is globalization, the ever-changing process that cannot be stopped, where the frequency of dominant languages decreases the use of the minor languages (Austin, 2008). This situation makes people speak the dominant nation's language, decreasing the native language and even more significant consequences.

One of the primary problems of maintaining and revitalizing the Indigenous languages of the indigenous cultural communities has to deal with the policies that do not indicate if a particular language is being passed across generations. Language is at the heart of the world's cultural variety but also a fragile aspect of the world's cultural legacy (UNESCO, 2001). Despite the importance of language as a component of cultural diversity, over 417 languages are threatened worldwide. A global language database stated that over 28 Philippine languages are endangered, up from 13 in 2016. Eleven languages are on the verge of extinction, with several already gone. There are more than 80 distinct dialects reported, and the six or eight most common types of speech are thought to be as diverse as the other languages, which implies that the Philippines has a diverse range of languages that are being lost at a faster rate than can fully document them.

DepEd established MTB-MLE (DepEd, 2009), following a complicated history in language-in-education policy, intending to have children begin formal learning in the language they know best. The program aims to improve students' cultural development, language development, cognitive development, and social development. The Mother Tongue Based-Multilingual Education (MTB-MLE) policy mandates the use of local mother tongues as the language of instruction from Kindergarten to Year Three (K-3), with the official languages (Filipino and English) being introduced after grade three. The goal of the education policy is for literacy skills to eventually be transferred to English and for academic development, which prepares the learner to master English eventually, and socio-cultural awareness, which boosts the learner's pride in his or her background, language, and culture. The drawbacks are all related to a lack of teaching materials, which impedes the learners' ability to improve their reading, speaking, and writing skills. In addition, there is a scarcity of training for potential teachers who want to teach in their mother tongue.

However, MTE is usually based on a combination of using the child's strongest language and elevating the status of LLs; the use of LFs must be balanced with teachers' affirmation of children's use of other languages to fulfill the goal of the program. With over 180 languages registered in the Philippines, linguistic power struggles are unavoidable. Indigenous languages nowadays, on the other hand, are more likely to perish "naturally" rather than being systematically eradicated, in order to meet the problems of language maintenance and revitalization knowing, that the languages Indigenous groups are continuously under attack in multilingual society the government has to come up with a plan that does not harm any language for others to survive.

## VI. CONCLUSION

We live in a crucial time where concerns about language extinction is accumulating, and language endangerment is an essential issue for the human race. More than half the world's languages are in danger of being swallowed up by dominant languages. Moreover, language endangerment has a significant issue, considering that some people maintain an ancestral language and transmit it to their children, while others abandon it. Also, the minority language maintenance and revitalization programs that has been implemented to save dying languages has some lacking that still the loss of language is increasing. In connection, this article focuses on evaluating existing language maintenance and revitalization programs of the Indigenous languages. By thoroughly reading studies and articles, this research established that languages under threat have an actual event in digital spaces, and turning the flow of language extinction is not easy since many languages that have been revived are still considered endangered. Also, the absence of language policies intimidates the maintenance of Indigenous languages. Indigenous people have begun reclaiming their languages and working towards their revival and use in communities. They encouraged and worked on the implementation of academic discussions defending languages and equally protecting them against the intrusion of larger ones. However, this is not enough for the language to survive. Thus, the urgency of language maintenance and revitalization requires the Indigenous communities to be practical and efficient in their choices and application of the intervention programs.

In conclusion, losing one's language is inevitable. Several factors keep on challenging the existence of a language. Language choice of humans also affects the indigenous languages, and the failure to pass one's native language contributes to its loss. In connection, the evaluated programs help significantly in saving language loss. This study shows that indigenous children's heritage language as the medium of teaching and the primary language commence a strength for enhancing the children's education and stimulating the maintenance and revitalization of their languages. This paper evaluated programs in language maintenance and revitalization of Indigenous people using extended literature and only provided development for design in specifications. Furthermore, the methods of the data of the article supported on the existing literature qualify the same field of study.

There might be several intervention programs towards language maintenance and revitalization, but still, they failed to maintain the indigenous language. Everyone is responsible for its indigenous language; thus, maintaining it and actively participating in provided solutions towards language endangerment is also our responsibility. The choice to learn, use, and share with others is already preserving it. As long as the speaker lives, continue to use, and regenerate their heritage language to the younger speakers, the language lives.

Furthermore, more thorough investigation, research, and theorization are needed to establish an independent study of language revitalization. Finally, this study proposed that it is best to develop a community-based approach to the intervention program in language maintenance and revitalization and encourage parents to practice speaking their heritage language at home to preserve their language. Also, the program must have a detailed objective and list of activities to ensure the preservation of the language. The

researchers firmly suggest implementing indigenous language usage in the classroom setting, daily conversation, and the teaching of the importance of speaking heritage language. Moreover, the government should also address this issue, supporting and monitoring plans and activities concerning language preservation.

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