



LANGUAGE USE AND ATTITUDE OF TALAANDIG AND HIGAONON NETIZENS TOWARDS BINUKID LANGUAGE MAINTENANCE

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ABSTRACT

This study analyzed the use of a Philippine indigenous language called Binukid on social media among the Talaandig and Higaonon Indigenous cultural communities in Bukidnon Mindanao, Philippines. It also investigated their attitude toward maintaining the Binukid language through social media platforms such as Facebook, YouTube, and TikTok. Drawing from qualitative and quantitative data, the study found that the Binukid language was used across various forms shared and cross-posted on different social media platforms, gaining greater use, visibility, and significance. Thus, social media platforms sparked more significant opportunities for Binukid language maintenance. Additionally, it offered the Binukid language an avenue to be used in different types of text genres, which are unavailable in traditional communication. The study also found that social media has made the Binukid language more trend adaptive as it was used in different creative forms and modern communication styles. The Talaandig and Higaonon netizens valorized their heritage language via digital technologies, raising its social prestige online. Moreover, the efforts of the Talaandig and Higaonon netizens to post Binukid content were found to emanate from their language attitude. They portrayed a very high level of positive attitude towards preserving their ethnic language, thereby contributing to the maintenance of the Binukid language.

Keywords: *Binukid, Talaandig, Higaonon, language maintenance, social media*

INTRODUCTION

Indigenous languages are minoritized and prone to extinction. About half of today's spoken languages may die by the end of the century, with one language disappearing on average every two weeks (Flores, 2008). Minority languages, like the heritage languages of Indigenous cultural communities, are the most vulnerable to these threats. If such a language disappearance happens, Indigenous people's intimate knowledge of the environment and ecosystems may eventually vanish, and the unique expressions of the human experience of the world, which are fundamental in answering questions of the future, may irrevocably be lost (Strochlic, 2018). One major factor behind this problem is that, due to certain social conditions, several Indigenous children shift to dominant languages instead of their heritage language. Degawan (2019) posits that in the Philippines, indigenous languages do not just distinguish one's lineage or membership in a community but also possess the moral principles of their predecessors. People's indigenous knowledge systems, which are essential to their existence, and the goals and hopes of their youth are all carried by their ethnic language. Hence, maintaining indigenous languages is indispensable in safeguarding indigenous cultures.

In maintaining minority languages, social media networks provide beneficial opportunities as they set forth avenues for online interaction to bring indigenous languages back to fruition and cease language loss. Different social media platforms are used by 3.8 billion people worldwide (Dollarhide, 2021), connecting people in various ways. As the University of South Florida (2011) introduced, social media is "an internet-based form of communication, which allows users to have conversations, share information, and create web content. There are many forms of social media, including blogs, micro-blogs, wikis, social networking sites, photo-sharing sites, instant messaging, video-sharing sites, podcasts, widgets, virtual worlds, and more" (p. 2). It was also added that on a personal level, social media helps users interact with friends and family, learn new things, develop new interests, and be entertained. In the Philippines alone, the Global Digital Report (2019) has shown that 76 million active Filipino social media users, comprising 71 percent of the entire population, spend an average of four hours daily on different social media platforms.

Moreover, Galla (2018) espoused that social media platforms can record, preserve, analyze, manipulate, and transmit languages in myriad ways. It can make minority languages like indigenous languages more visible in a broader communication span (Bhroin, 2015). Significantly, digital technology has created new domains for engagement and interaction for

indigenous language speakers. The online presence of indigenous languages raises their 'social prestige in a community' in some way, such that these languages are worthy, relevant, and necessary amidst languages of wider communication (Galla, 2010; 2016). Digital technology allows indigenous languages to co-exist and share 'space' with dominant languages, which is vital in resisting language decline and loss. Consequently, social media platforms are significant spaces to examine the digital opportunities of minority languages. Social media is a rich source of data that is substantial for linguistic studies since these platforms store conversations and share information among users (University of South Florida, 2011).

However, indigenous language maintenance greatly relies on community-based initiatives. Preservation efforts directly depend on the efforts of native speakers, particularly through consistent use of their mother tongue. Their attitude towards preserving their own language is crucial in the maintenance process, such as using the language in various domains and forms of communication. Keegan et al. (2015) posit that language revitalization efforts cannot be realized without due cooperation of the language community. Thus, it is also vital to examine Indigenous communities' attitudes toward using their language across different areas of communication. This is crucial as an initial step to assess how the community behaves when it comes to the use of their heritage language.

A wide array of literature canvassing pertinent to Indigenous Language Revitalization (ILR) efforts highlighted the following major areas: Indigenous Language Revitalization (ILR) on social media, especially Twitter and Facebook; the role of Indigenous youths in ILR efforts; the impact of digital technologies in preserving minority languages; and the attitude and motivation of Indigenous communities towards the preservation of their heritage language (Abu-Irmies & Al-Khanji, 2019; Galla, 2016, 2018; Putra, 2018; Lackaff & Moner, 2018; Rivron, 2012; Szecsi & Silagyi, 2012). For example, Ligidima and Makananisen (2020) examined the impact of social media in promoting indigenous African languages and found that social media platforms like WhatsApp boosted underrepresented and marginalized African languages. Cassels (2019) also contended that social media platforms allow the connection of geographically disjunct Indigenous groups and facilitate support and awareness between different indigenous language revitalization movements internationally. The use of indigenous languages in new media sparks metalinguistic reflection among users and increases the legitimacy of indigenous languages as relevant and modern modes of communication.

Apart from the fact that there has been a scarcity of information about indigenous language maintenance in the context of social media platforms

in the Philippines, the knowledge about ILR in digital spaces is still in its infancy and needs further understanding. Prior studies have focused mainly on Twitter and Facebook as social media platforms with language-maintaining qualities. To advance previous knowledge, the current study extended the scope to other platforms like YouTube and TikTok since, based on the initial data hunting, the Binukid language also exists on these sites. Moreover, the forms within which indigenous languages are used are barely distinguishable from the previous studies. The term ‘forms’ is crucial in the present study as it pertains to how a text exists or appears (Oxford Languages, n.d.). This study operationally defines ‘form’ as the particular type of text in which the Binukid language appears on the social media posts by the Talaandig and Higaonon netizens, such as vlogs, hashtags, memes, news events, songs, poetry, etc.

In a bid to explore language attitude and digital opportunities for Indigenous languages, this study analyzed the use of the Binukid language on social media platforms among the Talaandig and Higaonon netizens, as well as their attitude toward using this indigenous language online. The Talaandig and Higaonon are ethnolinguistic groups in the Province of Bukidnon in Mindanao, Philippines. The Talaandigs have continued to preserve and promote their indigenous customs, beliefs, and practices despite the strong influx of modernization and change. This group is found in barangays and municipalities surrounding the mountain of Kitanglad, specifically in the towns of Lantapan and Talakag (Talamdan, 2001, as cited in Province of Bukidnon, 2012). Additionally, Talaandig comes from the word “andig,” which is associated with people living on slopes, known to be steep area dwellers (Province of Bukidnon, 2012). According to Saway (n.d.), there are around 100,000 Talaandig people in Bukidnonin, which Mt. Kitanglad ranges, with its highest point of 2,938 meters above ocean level in Dulangdulang Mountain, constitute their region. On the other hand, the Higaonons live in the mountainous parts of Misamis Oriental, the Bukidnon plateau, and the eastern and western mountain boundaries of the provinces of Agusan and Lanao, respectively. The Higaonon population in a 15-20-kilometer radius is estimated to be between 10,000 and 20,000 people (Province of Bukidnon, n.d.). The name Higaonon is derived from the words “higa” meaning living, the word “goan”, which means mountains, and the word “onon” meaning people. Altogether, these words form the description of the tribe as “people of the living mountains”; some also call them “people of the wilderness” (Jong, 2010). However, only the Higaonons from Bukidnon are involved in this study.

The Talaandigs and Higaonons are two separate ethnic groups but speak the same language, the Binukid. According to Otanes (1992),

although the Binukid language has dialects, part of which are the Talaandig and Higaonon varieties, they are mutually intelligible. The discussion of Otanés (1992) appears that the Binukid dialects that Talaandig and Higaonon people use are the same in terms of grammar, morphology, marking particles, pronouns, verbs, etc. They are also largely similar in phonology except for the dialectical alternation of the phonemes /r/ and /d/. In some inland areas, these sounds are interchanged in certain words such as ‘hadì’ and ‘hari’, ‘hudà’ and ‘hurà’, ‘badut’ and ‘barut’, among others. Binukid has a Latin script writing system, part of the Malayo-Polynesian language group (Edgerton, 2020). It has around 122,000 speakers (Omniglot, 2021). However, with the rapid influx of modernization, Saldua (2011) argued that the use of this language has declined since the younger generation no longer uses it daily.

In this paper, the Talaandig and Higaonon netizens refer to the social media users who belong to the Talaandig and Higaonon indigenous cultural communities in Bukidnon. These social media platforms include Facebook, YouTube, and TikTok. The Indigenous Language Revitalization framework served as the lens for describing how the Binukid language was used and how social media can maintain it. This theory suggests that one way to improve the health of a language is to increase the number of domains where the language is used. On the other hand, the Self-determination Theory, developed by psychologists Edward Deci and Richard Ryan (1985), suggests that people tend to be driven by a need to grow and gain fulfillment. It suggests that people can become self-determined when their needs for competence, connection, and autonomy are fulfilled. Technological determination theory is also a pertinent framework applied in the study. It was developed by McLuhan (1962), who states that media technology shapes how individuals think, feel, and act and how society operates as people move from one technological age to another. Whatever society is using to communicate, people, too, will use it to communicate. Therefore, they will adapt to the medium they use to send and receive messages like everyone else.

This study investigated the importance of the participants’ language use and attitude towards the Binukid language on social media platforms and how these can contribute to maintaining such an ethnic language. The research was done by analyzing the different forms of Binukid posts on social media as evident manifestations of their language attitude. This is a timely and relevant study since the vitality of the Binukid language continues to decline across generations, necessitating more studies and preservation efforts.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This is a mixed-method study where qualitative and quantitative designs were applied to gather and analyze necessary data. A qualitative approach was used to determine the forms of the Binukid posts, while a quantitative approach was employed to measure the participants' attitudes toward using Binukid online. In the analysis, qualitative data (language use) were utilized to support the quantitative data (language attitude); hence, a triangulation between both types of information was set forth. Technically, this is a sociolinguistic type of research since language use and maintenance are significant concepts confined within its discipline. Sociolinguistics studies illustrate how factors like digital technologies shape the way people use their language for different communicative and social purposes.

Sampling Procedure

The qualifying participants in this study were the social media users who belong to the Talaandig and Higaonon tribes of Bukidnon and who also utilized the Binukid language on their social media networks such as Facebook, YouTube, and TikTok. A purposive sampling procedure was used to select the participants with the mentioned affiliation. Moreover, the author followed the Social Network Model, which hypothesized that the closer an individual's network ties with his/her local community are, the closer his/her language approximates to localized vernacular norms (Milroy & Milroy, 1987) to search for the said participants online. It was done by tracking the social connections of the participants, who were also potential prospects for the study.

Research Setting and Participants

Fifty participants were purposely recruited as sources of the desired data for this investigation. More specifically, 40 of them used Facebook (20 Talaandigs and 20 Higaonons), five used YouTube (two Talaandigs and three Higaonons), and five used TikTok (three Talaandigs and two Higaonons). All the participants were members of the Talaandig and Higaonon cultural communities of Bukidnon and who also used the Binukid language in their social media postings. In this investigation, these participants are called as 'netizens,' a portmanteau of the words 'internet' and 'citizen' as in a 'citizen of the net' or 'net citizen,' the Talaandig and Higaonon netizens.

Most of the participants were 'FB (Facebook) friends' of the author, and with the help of Milroy and Milroy's (1987) Social Network Model, the rest of the participants were identified through recommendations and referrals of friends. On TikTok, participants were gathered by manual searching. Here, the author typed in themes such as 'Talaandig,' 'Higaonon,' and 'Binukid language,' and the results appeared. To ensure appropriateness, the author approached these people through Facebook Messenger to verify if they qualify as Talaandig or Higaonon by ethnicity. As soon as these TikTok users agreed to the informed consent, they formed part of the study participants. The same process was performed to find participants on YouTube. The author searched for the mentioned themes, approached the YouTube Binukid-content creators, verified their ethnicity, secured informed consent, and finally counted them as participants.

Research Corpora

The corpora for this study were obtained from the Facebook accounts of 40 participants, the TikTok accounts of five participants, and the YouTube channels of another five participants. These were the sources of information about the forms of the participants' posts using the Binukid language. The data about the attitude of these participants towards the use of the Binukid language was based on the answers in the survey questionnaire.

Data Gathering Procedures

There were two major ways of gathering qualitative (forms of Binukid posts) and quantitative (language attitude) data: content analysis of the data corpora and survey questionnaire. To illustrate, content analysis was used to collect information about the forms of the Binukid posts based on the research corpora (participants' Facebook, YouTube, and TikTok postings). These corpora were saved within multiple drives as screenshot copies for raw data storage purposes. At this stage, the proponent analyzed the Binukid posts of the participants on their Facebook, YouTube, and TikTok accounts to identify the forms of the Binukid posts. Again, the term 'forms' in this study operationally refers to the type or genres of texts such as memes, songs, poetry, news, etc.

For intelligibility purposes, the textual contents of the Binukid posts were translated into English during the data presentation. Significantly, the author is a proficient Binukid speaker who belongs to the Talaandig indigenous cultural community of Bukidnon, which was immensely integral in interpreting Binukid texts during the data analysis. However, to further achieve a much more accurate English translation of the Binukid

texts, the author also double-checked his translations by allowing the owners of the posts to proofread them. In-depth discussions with the participants regarding these English translations were conducted to avoid translation accuracy issues and to retain similar nuances of meanings in both languages.

Finally, an online survey questionnaire was employed to collect data to measure the participants' attitudes in using the Binukid language. This was administered through Facebook Messenger to save time and to make the instrument more accessible. Apart from that, a Binukid and Cebuano translation of the questionnaire was also given for those participants who preferred to have the survey in Binukid and/or Cebuano. The participants who were geographically accessible, however, answered the survey questionnaire in person. As soon as these data were gathered, data interpretation then followed.

Research Instrument

To gather data regarding the forms of the Binukid posts, screenshot copies of the participants' Facebook, YouTube, and TikTok postings were used. On the other hand, the researcher employed a survey questionnaire to measure the participants' language attitudes. This questionnaire underwent reliability testing using Cronbach's Alpha, with a value of .758, which proved its validity.

Method of Data Analysis

Content analysis treated the data to analyze the forms of the Binukid posts by the participants. Here, the researcher performed a coding process called Selective Reduction in which the different forms of the Binukid data were reduced according to categories. In other words, the analysis in this stage involved describing the forms of the Binukid-based data, and these were categorized under relevant themes, such as memes, announcements, personal sentiments, song compositions/translations, poetry, and language lessons, amongst others. To avoid interpretation subjectivity, the researcher only extrapolated as far as the data allowed.

Meanwhile, initially gathered using the survey questionnaire, the participants' attitudes towards Binukid language use on social media were analyzed using descriptive statistics since these variables require frequencies, percentages, weighted means, and verbal interpretation of statistical data.

Finally, the implications pertinent to maintaining the Binukid language via social media platforms were largely based on the combination of qualitative and quantitative data. In other words, the author looked at the forms of the Binukid posts as manifestations of their language attitude.

The theoretical frameworks applied in this study were also of paramount importance during the data analysis. The postings using the Binukid language among the participants are crucial ways to preserve such a heritage language, and this was seen through the perspective of Indigenous Language Revitalization Theory (ILR) and Technological Determinism Theory. Furthermore, the participants' attitude was a personal factor that influenced their language use, and this phenomenon was seen through the lens of Self-determination Theory.

Statistical Treatment

Descriptive Statistics were needed for the data analysis to gather quantitative answers regarding the participants' attitudes towards the Binukid use on social media. The analysis of the interval level measured the attitude variable. Here, the scores from each question in the Likert Scale were added to get the total score. Afterward, the proponent determined the frequency, percentage, weighted mean, and verbal interpretation of the scores of the whole sample. The proponent calculated the mode for each question to get the overall impression of the total sample. Finally, tables were created to visualize the frequency, percentage, weighted mean, and verbal interpretation of each item choice.

Ethical Consideration

Participation in this study was informed and voluntary. The participants understood the study's purpose and freely decided to participate. The participants' personal data, mainly the screenshot copies of their posts used in this study, were protected for anonymity and confidentiality purposes. Most importantly, this study passed the Institutional Ethics Review Committee (IERC) of a university in Mindanao. IERC has reviewed the appropriateness of the operational procedures of this study, including the protection of the research participants.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

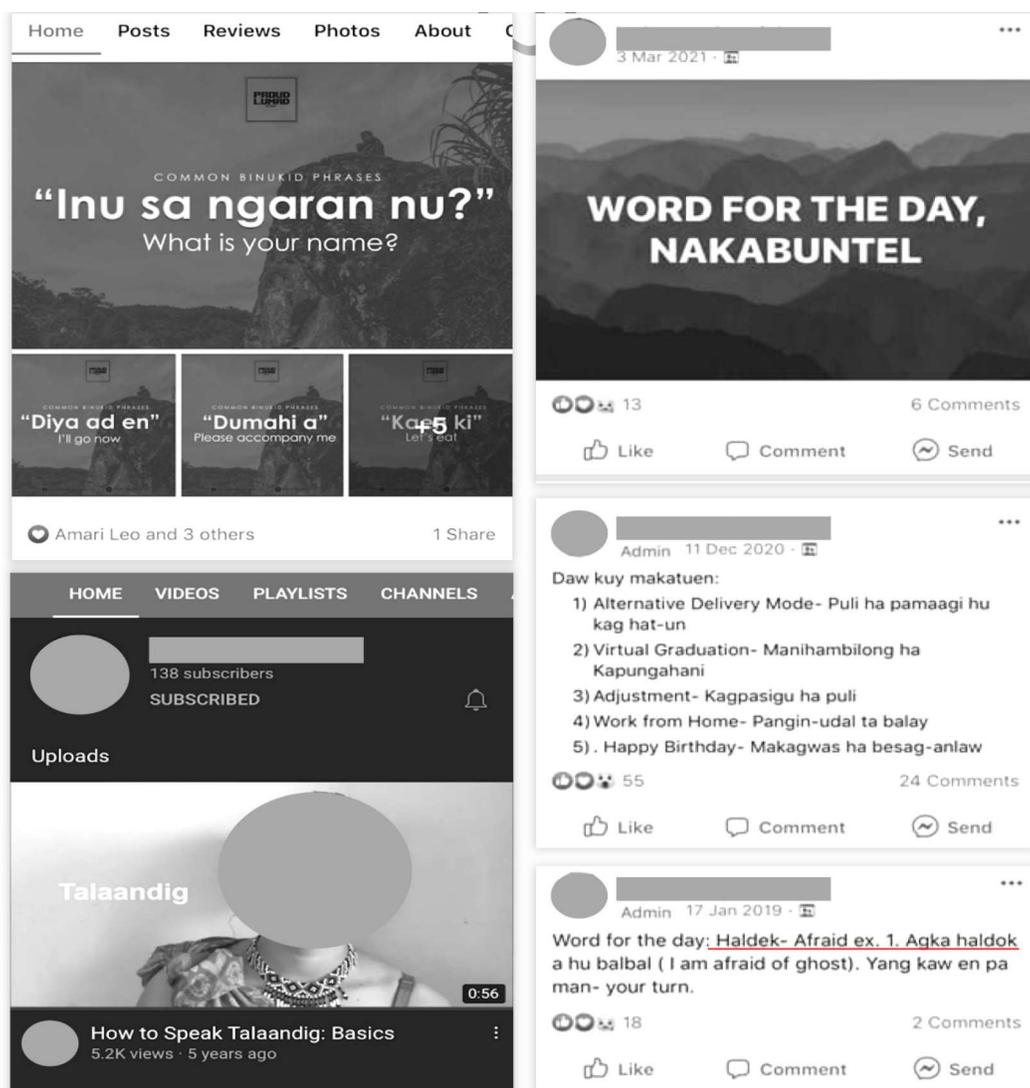
This section delves into the major findings regarding the language use and attitude of the Talaandig and Higaonon netizens regarding using the Binukid language across different social media platforms. A total of 185 (164 from Facebook, eight from TikTok, and 13 from YouTube) social media posts by Talaandig and Higaonon netizens between the years 2011 and 2023 were analyzed. The succeeding subsections discussed the forms (language use) of the Binukid posts and the attitude of the participants towards the use of the Binukid language on social media platforms.

Forms of Binukid Posts by the Talaandig and Higaonon Netizens on Social Media

The study unveiled that the Binukid language was used on social media platforms in various forms. Social media has provided an opportunity for this ethnic language to be used across different text types and genres, which has led to its greater use and visibility in comparison to traditional communication. Indeed, social media platforms transcend minority languages to a greater range of use online (Cassels, 2019). More specifically, the study found that the Binukid language was used online in different forms, which include language lessons, songs, memes, poetry, news events and announcements, questions eliciting important feedback, personal sentiments, and captions reinforcing posts.

Crucial to its maintenance are the language lessons regarding Binukid, which Chew (2021) considered a transformative effort for language education and promotion by the Talaandig and Higaonon netizens. For instance, Figure 1 shows that the participants use the Binukid language to teach Binukid lessons, commonly on Facebook and YouTube in written and video formats. The most common language lessons are Binukid orthography, phonology, vocabulary, common Binukid expressions, greetings, and self-introduction.

Figure 1
Binukid Language Lessons



This finding reflects the interest of the participants in learning and maximizing their proficiency in the Binukid language, which supports Cru's assertion (2018) that social media facilitates spontaneous literacy production and non-prescriptivist language use through postings and comments. More interestingly, it appeared that much like the mainstream languages, *Binukid* also exists in creative and entertaining forms online, such as songs, memes, and poetry. The participants composed their own songs about certain topics using *Binukid* lyrics, translated preexisting songs into *Binukid* versions, and turned some popular music into *Binukid* musical parodies, as reflected in Figure 2.

Figure 2
Binukid Songs



Chew (2021) maintains that these language activities can be indicators of the speakers’ high regard towards Binukid as a significant medium in producing modern communicative forms like hashtags, which are beneficial in preventing minority languages from being dormant. Moreover, elders and other community members use indigenous languages to record songs and stories, which are then shared and promoted on social media platforms as part of their preservation efforts.

Humorous forms of Binukid posts, like memes, were also prevalent. Sharma (2021) defines a meme as an element of a culture of behavior spread from one netizen to another by imitation. Memes are typically humorous images, videos, text, etc., spread rapidly by the netizens with

slight variations. In the case of the Binukid memes, they usually appear in photos and videos that depict humorous content, usually about love and friendship, as in Figure 3. Although the language used is Binukid, their photos, sound effects, ideas, and style, amongst other elements, were commonly imitations from other memes circulated on social media. Bhroin (2015) underscores that creative media like Indigenous tweets and hashtags can facilitate addressing the social need for minority language preservation.

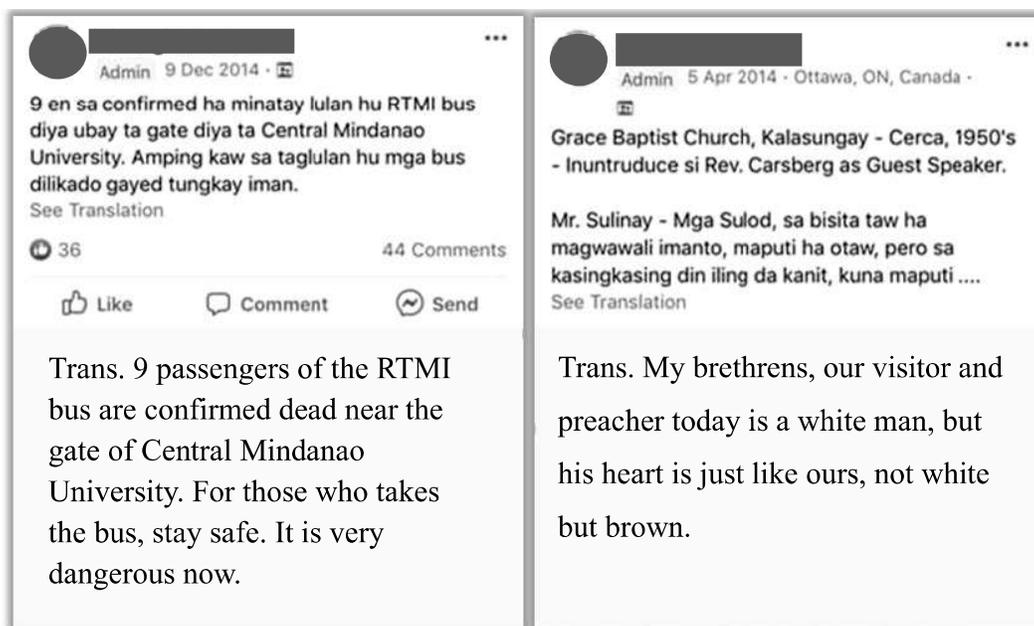
Figure 3
Binukid Memes



Moreover, Binukid poetry is another form of text found in the study. It is considered a pivotal effort in revitalizing the Binukid language as poetry exhibits a reflective and powerful nature for language and literacy enhancement (Newfield, 2015). Poetry is an imaginative expression of reality that evokes an emotional reaction using meaning, tone, and rhythmic language choices (Pardede, 2012). Based on the analysis, the most common examples of Binukid poetry are proverbs and 'hugot lines.' Proverbs are short sentences that people often quote to give advice or to tell something about life. Meanwhile, 'hugot lines' are originally a Filipino language phenomenon that began as a trend in communication in 2015 (De Leon, 2015). These lines pull out certain feelings and emotions about sentimental experiences and memories of a person (Echo, 2015, as cited in Bedoso, 2019). These feelings and emotions are expressed in witty and dramatic statements about love and experiences (Dauz, 2014). Bedoso (2019) argues that 'hugot lines' are classified as poems because they contain elements of poetry. In relation to this, the Binukid 'hugot lines' also depict the participants' life perspectives, frustrations, and romantic experiences, among other subjects. Thus, this paper argues that using Binukid poetry online significantly contributes to language revitalization. Newfield (2015) reconceptualized poetry as a multimodal genre that can be used as an approach to 'rejuvenate literacy' among speakers. This goes hand in hand with Mart's (2021) assertion that the value of poetry in language learning can improve speaker's proficiency in their language's grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation.

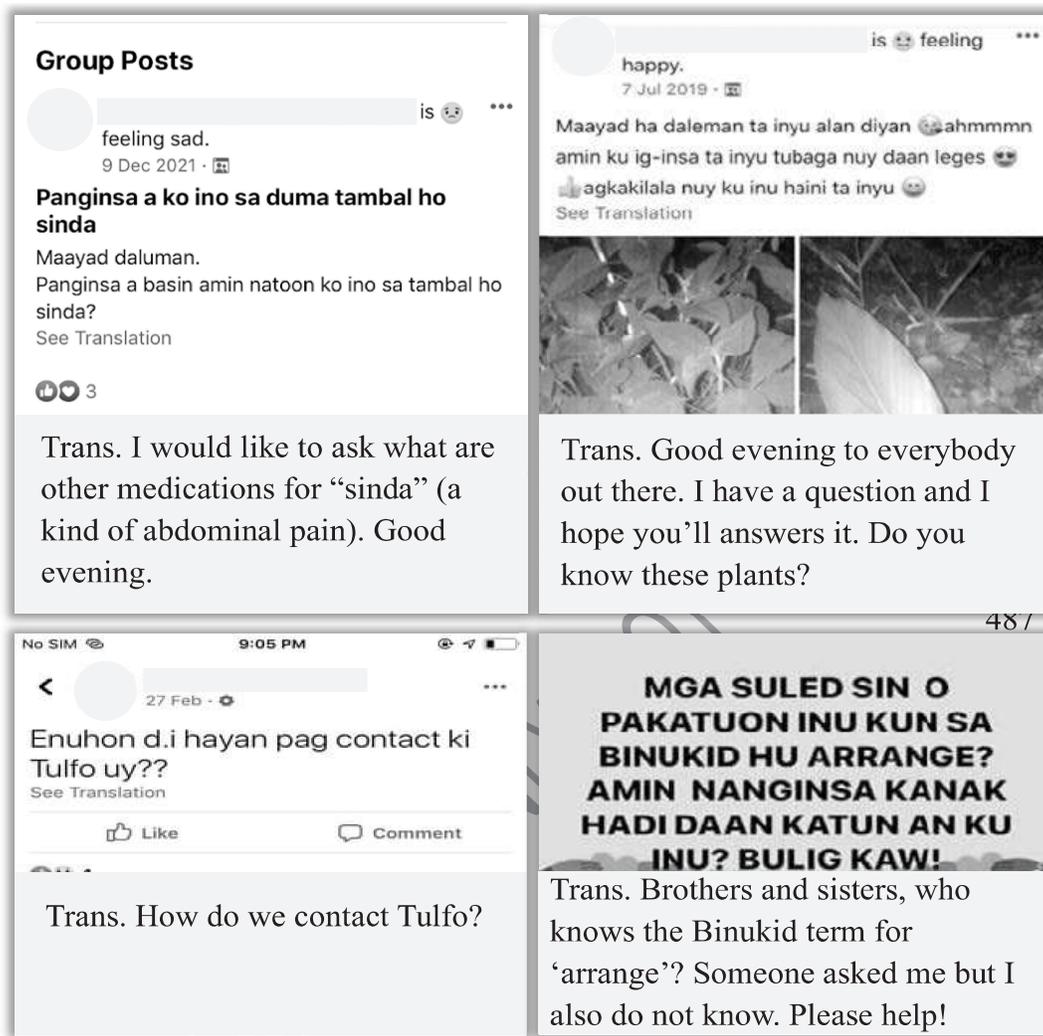
The incorporation of musical compositions, memes, and 'hugot lines' in the Binukid language implies that Binukid is perceived by its speakers as an equally trend-adaptive language termed by Cassels (2019) as 'indigenous language valorization.' She maintains that the presence of Indigenous languages on social media sparks metalinguistic reflection among users and increases the legitimacy of Indigenous languages as relevant and modern modes of communication. In addition, incorporating the 'hashtags' trend in Indigenous languages is considered a form of indigenous language valorization. Thus, this valorization is also evident in the Binukid language as it adopts current communication trends, like songs, memes, and 'hugot lines' among others.

Figure 4
Binukid News and Announcements



The data further reflects that the Binukid language was also used as a medium for spreading news events and announcements regarding specific incidents and subjects, making it a socially significant language, as reflected in Figure 4. These kinds of news and announcements are designed to partition audiences who prefer reading news and updates in their native language. On the other hand, the participants also ask for important information from their network of friends using the Binukid language, resulting in another form of Binukid post categorized by the researcher as 'questions eliciting for important feedback' as in Figure 5. Unlike the other categories previously discussed, posts asking for important information do not have a definite type of text. However, they are merely questions attempting to elicit answers from the other netizens who understand Binukid.

Figure 5
Binukid Questions



Interestingly, other types of Binukid posts of the participants were found that previous literature was not captured yet. These posts were too personal and involved participants’ random thoughts, feelings, reactions, beliefs, judgments, and opinions toward certain things expressed on social media, as found in Figure 6. The researcher categorized these posts as a form of ‘personal sentiment’ as they cannot be considered any other themes like lessons, memes, poetry, etc. Sentiment refers to an attitude, thought, or judgment prompted by feelings and a specific view, opinion, and emotion (Merriam-Webster, 2022). Using the Binukid language to express their personal sentiments supports Abu-Irmies and Al-Khanji (2019), who assert that the Chechen indigenous social media users use their ethnic language to express themselves better.

Figure 6
Binukid Personal Sentiment



Another special form of the Binukid posts on social media is categorized as the <captions reinforcing posts.> Again, this does not take a definite text type or genre, but these kinds of Binukid posts only serve as captions to reinforce the content, be it the participants' own posts or shared posts. The term 'reinforce' means that Binukid captions corroborate, support, or at least relate to the content of the participants' posts. Figure 7(a) and Figure 7(b) illustrate how Binukid captions are used to support and or relate to the content of the participants' own posts.

Figure 7
Binukid Caption



As illustrated in the tables above, the participants used Binukid captions even if their posts had nothing to do with their Talaandig and Higaonon culture and identity. This implies that they see Binukid as a relevant language that can be used regardless of what content the posts entail, for entertainment, news events, religious subjects, personal sentiments, etc. While the posts are associated with the Binukid language and culture, nonindigenous topics are captioned with Binukid. This implication ascertained the contention of Cassel (2019) that Indigenous languages on social media are used without limitation; they are valorized and perceived as a significant medium of communication even in contemporary times.

These use of Binukid language for news events and announcements, online captions, and random personal sentiments of the Talaandig and Higaonon netizens are instances of modern social media communication. Lackaff and Moner (2018) argue that these forms of communication play a crucial role in revitalizing minority languages by providing new platforms for language use and engagement. These social media platforms can support language revitalization and preservation initiatives by fostering contexts that are tolerant of the use of minority languages (Cunliffe, 2018). They also facilitate sustainable language practices by acting as online communities, or “breathing spaces,” for speakers of minority languages (Belmar & Glass, 2019). Further, social media and modern technology are seen as crucial instruments for language revitalization and maintenance, especially in light of the advancement of literacy (Jany, 2018).

The Attitude of the Talaandig and Higaonon Netizens Regarding the Use of Binukid Language on Social Media

As discussed previously, the expanding visibility of the Binukid language across different domains of social media platforms is a manifestation of the participants’ language attitude. As Table 1 suggests, Talaandig and Higaonon netizens hold a very high level of positive attitude in using the Binukid language on various social media platforms, including Facebook, TikTok, and YouTube. This may be attributed to the fact that digital technology, particularly online platforms, provides an opportunity for the participants to learn the Binukid language and to connect with other netizens from the same tribes, Talaandigs and Higaonons.

Table 1

Percentages, Means, and Verbal Interpretation of the Participants' Attitude in Using the Binukid Language Online

Statement	Percentage	Mean	Verbal Interpretation
1. The Binukid language should be used on social media platforms.	72%	4.68	very high level of attitude
2. I feel ashamed when I use the Binukid language on FB/Youtube/TikTok.*	60%	4.40	very high level of attitude
3. Facebook, TikTok, and YouTube, should be available in the Binukid language.	64%	4.56	very high level of attitude
4. I feel awkward and uncomfortable using the Binukid language online.*	62%	4.34	very high level of attitude
5. I get excited when I find something on FB/TikTok/YouTube that used the Binukid language.	86%	4.86	very high level of attitude
6. If I see a post in a language I don't understand, I feel excluded.*	42%	3.68	high level of attitude
7. I admire using Binukid language in different social media apps and settings.	64%	4.62	very high level of attitude
8. I am not interested in using Binukid language on social media platforms like FB, TikTok, and YouTube.*	64%	4.54	very high level of attitude
9. Anyone living in Bukidnon who is Talaandig/Higaonon should be able to understand and speak the Binukid language.	76%	4.76	very high level of attitude
10. It is not necessary to use indigenous languages like Binukid on social media; Bisaya, Filipino, English and other mainstream languages are better.*	64%	4.38	very high level of attitude

*Reversed statements**

Based on the results, most participants firmly believed that the Binukid language should be used on social media platforms. With a weighted mean of 4.40, findings revealed that the participants have a very high level of confidence in using Binukid as they do not have any feelings of shame or awkwardness in using this indigenous language on social media platforms. As a matter of fact, 86% of them experienced excitement when they found something on Facebook, TikTok, and YouTube that utilized the Binukid language. With this, they also feel a high level of inclusion when they see Binukid posts. Additionally, with a weighted mean of 4.56, they believed that Facebook, TikTok, and YouTube should be available in the Binukid language. They highly admired using the Binukid language in different social media apps and settings, with a 4.62 weighted mean.

Furthermore, the results have shown that participants have a very high belief that anyone who is Talaandig and Higaonon living in Bukidnon should be able to understand and speak the Binukid language. More interestingly, the data revealed that despite the predominance of other languages on social media used by most netizens in their region (Cebuano, Filipino, and English languages), the participants possessed a high conviction that it is still necessary to use the Binukid language even if this is considered a minority language.

The high level of positive attitude among the Talaandig and Higaonon netizens towards using the Binukid language on social media can be ascribed to the fact that they perceived their language as a relevant means of communication. They firmly believe that the Binukid language should expand across various areas of communication. This goes hand in hand with their use of Binukid language across different forms of texts, such as language lessons, memes, news, personal sentiments, etc. It appears that the Talaandigs and Higaonons attempt to initiate efforts to address language endangerment as Binukid is a minority language.

The findings support Abu-Irmies and Al-Khanji's (2019) assertion that the Chechens in Jordan used their language on social media with a positive attitude and different underlying purposes related to language and cultural promotion, among many other goals. Similarly, the current results corroborate Moriarty's (2009) assertion that because of the influence of digital technologies like television, the Irish participants developed a positive attitude and perception towards their native language.

This paper argues that the language attitude of the Talaandig and Higaonon netizens towards their heritage language plays a transcendental role in maintaining the Binukid language via digital platforms. This finding is essential since language preservation efforts cannot be made

without the cooperation of language communities themselves; therefore, it is vital to examine speakers' attitudes towards using their own language first. Speakers' attitudes play a significant role in the survival of a language, especially in minority populations. The perceived significance of the language, which can be impacted by things like the predominance of a mainstream language, frequently shapes these attitudes (Suek, 2014).

The Essentiality of the Binukid Postings and Language Attitude of the Talaandig and Higaonon Netizens towards Binukid Language Maintenance

The use of the Binukid language in various text forms and the language attitude of the Talaandig and Higaonon netizens paved the way for this indigenous language to expand across different communication domains, particularly within social media platforms. Since social media provides speakers with a platform to interact and utilize their language, using minority languages across various text types and genres is essential for language maintenance (Cunliffe, 2018). In contrast to the traditional mode of communication, the Binukid language gained greater opportunities on digital platforms. For instance, the study found that the posts using the Binukid language were "cross-posted" on different social media sites. Cross-posting happens when one post is shared on different platforms at the same time, such as Facebook, YouTube, and TikTok. This reacting and sharing process created a more significant opportunity for the Binukid language to be maintained and revitalized in various areas of communication. This corresponds to Leslie's (2016) contention that sharing the language with more people in various channels will significantly lead to intergenerational language transmission. The results reflect that these Binukid postings are brought about by the highly positive attitude of the Talaandig and Higaonon netizens to preserve and promote their ethnic language.

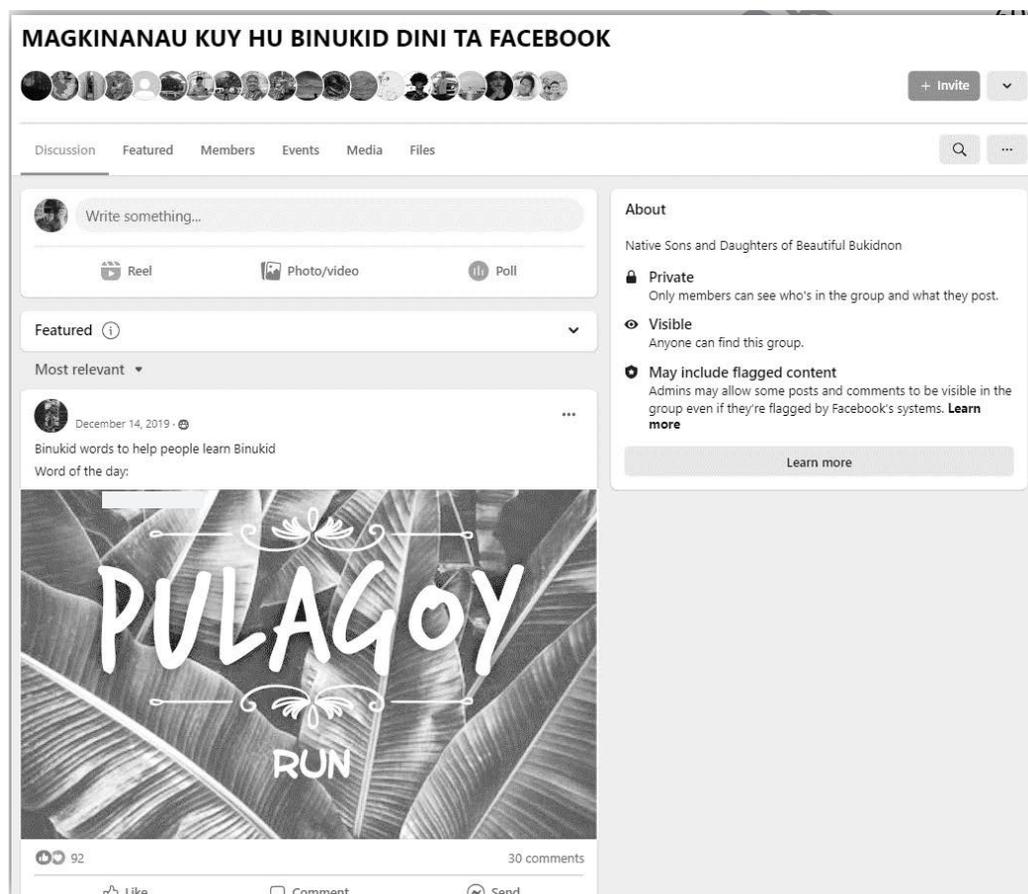
Since geographic differences between the Binukid speakers deprive them of actual interactions, this may lead to the deterioration of the use of such a language. This further threatens Binukid's vitality due to the limited opportunities for real-life communication. However, social media has provided an avenue for indigenous and minority language speakers to interact using their language virtually. For instance, the page called 'Magkinanau Kuy Hu Binukid Dini Ta Facebook' (let's learn Binukid here on Facebook), indicated in Figure 8, is a Facebook group with over 6,000 Binukid-speaking members. This private group with thousands of indigenous netizens has one goal in common — to learn or relearn, promote,

and preserve the Binukid language. This effort resembles the Haidawood Project in British Columbia. This revitalization project took advantage of social media to preserve the Haida language, a highly endangered language with only nine elderly fluent speakers, as well as to facilitate intercultural understanding and inspire other communities to maintain and share their own stories (Leslie, 2016). Haidawood saw the great potential of social media as an agent in reviving indigenous languages. Much like the Binukid FB page mentioned above, Haidawood also empowers the Haida community to create media that reflects a Haida perspective. It brings Haida stories to life using a Community Animation approach and shares Haida culture and values with community members and people worldwide.

Given the results of this study, it appears that social media platforms have become a room for language education and promotion for Binukid, which is fundamental for its linguistic fruition. Indeed, minority languages can be sustained if the users utilize the internet since it can preserve the future of ethnic and Indigenous languages (Buzard-Welcher, 2001 & Crystal, 2000). This also goes hand in hand with the Eton people of Cameroon, who maintained their traditional culture by utilizing their ethnic language on Facebook (Rivron, 2012). Lackaff and Moner (2018) also maintain that these digital platforms help minority language communities to write their ethnic language by themselves, and this ethnic language secures the proliferation of culture for the next generations.

Furthermore, the Binukid posts are crucial in fortifying the value and social significance of the Binukid indigenous language. As Galla (2018) argues, indigenous languages have raised their 'social prestige' in the community because of their presence on social media. He also points out that these languages are worthy, relevant, and perceived as 'normal' amidst languages of wider communication. Digital technology allows indigenous languages to co-exist and share 'space' with dominant languages. The same holds true for the *Binukid* language, which is slowly gaining a positive status and refutation as its use on online platforms has been normalized.

Figure 8
Binukid Facebook Page



Based on the findings, the *Binukid* language is slowly gaining social prestige online and ‘valorized’ (Cassels, 2019). Social media is an immensely powerful tool for maintaining Indigenous languages as it can record, preserve, archive, and transmit languages in myriad ways (Galla, 2018; Jany, 2018).

CONCLUSION

Using the Binukid language in various forms via social media platforms sparked greater opportunities for indigenous language maintenance. They provide the Binukid language opportunities to be used in different genres of text, which are not available in traditional communication. Posts using the Binukid language, like language lessons, songs, memes, poetry, news events and announcements, questions eliciting important feedback, personal sentiments, and captions reinforcing posts, have led

the said language to its expansion in different areas of communication and to its greater use and visibility. Further, the language lessons regarding the Binukid alphabet, phonology, and vocabulary are perceived as pivotal efforts of the Talaandig and Higaonon netizens toward language education and promotion.

Moreover, the creative use of the Binukid language in forms like memes, songs, and hugot lines (poetry) implies that even if it is considered a minority language, it has also become trend-adaptive like the major languages. The Talaandig and Higaonon netizens valorized the Binukid language online by incorporating modern ways of communication, making it even more socially significant. Thus, social media platforms are remarkable tools for making minority languages alive.

This paper further maintains that the language attitudes of the Talaandig and Higaonon netizens influence their language use and their desire to preserve the Binukid language. The various forms of their Binukid posts have provided compelling evidence that they have active self-determination to maintain their heritage language online. Hence, community-based language preservation efforts sustain languages' vitality while lessening the risks of endangerment. This study emphasizes that this is confined only to how social media materializes language maintenance about Indigenous languages like the Binukid, which does not include revitalizing weakened minority languages. Hence, future studies may explore how digital technologies maintain and revitalize minority languages.

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Jerwin Y. Amarillo is the only author who conceptualized, conducted, and analyzed the study.

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The author declares no conflict of interest.

DECLARATION OF USE OF GENERATIVE AI / AI-ASSISTED TECHNOLOGIES

No AI platform was used in writing this research except Grammarly, which was utilized to enhance the language and readability of this article. AI technologies like ChatGPT, Jasper AI, NovelAI, etc., were not used for content production.

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