

# Language use of Manobo students in social networking sites

Lyzyl Lopez-Banuag, Rachel C. Payapaya

Philippine Normal University-Mindanao

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\*Corresponding author: Lyzyl Lopez-Banuag  
(banuag.ll@pnu.edu.ph)

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## ABSTRACT

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*This paper explored the scope of the usage of Agusan Manobo language in social networking sites and ascertained the factors influencing the use of this minority language. The study employed both quantitative and qualitative research methods in data collection and analysis. The participants were identified through purposive sampling of 114 Manobo students enrolled in a multicultural teacher-education university in Northeastern Mindanao. A contextualized questionnaire from Jongbloed-Faber (2015) gathered all data analyzed through percentage, mean and Pearson r. Focused Group Discussions (FGD) deduced all qualitative data. Results showed that first year Manobo students use Agusan Manobo now and then in updating their status and sending private messages in Facebook. The factors influencing the use of Agusan Manobo in social networking sites are language use with friends and attitude towards the language. The findings imply germane policies to support present initiatives of the university in establishing its niche as a multicultural teacher-education institution.*

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## Introduction

### *Language Vitality, Shift and Death*

The Language Vitality Index developed by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in 2003 revealed that there is still a need to respond to linguistic issues to new domains and media. Extinction of a language is predicted through its loss of function referred as the extent to which a language is substituted by another language. The loss of prestige of a

language is another sign which is the result of the increasing negative attitudes of the current generation towards the minority language. The inability of the youth to use the minority language in communication leads to the third sign which is the loss of competence. Ninety-five percent (95%) of the languages in the world are not well-represented online and are now facing extinction (Kornai, 2013). These signs of language vitality are threats to the survival of any minority language such as the Agusan Manobo. Thus, the need for this particular

language in social media is timely and vital for its survival.

The Philippine education system implements the Bilingual Language Policy for the purpose of achieving competence in Filipino and English through their use as language of instruction in all levels in education and are considered as the official languages in the country as mandated in sections 6 to 9 of article XIV of the constitution. Other aboriginal languages are regarded as auxiliary official languages which serve as auxiliary medium of instruction in the regions they are spoken. Curricular and policy reforms in the educational system of the Department of Education (DepEd) was launched in 2011. The K-12 program aimed to build proficiency through language using Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education (MTB-MLE) which became a law in 2013. In context, a mother tongue is the first language or dialect learned by a child and with which he or she identifies with (Tan, 2014). In consonance with the recent policy, Cebuano which is considered as the regional language in Caraga, is the medium of instruction from kindergarten up to Grade 3 classes in the elementary level. To bridge the gap, DepEd formulated a mother tongue transition program for pupils in the higher grade levels where only English and Filipino languages are used. This process aimed to develop both languages in the Junior and Senior High School.

Most scholars agree that at least half of the world's linguistic diversity will disappear over the next 100 years due to some factors like intergenerational language transmission, percentage of speakers among the total population, domains and functions of use, attitudes and language ideology of the community and of their neighbors, speaker evaluation of their language (Jongbloed-Faber, 2015). The issues on language shift and death convey impending loss of cultural identity. Hoffman (2009) discussed

that language loss will result to the loss of identity which will affect other culturally relevant linguistic practices. Disruption in the transmission of cultural knowledge is one effect of language loss. Losses of cultural knowledge, such as detailed knowledge of environments and resources may also be caused by language shift. This means that documenting and preserving languages which are on the verge of extinction is vital for social and cultural reasons. Both language and government authorities must then render all preventive efforts to save such languages from extinction (Michael, 2011).

According to Cunliffe (2007), inequality of the balance of powers between majority and minority language are evident in offline societies and are apparent even in online situations. Using a minority language when not everyone understands it is perceived to be impolite. As a political statement, a minority language must be chosen even when someone is proficient in the majority language. Bilinguals have complex and varied language behavior on social network and it varies in every platform (Carroll, 2008). In addition, different social groups come together in an online social network which usually does not occur in offline situations. It will be complicated then for the social network owner to deliberate language choice and style in properly addressing the audience when they use diverse languages. This situation is referred to as context collapse (Marwick & Boyd, 2011).

#### *Language use on social media*

Social networking sites have become more than avenues for personal chatter. According to the United Nations, half of the 6,000 languages in the world face extinction by the end of the century. However, this trend could work the other way when endangered languages are represented through social media platforms by speakers (Billock, 2012). The transfer of language to the younger

generations is significant for them to develop a sense of connection to their culture and their past. Nowadays, social media have become instruments in preserving threatened languages; however, what remains to be an unexplored area of research is the issue on which languages are used in social media and in bilingual communities (Cunliffe, Morris, & Prys, 2013).

In the global setting, the internet and social networking sites are perceived as threats for minority languages. There is a growing number of opportunities in the Internet for the preservation and distribution of contents using a minority language in both written and audio-visual forms as well as connecting speaker of these languages across the world. Connecting and strengthening linguistic communities and reviving endangered languages are possible through the Internet and other electronic technologies (Cunliffe, et.al., 2013). Social media applications are imperative as they have become part of the daily life of the modern society. These applications are the new generation's easy and steadfast avenues not only for communication but also for self-expression.

Students today are all "native speakers" of the digital language of computers, video games and the Internet. The first generations of these speakers are presently in kindergarten through college. Less than 5,000 hours are spent by college graduates in reading, but they devote 10,000 hours playing video games. Playing computer games, e-mailing, surfing the Internet, using cell phones, and instant messaging have become fundamental parts of living (Prensky, 2001).

The minority language used in varied networks depends on the activity of the teenagers (Jongbloed-Faber, 2015). The most commonly used social media platform is WhatsApp. Frisian is used more frequently in sending and receiving personal messages.

It is used the least in Facebook status updates. It was further shown that Frisian has been included in the domain of writing in social media platforms. It is perceived that the use of Frisian in that domain will escalate its language vitality.

In the progressive language studies of Androutsopoulos (2012; 2013; 2014) among German teenagers with Greek backgrounds, results indicated that using a minority or migrant language online is not always valued. Majority languages were more encouraged to be used. There were limitations in using a minority language such as in formulaic discourse purposes and citations. Strategies used to maximize the audience include choosing a language with the most number of speakers, using multiple languages or consecutive messages to address contacts, and avoiding the use of language, instead, use pictures, videos and emoticons.

The studies previously mentioned demonstrate that using a speaker's minority language on social media as avenues and tools for the survival of that language is a challenge. Thus this study explored the language used by Manobo students in social networking sites. It determined the participants' proficiency and fluency in the use of the language as well as the factors that were influential to it.

### *The Agusan Manobo*

Being a teacher-education university and multicultural education hub, the research locale strengthens its heartfelt desire to reach out to the community, to the people who are diverse in ethnicity, language and culture in general. Such are indigenous students from Region 13 (Caraga) who belonged to the Manobo ethnic tribe. Their language known as Agusan Manobo'or Ninitibo is a minority language from an Austronesian origin. It is largely used as medium of communication among people living in specific provinces in Northeastern Mindanao predominantly

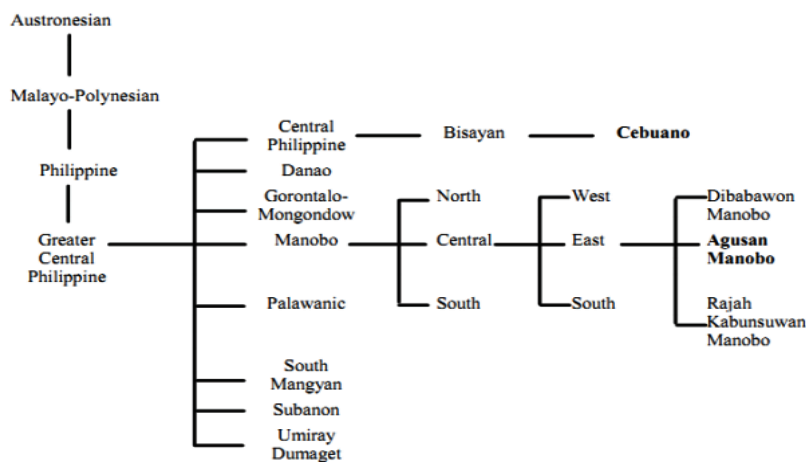


Figure 1 The Agusan Manobo Language Tree (Campos, 2009)

in Agusan del Sur, Agusan del Norte, and Surigao del Sur. Initial studies on Agusan Manobo was conducted by Campos (2009) on the language attitudes of local speakers of the language.

The Agusan Manobo language was originated from the branch of the Austronesian language family which is the Malayo-Polynesian. Hence, there are 15 documented sub-groups of the Manobo language. This study focuses on the Agusan Manobo language spoken by select students of a multicultural teacher education university in Mindanao. Figure one shows the broad language family to which the Agusan Manobo belongs.

### Purposes of the study

The concerns for language shift and death were deliberated by Hoffman (2009). Language loss would lead to the loss of identity which would lead to the loss of other culturally significant practices that are dependent on the language and disruption in the transmission of cultural knowledge. With the advent of the World Wide Web, the danger of digital language death (Kornai, 2013) is a compelling occurrence to endangered languages. Three observable

signs of impending death of a language are loss of function, loss of prestige, and loss of competence. Thus, documenting and preserving a minority language such as the Agusan Manobo is significant both for social and cultural reasons.

The primary objective of this study was to examine the extent of use of Agusan Manobo in online networking sites and to identify factors that influence this minority language by Manobo students. Specifically, this study aimed to seek answers to the following questions:

1. How often do Manobo students use Agusan Manobo in following situations:
  - 1.1. status updates on Facebook?
  - 1.2. private messages through Facebook?
  - 1.3. send a regular Tweet?
  - 1.4. Tweets to someone or in direct messages?
2. What is the level of proficiency of Manobo students in the Agusan Manobo language in the following

linguistic skills:

2.1. listening

2.2. speaking

2.3. reading

2.4. writing

3. Is there a relationship of the frequency of students' use of Agusan Manobo and language on social media and their proficiency in Agusan Manobo language when grouped according to mother tongue?

3.1. Cebuano

3.2. Manobo

4. What factors influence the use or non-use of Agusan Manobo language among Manobo students in social media?

the usage of the Agusan Manobo language in social networking sites by Manobo students enrolled in a teacher education university and multicultural education hub and identify explanatory factors that influence the usage or non-usage of this minority language.

### *Participants*

The participants of the current study were the 123 Manobo students enrolled for the third term of academic year 2015-2016 in a teacher education university and multicultural hub. However, only 114 students were the actual respondents due to inevitable circumstances. They were composed of 30 first year students, 26 second year students, 36 third year students and 22 fourth year students. Permission to conduct the study was sought from the office of the Director for Multicultural Education, Linkages and Extension (MELES) to secure a complete roster of Manobo students in the university for the current school year. A letter was also sent to the Executive Director through the Dean for Academics to be allowed to conduct the said study and be given the chance to administer the questionnaire to the identified Manobo students in the university for the current school year. Table 1 reflects in detail the participants' profile in terms of age, sex, and mother tongue.

## **Methodology**

### *Research Design*

This study utilized both quantitative and qualitative descriptive types of research because it aimed to examine the scope of

**Table 1**

*Profile of Participants*

#### **According to Age**

Age	First Year	%	Second Year	%	Third Year	%	Fourth Year	%	Total	%
16	2	1.75	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	1.75
17	12	10.53	4	3.51	0	0	0	0	16	14.04
18	8	7.02	13	11.40	8	7.02	0	0	29	25.44
19	3	2.63	5	4.39	18	15.79	3	2.63	29	25.44
20 and above	5	4.39	4	3.51	10	198.77	19	16.67	36	31.58
Total	30	26.32	26	22.81	36	31.58	22	19.30	114	100

### According to Sex

Sex	First Year	%	Second Year	%	Third Year	%	Fourth Year	%	Total	%
Male	8	7.02	11	9.65	9	7.89	4	3.5	32	28.07
Female	22	19.30	15	13.16	27	23.68	18	15.8	82	71.93
Total	30	26.32	26	22.81	36	31.58	22	19.3	114	100.00

### According to Mother Tongue (L1)

Mother Tongue	First Year	%	Second Year	%	Third Year	%	Fourth Year	%	Total	%
Manobo	6	5.26	9	7.89	3	2.61	4	3.52	22	19.30
Cebuano	21	18.42	15	13.16	31	26.96	15	13.16	82	71.93
Filipino	2	1.75	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	1.75
Talacognon	0	0	1	.88	2	1.74	3	2.63	6	5.26
Butuanon	1	.88	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	.88
Boholano	0	0	1	.88	0	0	0	0	1	.88
Total	30	22.81	26	22.81	36	31.30	22	19.30	114	100

### Instrument

This study used a modified questionnaire developed by Jongbloed-Faber (2015). The questionnaire which originally contained 56 questions was narrowed to 48 questions to suit the setting of the current study. The questionnaire included personal information, questions on the attitudes towards the Agusan Manobo language, general language use, use in social media, in schools, and general information. The questions sought information on the students' use of Agusan Manobo, Cebuano, Filipino, English and other spoken languages on two predominantly used social networking sites: Facebook and Twitter. A Focused Group discussion (FGD) was also conducted to select Manobo students to add to the descriptive character of the study. The Jeffersonian Transcript Notation was used.

### Data Collection

The respondents were notified through a letter posted in the school's bulletin board and during class time since the researchers were their subject instructors of the respondents. The questionnaires were filled in during a special schedule, to ensure the participation of all concerned students in

class. The data were collected on the third week of February 2016. The use of Agusan Manobo in Facebook in terms of their status updates and sending private messages and Twitter in terms of their regular tweets and direct messages were examined. When talking about the mother tongue of all Manobo students in the university, the complete sample was used to analyze the Agusan Manobo self-reported proficiency. To assess their skills in listening, speaking, reading and writing skills, a five-point Likert scale was used with 1-not at all, 2-with difficulty, 3-reasonably, 4-well, and 5-very well. The factors which were influential in the use or non-use of Agusan Manobo language among the participants were explored during a Focused Group discussion (FGD) to add to the descriptive character of the study. The FGD, which lasted for 42 minutes and 52 seconds, was conducted to six select Manobo students coded from S1 to S6. They were all proficient in speaking, listening, reading, and writing skills (Table 2). A personal letter of invitation was given to the participants and a consent form was secured also from them prior to the FGD. The responses were transcribed, translated, and thematically arranged for the purpose of addressing the research questions of the present study.

**Table 2***Self-Reported Agusan Manobo Proficiency of Manobo Students*

Students	Listening	Speaking	Reading	Writing	Overall Mean	Interpretation
First Year	2.27	2.10	2.43	2.07	2.22	with difficulty
Second Year	2.81	2.50	2.81	2.54	2.66	reasonable
Third Year	2.36	1.92	2.39	1.72	2.10	with difficulty
Fourth Year	2.23	1.86	1.86	1.68	1.91	with difficulty

### *Data Analysis*

Statistical measures were used in the treatment of data. The responses to the different questions undertaken by the respondents were gathered and tabulated. The percentage of the profile and the responses were taken. Mean was used to assess the self-reported level of proficiency in Agusan Manobo and the frequency of the students' use of Agusan Manobo in different social media platforms (Facebook and Twitter). Pearson correlation was employed to identify the relationship of the students' mother tongue, the frequency of students' use of Agusan Manobo language on social media and their proficiency in Agusan Manobo language.

## **Results and Discussion**

### *The Use of Agusan Manobo on Social Media*

During the FGD, the students were asked about their daily time allotment (hours per day) in using social networking sites such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram; however, all the participants of the FGD only have accounts in Facebook. Most of them said that they have the chance to check their Facebook accounts as often as they could as they need to check posts of quizzes, assignments or announcements in their Edmodo account, a Flexible Learning Delivery site which is part of the Outcomes-Based Teacher Education Curriculum (OBTEC) that the university is adopting.

As stipulated by Carroll (2008), bilinguals have complex varied language behavior on social networks which also varies in online platforms. When asked how often they use Agusan Manobo in their status updates in Facebook, they responded that they very seldom use it. S3 narrated that her last status update on Facebook in Manobo language was during her graduation in high school.

The participants mentioned that they send private messages in Facebook to friends who are also speaking Agusan Manobo. S1 mentioned that one time, somebody asked him to teach how to speak the language in a private message, and so he taught the person by messaging in Agusan Manobo. This supports the findings of Jongbloed-Faber (2015), that a minority language is used in varied networks depending on the activity of the participants.

### *Proficiency in Agusan Manobo*

Proficiency in one's heritage language indicates the strength of ethnic identity and affiliation in his or her ethnic group (Oh & Fuligni, 2010). The Agusan Manobo is the language spoken by the Manobos, the most dominant tribe in the province of Agusan del Sur. Proficiency in this particular minority language contributes to its use and maintenance in the society. The self-reported language proficiency of the Manobo students differ in listening, speaking, reading and writing as presented in Table 2.

Nevertheless, the FGD participants were proficient “kaamu” in speaking, listening, reading and writing the Agusan Manobo language. It was revealed that all six of them came from the same high school, Divine Word Manobo Cultural Development Academy Foundation, Incorporated (DWMCDAFI) founded and ran by a priest missionary, Rev. Fr. Ruby Tagaro.

Overall, it was implied that most of the Manobo students in the present study had difficulty in listening, speaking, reading, and writing in their minority language. The participants were well aware of the need and significance to be proficient in Agusan Manobo but lacked the linguistic skills in so doing. This signifies the important role of the parents, school, and K to 12 educators and policy makers in the language maintenance and use of the minority language (Yu, 2013). Educational reforms and initiatives to address these existing problems are vital for the survival of the Agusan Manobo language.

#### *Frequency of Students' Use of Agusan Manobo Language on Social Networking Sites*

Linking and solidifying linguistic communities and reviving endangered languages are possible through the Internet and other electronic technologies (Cunliffe, et.al., 2013). Hence, the role of these modern technology and communication media have great impact in language use. Results on the frequency of students' use of Agusan Manobo language on social networking sites reveal that Manobo students generally had minimal use of the minority language in their online communication.

The Manobo first year students' use of the minority language in updating their statuses and sending private messages both had a mean of 1.67 which meant that they use Agusan Manobo now and then in Facebook. It was also found out that students never use the language in regular tweets or direct messages in Twitter as the mean is 1 (never).

Among the second year Manobo students, the use of Agusan Manobo in updating their statuses in Facebook had a mean of 1.42 (never), sending private messages had a mean of 1.5 (now and then), regular tweets in Twitter had a mean of 1.19 (never), and direct messages in Twitter had a mean of 1.19 (never). It could be interpreted that the students never used the Agusan Manobo language in Facebook and Twitter since the overall mean is only 1.33.

As for the third year Manobo students, it was found out that the use of Agusan Manobo in updating their statuses in Facebook had a mean of 1.19 (never), sending private messages had a mean of 1.19 (never), regular tweets in Twitter had a mean of 1.06 (never), and direct messages in Twitter had a mean of 1.06 (never). Thus, it could be inferred that the students never used the Agusan Manobo language in Facebook and Twitter since the overall mean is only 1.13.

Almost the same results were gathered among the fourth year Manobo students as their use of Agusan Manobo in updating their statuses in Facebook had a mean of 1.27 (never), sending private messages had a mean of 1.32 (never), regular tweets in Twitter had a mean of 1.05 (never), and direct messages in Twitter had a mean of 1.09 (never). As such, it could be concluded that the students never used the Agusan Manobo language in Facebook and Twitter since the overall mean is only 1.18.

These findings were most likely to happen since majority language content dominates social media (Cunliffe, 2019). What is alarming in this data trend is that language representation in the internet contributes to the survival of that language. This denotes that if a minority language such as the Agusan Manobo language, is not represented online, it could have a great impact in its subsistence.



*Relationship of Frequency of Students' Use of Agusan Manobo Language on Social Media and their Proficiency in the Language*

The internet has permanent effect on languages though it is too early to identify as it has been used for around twenty years, there are signs of changes in everyday speech and writing (Crystal, 2014). Such foreseen occurrences are vital to note when frequency of use in social media and proficiency in the minority language are to be considered, particularly in the status of Agusan Manobo. When grouped according to mother tongue, significant findings were noted in the study.

It was identified that dominantly, there were eighty-two (82) Manobo students who had Cebuano as their mother tongue while twenty-two (22) Manobo students had Agusan Manobo. Other mother tongue languages included Talacognon, Filipino, Butuanon and Boholano but the number of speakers was considered insignificant to the current study.

The findings on the frequency of students' use of Agusan Manobo language on social media show that the use of Agusan Manobo in updating their statuses in Facebook had a mean of 1.39 (never), sending private messages had a mean of 1.41 (never), regular tweets in Twitter had a mean of 1.07 (never), and direct messages in Twitter had a mean of 1.08 (never). So, it could be inferred that the Manobo students in PNU Mindanao never used the Agusan Manobo language in Facebook and Twitter since the overall mean is only 1.24.

Results of the Manobo students' listening proficiency had a mean of 2.41 (with difficulty), their speaking proficiency had a mean of 2.09 (with difficulty), their reading proficiency had a mean of 2.39 (with difficulty) and, their writing proficiency had a mean of 1.99 (with difficulty). It can be deduced that the students had a difficulty

in all the language skills since their overall mean is 2.22.

As for the 82 Manobo students who had Cebuano as their mother tongue, their frequency of use of the Agusan Manobo language in social networking sites and their proficiency in the Manobo language were analyzed using Pearson  $r$ , it was found out that the value of correlation is 0.386575. Thus, the relationship of these variables to Cebuano mother tongue is insignificant or very slight.

The 22 Manobo students who had Agusan Manobo as their mother tongue, their frequency of use of the Agusan Manobo language on social networking sites and their proficiency in the Manobo language were likewise analyzed using the same statistical tool. Based on the results, the value of correlation is only 0.247846 which meant that the relationship of the given variables to Agusan Manobo as mother tongue is also insignificant or weak.

These substantial results indicate a loss of competence of the minority language which is one of the signs of digital language death (Kornai, 2013). The participants were considered semi-speakers who understand the culture of their older generation; however, they never used the Agusan Manobo language in social networking sites and most of them struggle in their linguistic skills of the minority language. The proficiency of the FGD participants in the Manobo could be attributed to the notion of Golla, Starr, and Ferreira (2015) that the number of speakers is influential than the frequency of use for the prediction of proficiency of a minority language spoken at home.

*Influential Factors on the Use of Manobo in Social Networking Sites*

Most of the participants are multilinguals and their language preference in face to face or online communication are influenced by a

number of factors. As Cunliffe (2013) claimed, social media have significant roles in terms of language use and shaping of perceptions of a minority language. It was found out in the current enquiry that language use with friends and one's attitude are the strong factors that influence the participants' use of Manobo in social networking sites and not their mother tongue.

*Language use with friends.* It was found out that Facebook is the most common platform of social media that the first year Manobo students are using. All of the FGD subjects knew how to speak, read, and write the Agusan Manobo language but they use the language only in selective instances such as updating their status and sending messages in Facebook. However, these statuses and private messages are used very seldom and only when the contact person also understands the language. The students never used Manobo language in Twitter and Instagram. These results could be related to the notion of Lillehaugen (2019) that smaller languages are often devalued by surrounding communities. The use of language in global media, such as Facebook, can be a form of language activism in itself. This means that not all speakers of a language may want to write their language on social media. There may be individuals who do not wish to share their language with people who are not part of their speech community.

*Attitude towards the Language.* When the select students were asked about how they feel about the Manobo language, they shared that they were proud of being Manobos because their tribe is dominant in Agusan. This could be associated to the impression that when minority children have positive feelings about their own ethnic identities, they will exhibit higher self-esteem (Bradford, Burrell, & Mabry, 2004). The students take pride in knowing the language and being able to speak and write it for some reasons. S1 shared that one of his advocacies as a student is to uplift the Manobo language.

The student attested that:

"In some researcher mam (.) especially diri sa atong campus mam (.) useful kaayo (.) useful kayo nga (.) > kabalo ka mag-istorya ug Manobo o kabalo ka mosulat ug Minanubu kay (.) mao man ang ilang focus sa ilang research." <

(In some researcher, especially in the campus, it is very useful that one knows how to speak Manobo or write in Manobo because it is their focus in research.)

When asked about the usefulness of the Agusan Manobo to friends, S6 stated that:

"Dili kaayo sya useful (.) kay kanang (.) ang uban gani mam kay (.) dili kasabot ug Minanubo so (.) di kayo sya magamit."

(It was not very useful because others could not understand Minanubo so it was not used often.)

When asked how important proficiency in Agusan Manobo is they mentioned that the language is important to communicate with other people who belong in their tribe. It is likewise significant in knowing the lives of their ancestors.

When asked about their opinion on some statements such as the following:

1. People living in Agusan should be speakers of the minority language.

S4 mentioned that:

"Dapat mam kay (.) diri baya sa Agusan daghan baya ang manubo (.) dapat man jud kabalo (.) pero ang uban kay dili kabalo kay (.) kanang (.) di sila proud >aww kanang di sila kabalo kay maulaw sila (.) di sad sila proud = di nila isulti

mam maulaw sila.”

(It should be because there are many Manobos here in Agusan. They should be able to speak the language. Others don't know the language because they are not proud. They don't know because they are shy. They are not proud and they don't speak because they are ashamed.)

2. People living in Agusan should understand the Manobo language.

S1 commented that:

“Yes mam, kay sa Agusan man gud mao jud na ang territory sa Manobo dyud (.) Ug kinahanglan dyud nga makasabot tanan ug (.) one factor pud kay usahay limtan nila (.) usahay kanang (.) ikaulaw nila mam ba ikaulaw nila nga Manobo sila tungod sa mga (.) <practices and traditions mam>.”

(Yes mam, because Agusan is the territory of the Manobos. There is a need that everyone should understand. One factor also is that people forget. Sometimes they are ashamed of that they are Maobos because of their practices and traditions.)

3. Manobo speaking parents should speak Cebuano with their children.

S2 commented that:

“Dapat ang anak, (.) kibali parents nimo is Manobo (.) so (.) dapat is kung mag istorya sad ka sa ilaha is Manobo pud para makuan nila (.) makasundog sila or kanang ma (.) maanad pud sila mag-istorya ug Manobo.’

(Manobo parents should speak in Minanubo with their children so they could imitate and would get used to speaking the language.)

4. Children growing up in Agusan should be given Manobo classes at school.

S5 reasoned that:

“Kay para dili pud nila kuan (.) makalimtan kung unsa sila >kung asa sila naggikan< unya kuan(.) mapadayon ilang tribo.”

(So they would not forget where they came from and for their tribe to flourish.)

All of the subjects of the FGD came from the same school in high school, the Divine Word Manobo Cultural Development Academy Foundation, Incorporated (DWMCDAFI) founded by Rev. Fr. Ruby Tagaro. The students revealed that they were all scholars in the school since everything was free. They had both Manobo and non-Manobo teachers who most of the time speak to them in Agusan Manobo. Other students from the said school were enrolled in other universities like in University of the Immaculate Conception (UIC) in Davao City.

S1 stated that:

“Daghan man dyuy mga opportunity para ma scholar sa mga Manobo mam (.) ang problema lang is (.) kung makapasa (.) naa man dyuy mga exam (.) exam ana makapasar ka (.) makakuha dyud kag scholarship,mam.”

(There are many opportunities once you are a Manobo scholar. The problem is passing the qualifying examinations. You would really get the scholarship.)

5. Bilingualism is beneficial for a child's development.

The subjects confirmed that in their homes, they speak mixed or different languages (Manobo-Cebuano). Such

scenario is defended by the students by stressing out the importance of learning and speaking Manobo and other languages. S6 attested that:

“Importante nga makabalo ka’g Manobo (.) para ma preserve ang inyuhang culture nya >para dili sya malimtan < para (.) naa ra gihapon sya (.) then sa Bisaya (.) (Cebuano) importante sya nga makabalo kag Bisaya (Cebuano) o Tagalog (Filipino) kay (.) para sa imohang interaksyon sa (.) uban tao nga dili (.) mga Manobo <para maka-communicate ra pud ka sa ila>”

(It is vital that you know how to speak Manobo to preserve the culture so it wouldn't be forgotten. It is likewise important to learn Bisaya or Cebuano and Tagalog or Filipino for interacting with non-Manobo people to communicate with them.)

When asked why Filipino and English should be learned, the students cited that there is a need since Filipino is the national language in the country. English accordingly should be learned to be able to speak the language when one goes abroad. English is useful to be learned in school so that when they become teachers so one could communicate to others. Furthermore, when asked if they mix languages in daily conversations, they mentioned that they use Manobo-Cebuano most of the times in their daily conversations with peers and even in their households. English- Manobo and Filipino-Manobo are seldom used in school because few students speak Agusan Manobo. Filipino-English and Cebuano-English is also commonly used in the classroom especially during class discussions.

The select students shared that they are very proud of their Agusan Manobo language because it is the language of the Manobo tribe which they belong. It also gives students opportunities

especially in availing scholarships from the provincial government and even from Non-government Organizations (NGOs). They are also well aware that their knowledge in speaking, listening, writing and understanding of the Agusan Manobo language is very useful for the university because the institution is a multicultural hub. Hence, one of the major focus in research is on the Manobo people's culture, tradition and language. Yet accordingly, there are Manobo students who know the Agusan Manobo language very well but were withdrawn to use the language because of fear of social discrimination. This negative attitude of the speakers towards their indigenous language could be related to the attitudes of the government, language policy makers, public institutions, and the degraded status of indigenous languages as viewed by Adegajo (2010). Despite the anxiety, the FGD respondents still adhere to the idea that people living in Agusan should speak and understand the Agusan Manobo language. As such, they look forward to an inclusion of this minority language in the curriculum of the university.

## Conclusion and Recommendations

The study explored the scope of the usage of the Agusan Manobo language in social networking sites. It also aimed to ascertain influential factors in the use of this minority language. Since the study is only limited to the Manobo students enrolled in the current research locale, it does not represent the entire Manobo studentry in Caraga region. Despite the limitation, significant findings were gathered which have strong implications to the school culture of the university which was designated as the Multicultural Education Hub in the country.

The institution is home to students of diverse ethnicity, language, and culture in general. Hence, relevant policies on the use of Agusan Manobo in the campus could be

designed to support the present initiatives in establishing the academe's niche as an internationally recognized and nationally responsive teacher education university specializing in multicultural education. Language policies could be developed in the campus as they are expressions of a long-lasting linguistic culture (Schiffman and Ricento, 2006). Inclusion of the linguistic features and usage of Agusan Manobo in the undergraduate curriculum of the university is suggested.

In addition, the findings of the present study could empower the indigenous student organizations in the tertiary levels to serve as support group for students of different linguistic and cultural backgrounds. Such endeavors could ripple positive effects of encouraging the notion and practice of inclusive education in higher education institutions. Future research directions of this study could focus on developing school, home, and online language programs which would help improve students' language proficiency of their indigenous languages.

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