



Community-based Language Development of Northern Catanduanes, Philippines

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ABSTRACT

This study determined the language status of Northern Catanduanes spoken in Caramoran, Province of Catanduanes, and a language spoken by the local folks but not widely used outside of their community. Conducted at the height of the pandemic, the Functions, Acquisitions, Motivations, Environment, and Differentiation (FAMED) conditions identified the common factors that determined the level of language use, while the Expanded Graded Intergenerational Disruption Scale (EGIDS) measured the level of language use and vitality. Ten participants who are native speakers were selected through purposive sampling based on the Sustainable Use Model (SUM) that provided the framework for evaluating the sustainability of Northern Catanduanes. The data were collected through online focus group discussions (FGD) and survey questionnaire. The findings suggest that the EGIDS level for Northern Catanduanes is Level 5 Developing, which means "the language is being used by some though this is not yet widespread or sustainable language is in vigorous use with literature in a standardized form." It does not enjoy the same vigorous use and prestige as the other languages of the Bicol Region, because not much is written in Caramoran; though the locals see its importance as they widely use the language. But it is not the dominant language in trade, government, and education. A coordination with the local education sector, Bicol University, and the Local Government Unit (LGU) for the creation of a working orthography of the Caramoran language is highly recommended by the key informants to reinforce the conditions of sustainable language use and the preservation of the local Caramoran language including comparative studies to gain insights about language vitality that may lead to crafting orthographies and strengthening the MTB-MLE program.

RESUMO

Este estudo determinou o status linguístico dos Catanduanes do Norte falados em Caramoran, Província de Catanduanes, e uma língua falada pela população local, mas não amplamente utilizada fora de sua comunidade. Conduzidas no auge da pandemia, as condições de Funções, Aquisições, Motivações, Ambiente e Diferenciação (FAMED) identificaram os fatores comuns que determinaram o nível de uso da linguagem, enquanto a Escala Expandida de Interrupção Intergeracional Graduada (EGIDS) mediu o nível de uso e vitalidade da linguagem. Dez participantes falantes nativos foram selecionados por meio de amostragem intencional com base no Modelo de Uso Sustentável (SUM) que forneceu a estrutura para avaliar a sustentabilidade dos Catanduanos do Norte. Os dados foram coletados por meio de discussões de grupos focais online (FGD) e questionário de pesquisa. Os resultados sugerem que o nível EGIDS para Catanduanes do Norte é o Nível 5 em Desenvolvimento, o que significa que "a linguagem está sendo usada por alguns, embora ainda não seja difundida ou a linguagem sustentável esteja em uso vigoroso com a literatura de forma padronizada". Não goza do mesmo uso vigoroso e prestígio que as outras línguas da região de Bicol, porque não se escreve muito em caramoran; embora os habitantes locais vejam sua importância, pois usam amplamente o idioma. Mas não é a língua dominante no comércio, governo e educação. Uma coordenação com o setor educacional local, a Universidade de Bicol e a Unidade de Governo Local (LGU) para a criação de uma ortografia de trabalho da língua Caramoran é altamente recomendada pelos informantes-chave para reforçar as condições de uso sustentável da língua e a preservação da língua Caramoran local, incluindo estudos comparativos para obter insights sobre a vitalidade da linguagem que podem levar à elaboração de ortografias e ao fortalecimento do Programa MTB-MLE.

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Introduction

The shift in Philippine education with the enactment of Republic Act 10533, or the Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013, transitioned the curriculum in the basic education sector to the current K to 12 program. This included a shift in the medium of instruction in elementary schools from the traditional use of English and Filipino to the Mother Tongue-Based (MTB)-Multilingual Education (MLE) framework. This transition in the medium of instruction for basic elementary education is supported by UNESCO's three principles on education in a multilingual world, particularly the necessity of mother tongue instruction, bilingual or multilingual education to address language diversity, and supporting language as an essential component of intercultural education (UNESCO, 2003).

Giannini (2024) stated that "language is more than a tool for communication; it is a very specific human cognitive faculty and the foundation of our shared humanity" (Giannini, 2024).

The Philippines, being an archipelago, is home to a variety of dialects and languages. According to Ethnologue, there are 182 living languages in the Philippines. Ilhem (2013) noted that interest in dialect study has increased due to the development of dialectology as a data-oriented discipline. He further mentioned that dialect speech inside the classroom was traditionally regarded as inferior, but perceptions on dialects have changed, and there are now more opportunities to express academic opinions about dialects as a curricular right of schoolchildren (Allagui & Al-Najjar, 2018).

With this change in perceptions on dialects and language diversity, teachers implementing MTB-MLE face growing concerns when the student's mother tongue is neither Bikol, Filipino, nor English. Apprehensions about the MTB-MLE have been expressed, particularly regarding "an actual provision in RA 10533, when taken out of context, [which] may be twisted to mean that only a few regional languages will be used as the language of instruction to the exclusion of other Philippine languages" (Nolasco, 2013).

The Bicol Region is one of the most dialectally diverse areas in the Philippines, exhibiting variations in every linguistic aspect. Many of its language varieties remain spoken but undocumented and unwritten, highlighting the need for comprehensive linguistic examination. Extensive studies have classified Bikol regional varieties into subgroups, with languages in each subgroup assumed to descend from a parent language (Crowley, 1997). Cunanan (2015) conducted a meta-analysis of earlier subgroupings of Bikol language varieties, incorporating works by Anderson and Lynch (1956), Epstein (1967), Mintz (1973), McFarland (1974, 1983), and Lobel (2000).

Teachers in the region often face challenges in implementing the mandated dialect as the medium of instruction, particularly when students have been exposed primarily to Filipino or English at home. This issue is exacerbated for teachers assigned to areas with different dialectal variations from their own. Additionally, there is an observed generational gap, with elders possessing knowledge of words that younger generations may not understand, leading to a disconnect in language use. Furthermore, an increasing number of Bikolanos are adopting Filipino or English in their homes and workplaces, contributing to the diminishing use of traditional dialects.

According to Van Herk (2012), these tendencies reflect dialect geography and dialectology, aiming to identify where particular speech varieties are formed and to understand the boundaries between dialect areas.

Dialects, particularly local languages, must be developed alongside established Western languages to better understand concepts of social development within the context of local communities (Ca, Tangyie et al., 2016).

These lead to a concern on the language vitality and development of the respective communities particularly in the Province of Albay, Bicol Region, Philippines. The Mother-Tongue Based-Multi-Lingual Education (MTB-MLE) framework of the current curriculum and its corresponding dialectal issues has shifted focus on the growing concern for the dominant regional dialect used for instruction in lieu of the prevailing dialect in the community.

It is in this context that the current study focused on the language status in terms of the language use and vitality of the Northern Catanduanes dialect particularly in the municipalities of Caramoran in the Province of Catanduanes. The study facilitated the speech communities to (1) identify the factors that determine the level of language use; (2) measure the level of language use and the vitality of the language; and (3) develop plans of action to reinforce conditions that will likely result in a sustainable level of language use. Richford (2019) indicates that linguists use dialect as a neutral term to pertain to the systematic usage of a group of speakers belonging to a particular region or social class. As neutral term, dialect is not associated with any of the negative perceptions or connotation people have about substandard language varieties. As Fromkin, Rodman, and Hyams (2010, p. 441) put it: “No dialect, however, is more expressive, less corrupt, more logical, more complex, or more regular than any other dialect or language. They are simply different. More precisely, dialects represent different set of rules or lexical items represented in the minds of its speakers. Any judgments, therefore as to the superiority or inferiority of a particular dialect or language are social judgments, which have no linguistic or scientific basis.”

Lewis and Simons (2016:35) supports this direction having said that “Community-based language development empowers and builds capacity in local language communities by

assisting them in identifying their own holistic development goals taking into account the relationship of identity and language to the transmission of life-crucial knowledge."

With this, opportunities are given to the speech communities to decide on the language development they want to achieve; making it participative. Involving the community is also one way of ensuring that whatever linguistic changes local dialects may undergo, which are inevitable, will allow for the participative development of interventions to preserve existing dialects.

Conceptual/Theoretical Framework

Since language change is inevitable, it is imperative to introduce interventions to preserve the language before it dies. Language death occurred to some languages of the minority in the Philippines such as the Agta language. According to Headland (2010:114), "(Agta people) were exceptionally skilled ethnobotanists with a vocabulary of many hundreds of terms to express that knowledge; with the plant world as a central theme of their culture. It was estimated that the Agta had between 700 and 800 names for plants in their language. For older Agta, this was still the case as recently as 2008. But younger adults, and especially teenagers, have lost most of this knowledge today."

The loss of linguistic diversity is a widely recognized phenomenon that is being addressed in many ways by linguists, anthropologists and speakers of the endangered languages themselves (Lewis, 2014). One particular way of addressing this is through the Sustainable Use Model (SUM) which provides an understanding of the various context of disruption not simply of language but knowledge transmission in itself. This model proposes that certain bodies of knowledge vital to the community need to be preserved and continuously transmitted within their community's context with the community's participation in the choices or decisions they make about their own language.

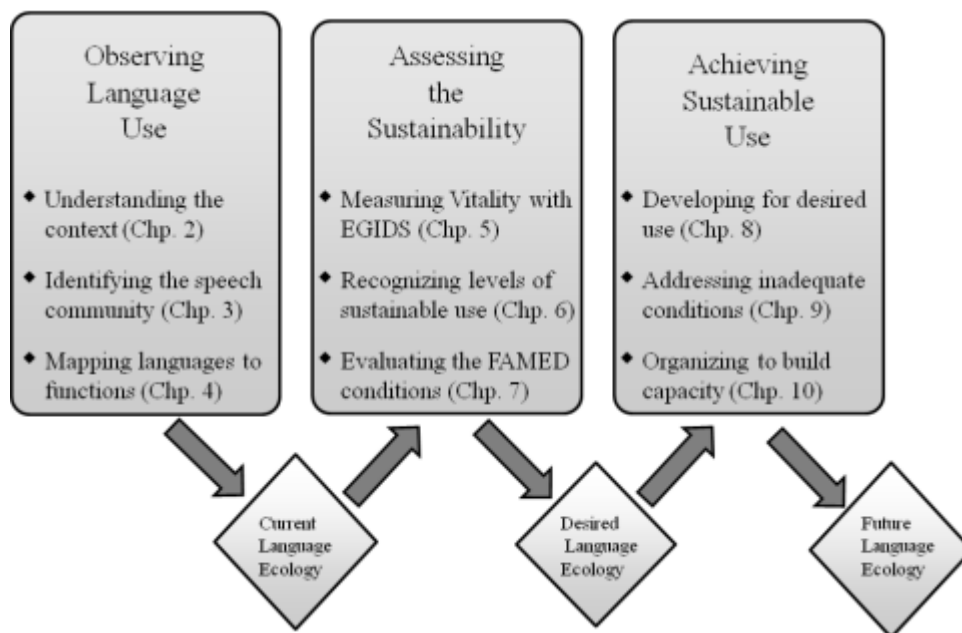
To achieve this, the Sustainable Use Model (SUM) constitutes a three-way process that begins with Observing Language Use, Assessing the Sustainability, and Achieving Sustainable Use. The context of how the language is used in the chosen speech community is vital in mapping the language to get the Current Language Ecology. This process assesses the current language status, particularly its use by the locals in the speech community. In assessing the sustainability of language, and evaluation of its vitality status the Expanded Graded Intergenerational Disruption Scale (EGIDS) is used as the "cornerstone of a larger framework for understanding language maintenance and shift, known as the SUM". Assessing the sustainability of language is also reliant on the FAMED conditions (Functions, Acquisitions, Motivations, Environment, and Differentiation) which assists in determining the current language ecology of the speech community.

Since people's participation is necessary to people-led development, in planning about the community's language, it is highly important that achieving sustainable use must go hand in hand with developing the language for desired use, while addressing inadequate conditions and organizing to build capacity. In this way, community-based language development concerns itself with the people, not solely on language (Lewis and Simons, 2016:37). With the complex linguistic situation in the Philippines, contextualization of language programs is quite challenging. Calinawagan (2016) provides three possible classroom scenarios that teachers may confront: (1) school may have a strong community language as its mother tongue and the majority of its students communicating in this language; (2) there are more students whose mother tongue is the regional lingua franca—for instance, Ilokano in northern Luzon—and the other students use their own community/indigenous languages as their mother tongue; and (3) there could be a strong regional lingua franca, but the students' linguistic profiles show that they are more competent in languages of wider communication such as English and Filipino.

Burton (2013) found that the teachers' and parents' opinions of MTB-MLE were mainly about the short-term advantages and the long-term disadvantages of the program. In terms of management, she asserted that the program must be implemented through interactions between the top and the bottom rather than a top-down approach that does not consider the local context. Similarly, Amay Lin and Yuday (2013) suggested the necessity for collaborating with local communities in the development of language programs as a shift from top-down process of implementing language policy.

But the way to developing the future language ecology is neither prescriptive nor restrictive towards changing how language is used by the people in the community. Instead, it allows the people or the locals to decide how their language can help in the transmission and preservation of knowledge in vital areas as it meets their communal needs. By veering away from the structural flaws of language, the community is able to see how their language works in the community because the concern is directed towards knowledge transmission. It then becomes facilitative as language is capacitated to serve the beneficial functions endemic to the community. The planning for language sustainability by the people themselves in the respective speech community is a collective effort and the owning process is then ensured.

Figure 1.
Sustainable Use Model (Lewis & Simons, 2015)



Materials and Methods

One particular way of addressing loss of linguistic diversity is through the Sustainable Use Model (SUM) which provides an understanding of the various context of disruption not simply of language but knowledge transmission in itself. Several studies in community-based language development have employed the Sustainable Use Model (SUM) and Expanded Graded Intergenerational Disruption Scale (EGIDS) by Lewis and Simons (2016) in examining the level of language use and the vitality of the language. Eberhard's (2017) used SUM as a tool based on a theoretical approach to community-based language development. He described the basic structure of the "Guide for Planning the Future of Our Language," and then explained its applications in many communities and workshops with native speakers.

This model proposes that certain bodies of knowledge vital to the community need to be preserved and continuously transmitted within their community's context with the community's participation in the choices or decisions they make about their own language. To achieve this, the Sustainable Use Model (SUM) constitutes a three-way process that begins with Observing Language Use, Assessing the Sustainability, and Achieving Sustainable Use. The context of how the language is used in the chosen speech community is vital in mapping the language to get the Current Language Ecology. This process assesses the current language status, particularly its use by the locals in the speech community. Tehan and Markowski (2017) similarly assessed the language vitality of the So communities in Thailand using Expanded GIDS and the Sustainable Use Model, an expansion of the Graded Intergenerational

Disruption Scale (GIDS), revealing that many So villages manifest vigorous language vitality, while other villages are threatened by language shift.

In assessing the sustainability of language, and evaluation of its vitality status the Expanded Graded Intergenerational Disruption Scale (EGIDS) is used as the “cornerstone of a larger framework for understanding language maintenance and shift, known as the SUM”. Assessing the sustainability of language is also reliant on the FAMED conditions (Functions, Acquisitions, Motivations, Environment, Differentiation) which assists in determining the current language ecology of the speech community.

Since people’s participation is necessary to people-led development, in planning about the community’s language, it is highly important that achieving sustainable use must go hand in hand with developing the language for desired use, while addressing inadequate conditions and organizing to build capacity. In this way, community-based language development concerns itself with the people, not solely on language (Lewis and Simons, 2016:37). The way to developing the future language ecology is neither prescriptive nor restrictive towards changing how language is used by the people in the community. Instead, it allows the people or the locals to decide how their language can help in the transmission and preservation of knowledge in vital areas as it meets their communal needs. By veering away from the structural flaws of language, the community is able to see how their language works in the community because the concern is directed towards knowledge transmission. It then becomes facilitative as language is capacitated to serve the beneficial functions endemic to the community. The planning for language sustainability by the people themselves in the respective speech community is a collective effort and the owning process is then ensured.

Bicol Region is subscribed to a single literature written in the Standard Bikol of Naga or Legazpi. However, this degree of linguistic similarity and inherent intelligibility is also present between Bikol-Sorsogon varieties that become the basis for the contextualization of MTB-MLE (Dela Torre, 2017). Consequently, Bicol has locals who do not speak Standard Bikol as first language, hence the need to contextualize MTB-MLE to a number of linguistic areas. Intelligibility is a complex phenomenon, hence, factors affecting the intelligibility of the speakers, such as language contact, education, etc., should still be taken into account.

The vitality of Northern Catanduanes was measured through an evaluative scale, namely, the Expanded Graded Intergenerational Disruption Scale (EGIDS). Arranged from 0-10 and with corresponding descriptions, the tool classified Central Bikol as one of the following categories: international, national, provincial, wider communication, educational, developing, vigorous, threatened, shifting, moribund, nearly extinct, dormant and extinct. That scale also helped the community identify whether the current status of the language in their repertoire was sustainable. The evaluation of the current status allowed the community to make a decision about the desired level of sustainable use for each of the languages in their repertoire.

In making these decisions, the primary focus of the local communities was on the local language(s), however, the functional assignments of other languages in the ecology was also be taken into consideration.

The analysis of language use patterns was done in details by the community through the FAMED conditions. To know the factors that determine the level of language use, these were categorized in a framework of conditions which are Functions, Acquisition, Motivation, Environment, and Differentiation (FAMED) (Lewis & Simons, 2016:124) (Table1). The FAMED conditions provided more detailed information as to the factors contributing to the present status of Central Bikol and thus pointed to the ways on how to properly address language needs to effect a change. The results of the analysis served as basis for the development of an action plan.

Table 1.

FAMED Conditions (Lewis and Simons, 2015:159:9)

Conditions	Descriptions
Functions	Functions (uses, bodies of knowledge) associated with the language must exist and be recognized by the community.
Acquisition	A means of acquiring the needed proficiency to use the language for those functions must be in place and accessible to community members.
Motivation	Community members must be motivated to use the language for those functions. They must perceive that the use of the language is beneficial in some ways.
Environment	The policy environment (including national, regional, local levels) must not be hostile to the use of language for those functions.
Differentiation	Societal norms must clearly delineate the functions assigned to the local language marking them as distinct from the function for other languages in the speech community's repertoire.

Another instrument was used to determine the level of language use and the vitality of Bikol-Albay. The Expanded Graded Intergeneration Disruption Scale (EGIDS) by Lewis and Simon (2015), shown below, was used for the stated purpose.

Table 2.

Expanded Graded Intergeneration Disruption Scale (EGIDS) by Lewis and Simon (2015)

Level	Label	Description
0	International	The language is widely used between nations in trade, knowledge exchange, and international policy.
1	National	The language is used in education, work, mass media, and government at the national level.
2	Regional/Provincial	The language is used in education, work, mass media, and government within major administrative subdivisions of the nation.
3	Wider Communication	The language is used in work and mass media without official status to transcend language differences across a region.
4	Educational	The language is in vigorous use, with standardization and literature being sustained through a widespread system of institutionally supported education.

5	Developing	The language is being used by some though this is not yet widespread or sustainable language is in vigorous use, with literature in a standardized form.
6a	Vigorous	The language is used for face-to-face communication by all generations and the situation is sustainable.
6b	Threatened	The language is used for face-to-face communication within all generations but it is losing users.
7	Shifting	The child-bearing generation can use the language among themselves, but it is not being transmitted to children.
8a	Moribund	The only remaining active users of the language are members of the grandparent generation and older.
8b	Nearly Extinct	The only remaining users of the language are the members of the grandparent generation or older with little opportunity to use the language.
9	Dormant	The language serves as a reminder of an ethnic community, but no one has a symbolic proficiency.
10	Extinct	The language is no longer used and no one retains a sense of ethnic identity associated with the language.

These were supported by online FGDs and survey questionnaires. The data collected using these instruments were analyzed for the development of action plans to reinforce conditions that will likely result in a sustainable level of language use, the decisions were based on the findings of the FGDs. In selecting the participants, the general guidelines by Hanawalt, Varenkamp, Lahn and Eberhard (2016) was used as discussed in “A Guide for Planning the Future of Our Language.” In achieving the purpose of the study and learning about the status of the language in the respective communities, the guide stated that participants must be from the speech community representing a cross-section of the people to give clearer understanding of the language situation.

In view of these guidelines, the study used purposive sampling. The following criteria served as bases for selection of the participants: (1) born and raised in the local community; (2) native speakers of the traditional language; (3) with parents from the locality and native speakers of the traditional language; (4) within the age brackets of 20-30, 40-50, and 60-70 years old; (5) may have finished or reached elementary, high school, or college levels; (6) belong to different social classes; and (7) community leaders and members.

Results and Discussion

The discussion of the findings follows the objectives of the study. First, the factors that determine the level of language use are identified. Second, the level of language use and the vitality of the language are measured. Finally, plans of action are developed to reinforce conditions that will likely result in a sustainable level of language use.

Factors that Determine the Level of Language Use of Northern Catanduanes (Bikol-Caramoran)

The factors that determine the level of language use were identified using the FAMED (Functions, Acquisition, Motivation, Environment, and Differentiation) conditions.

Functions

This section presents the data on the Functions condition which refers to the uses and bodies of knowledge “associated with the language that must exist and be recognized by the community” (Lewis & Simons, 2015:159). It deals with how the language is useful and used by the community. The Functions level of Northern Catanduanes is shown by the language pattern of the community. Here the languages used by the speakers and the functions of these languages in the community were identified. The tables below show these patterns of language use.

Table 4.

Assessment Chart Responses Relevant to Functions

Question	Point in the Scale (1–4)	Answer
Where do we speak our language?	4	Almost all settings and situations
When do we speak ONLY our language?	4	Many situations
When do we use phrases or words in our language	3	Almost all situations
When do we use phrases or words ONLY in our language	3	Some situations
What do we read and write in our language?	2	Very few situations
When do we read and write in ONLY our language?	0	None

The assessment charts show that, in terms of speaking the language, the locals use Caramoranon in most settings and many situations. The locals only read and write in Central Bikol or Bikol-Legazpi in some settings and situations such as in school and in dealing with local government and in the church. There is only one identified work written in Caramoranon which was produced through a grant for instructional purposes. Overall, the people’s use of Caramoranon centers on Spoken, Identity, to Reading and Writing.

Table 5

Responses about the Places Where the Languages Are Used

Places inside and outside the community	Language(s) used
Church	Bikol-Caramoran, Bikol-Legazpi, Filipino, English
Market	Bikol-Caramoran
School	Bikol-Legazpi, Filipino, English
House	Bikol-Caramoran

Offices	Bikol-Legazpi, Bikol-Caramoran, Filipino, English
Hospital	Bikol-Caramoran, Filipino, English
Malls (There is no mall in Caramoran; it's in Virac)	Bikol-Caramoran, Catanduanon (Virac), Filipino, English
Muslim community	Bikol-Caramoran, Bikol-Legazpi, Filipino, English
Farm / Rice Field	Bikol-Caramoran
Airport	Bikol-Caramoran, Bikol, Filipino, English
Beach	Bikol-Caramoran, Bikol-Legazpi, Filipino, English
Park	Bikol-Caramoran
Mountain	Bikol-Caramoran
Barrio / Village	Bikol-Caramoran
Hospital	Bikol-Caramoran, Filipino, English
Hotel	Bikol-Caramoran, Filipino English
Cockpit Arena	Bikol-Caramoran
Naga City	Bikol-Legazpi, Filipino
Sorsogon City	Bikol-Legazpi, Filipino
Municipality of Ligao	Bikol-Legazpi, Filipino
Municipality of Tabaco	Bikol-Legazpi, Filipino

Northern Catanduanes or Bikol-Caramoran is used in most domains of the community as well as outside the community which makes it strong in terms of its orality. But it appears that alongside the language of Northern Catanduanes, it is Central Bikol or Bikol-Legazpi which is considered as the standard language as it is widely spoken and understood in Bicol Region. Northern Catanduanes or Bikol-Caramoran is almost exclusively used in the farm, barrio or village, and cockpit arena which are rural places. Although, it is also used among themselves and in other situations and settings, it is Bikol-Legazpi or Central Bikol that is significantly used as a medium in mass media, education, government offices, churches, among others, alongside Filipino and English.

The Function scale by Lewis and Simons (2015:167) measures the functions of a language as shown in Table 8. It provides the level and description that correspond to the EGIDS levels, as well as the highest EGIDS potential which indicates the condition for the level to be likely achieved.

Northern Catanduanes (Caramoranon) is level F3 with the highest EGIDS potential of 6a (Vigorous) which means “The language is being used orally for the functions of day-to-day life, but there is no written use of the language.” The data from the online focus group discussions reveal that although Northern Catanduanes-Bikol-Caramoran is widely used in all domains of the community, encompassing social, cultural, economic, and political functions, the strong and preferred use of Bikol-Legazpi, Filipino, and English in MTB-MLE instruction in basic elementary education, government, mass media, the church, among others, have limited its use and sustainability

Table 6.
Function Scale (Lewis & Simons, 2015:167)

Level	Description	Highest EGIDS potential
F1	Adequate literature exists in this language for every Function for which writing in this language is desired	4 (Education)
F2	Enough literature exists in this language for some Functions to exemplify the value of literacy in this language.	5 (Developing)
F3	The language is being used orally for the Functions of day-to-day life, but there is no written use of the language.	6a (Vigorous)
F4	Some members of the community use the language orally for the Functions of day-to-day life, but an increasing number no longer do so.	6b (Threatened) to 8a (Moribund)
F5	There is enough oral use of this language to represent the identity of the group, but not enough for full communication.	8b (Nearly Extinct) and 9 (Dormant)
F6	The language is no longer used but there are enough archival materials that some Functions could be restored in the future.	10 (Extinct)
F7	The language is no longer used and there is little or no documentation.	10 (Extinct)

Acquisition

This section presents the data on the Acquisition condition which is “a means of acquiring the needed proficiency to use the language for those functions must be in place and accessible to community members” (Lewis & Simons, 2015:159). It deals with how the people are learning the language.

Table 7.
Assessment Chart Responses Relevant to Acquisition

Question	Point in the Scale (1–4)	Answer
Are children learning to speak our language?	3	Many children
Are any of the next generation learning phrases or words of our language?	3	Many of them
Are young people learning to read and write our language?	0	Not a priority (acquisition as first “spoken” language)

Many children are actually learning to speak Bikol-Caramoran as a first language. Many of the next generation resulting from parents’ influences and the prevailing home environment, are also learning phrases or words in the language. However, no significant effort is made for young people to learn how to read and write in the language because even in the MTB-MLE instruction in basic elementary education, the language used is Central Bikol or Bikol-Legazpi. The participants or key informants have noted that that their children learned to speak Bikol-Caramoran (L1) at 1-2 years old, Filipino (L2) only when they entered pre-school, along with English (L3) but still preferred to speak in Bikol-Caramoran. The children’s L1 was acquired at home, while their L2 and L3 were acquired and learned in the community

especially in the school through formal education and also informally through the influence of technology and social media.

In the community, the participants could not name a particular literary piece and literary materials written in Bikol-Caramoran except one big book which was utilized for instructional purposes and was a product of a book grant with DepEd and the local government. The Bible and other books are still written in Central-Bikol or Bikol-Legazpi. Radio broadcast however, are in Bikol-Caramoran.

Table 8.

Language(s) Used by the Speakers at Home

Speakers and Receivers	Language(s) Used
Parents to their children	Bikol-Caramoran, Filipino, English
Children to their parents	Bikol-Caramoran, Filipino, English
Children to their siblings	Bikol-Caramoran, Filipino, English
Couple/Adults to the community	Bikol-Caramoran, Filipino
Grandchildren to their grandparents	Bikol-Caramoran
Grandparents to their grandchildren	Bikol-Caramoran
Uncles and aunts to their nephews and nieces	Bikol-Caramoran
Nephews and nieces to their uncles and aunts	Bikol-Caramoran
Children to their nannies	Bikol-Caramoran
Nannies to the children	Bikol-Caramoran, Filipino

Members of the household such as parents, children, and grandparents including among members of the extended family (uncles, aunts, nephews, nieces, and nannies). speak in Bikol-Carmoran. This is the preferred language in communicating with one another and Bikol-Legazpi, Filipino, and English are only used by guests, outsiders, or those who are not natives of Caramoran. The elders and the young are strongly using the language with little to almost no influence of preferring Filipino and English over their native language. The participants conveyed that among the languages they speak at home, Bikol-Caramoran is used most frequently and strongly.

Along with the implementation of the K to 12 Basic Education Curriculum, Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education (MTB-MLE) was institutionalized through DepEd Order No. 74 s. 2009. The varieties spoken in the Bicol Region subscribe to a single literature written in the Standard Bikol— the Bikol of Naga or Legazpi. Based on DepEd Order No. 16, s.2012, Bikol or Central Bikol is one of the eight major languages or Lingua Franca offered as a learning area and utilized as a language of instruction (MTB-MLE).

This has become a common and pressing issue because the various linguistics nuances and variations is not captured in the existing Bikol orthography that has been cascaded for literacy through the development of the MTB-MLE Bikol learner’s material, *Madya Magbarasa Kita: Giya sa Pagtukdo nin Bikol – Inot na Grado* (DepEd-IMCS, 2013).

Apart from the religious materials, various literacy materials have been developed in Central Bikol. Since the institutionalization of MTB-MLE, teacher training for literacy teachers was conducted all over the country which led to the production of big books, story books, and picture dictionaries to help the students improve their reading. These initiatives support the establishment of Central-Bikol as the major language of the Bicol Region, but negates the equal importance and significant of other Bikol varieties such as Bikol-Caramoran.

The proficiency levels of the locals in Bikol-Caramoran were only inferred from the responses of the participants in the online focus group discussions and survey questionnaire. Most members of the community are motivated to learn and read in Bikol-Caramoran and sees the need to produce materials in the language. The number of people who can read and write in Bikol-Caramoran is numerous, but this eagerness and ability is eclipsed by the proliferation of the use of Central-Bikol or Bikol-Legazpi.

The Acquisition scale by Lewis and Simons (2015:167) measures the level of support provided to the community to acquire oral or written proficiency in Central Bikol. Table 9 presents the level and description that correspond to the EGIDS levels, as well as the highest EGIDS potential which indicates the condition for the level to be likely achieved.

Table 9.

Acquisition Scale (Lewis & Simons, 2015:171)

Level	Description	Highest EGIDS potential
A1	Literacy in this language is being taught by trained teachers under the auspices of a sustainable institution.	4 (Education)
A2	There are adequate materials in this language to support literacy instruction in the language and some members of the community are successfully learning to read and write about some bodies of knowledge in the language.	5 (Developing)
A3	There is full face-to-face transmission of this language to all children in the home and community; literacy acquisition, if any, is in another language.	6a (Vigorous)
A4	Only some of the child-bearing generations are transmitting the language by normal means to their children.	6b (Threatened)
A5	The only transmission of the language is for identificational use (often in institutional settings rather than the home).	7 (Shifting) to 9 (Dormant)
A6	There is no transmission of this language.	10 (Extinct)

Northern Catanduanes or Bikol-Caramoran is Level A3 with the highest EGIDS potential of 6a (vigorous) which means “*There is full face-to-face transmission of this language to all children in the home and community; literacy acquisition if any, is in another language.*” The data from focus group discussions reveal that Bikol-Caramoran in Northern Catanduanes, is the dominant language of the community and the vast majority of parents transmit Bikol-Caramoran to their children. The support for oral acquisition of the language is strong; however, the support for the acquisition of the written form needs to be strengthened through intellectualization and further measures of sustainability of the language.

Motivation

This section presents the data on the Motivation condition which points out that “Community members must be motivated to use the language for those functions. They must perceive that the use of the language is beneficial in some way” (Lewis & Simons, 2015:159). It deals with the motivations of the community members to use the language.

The Motivation level of Bikol-Caramoran is based on the consensual answers of the participants during the online FGD using the language assessment charts and supplemented by the survey and interview responses. Table 10 gives an indication of the attitude toward the community’s own language by the advantages they perceive to being literate in Bikol-Caramoran.

Table 10.

Assessment Chart Responses Relevant to Motivation

Question	Point in the Scale (1–4)	Answer
How many of us think there is a benefit to speaking our language?	3	Many people
How many of us think that there is a benefit in knowing phrases or words of our language?	3	Many people
How many of us think that there is a benefit to reading and writing in our language?	3	Many people

As shown in Table 10, many people in the community including children see the benefit to speaking, knowing phrases or words of, and reading and writing in their language since they use it in their daily community life as well as work. Some of the benefits mentioned by the participants as regards the use of Bikol-Caramoran are as an identity marker, and for preservation of traditional language and culture of Caramoran. Although there are initiatives of the local government in sustaining the language, especially through contests during the commemoration of the town’s fiesta, there is almost a non-production of the language in terms of reading and writing as the Central Bikol or Bikol-Legazpi dominates this aspect.

Although Bikol-Carmoran is widely spoken in the community by both the older generation and the young, young people are learning to read and write in Central Bikol because MTB-MLE which is implemented in kindergarten to third grade uses the Bikol-Legazpi variety or Central Bikol. In high school and college, students, however, are not being taught to read and write in Bikol-Caramoran and in Bikol because these are used almost exclusively in informal contexts. According to the participants, there are benefits to the use of Bikol-Caramoran if it will be given priority in MTB-MLE instruction, because the children can understand more the lessons, keep track of their traditional language, while learning more about their culture. Thus, the participants expressed the need to focus on producing works in Bikol-Caramoran for MTB-MLE.

The Motivation scale in Table 11 by Lewis and Simons (2015:167) measures how motivated the community is to use their language. The more reasons there are for the speakers to use their language, the more sustainable the use of the language at a particular level. The scale provides the level and description that correspond to the EGIDS levels, as well as the highest EGIDS potential which indicates the condition for the level to be likely achieved.

Table 11 .

Motivation Scale (Lewis & Simons, 2015:175)

Level	Description	Highest EGIDS Potential
M1	Members of the speech community perceive the benefits of reading and writing in this language.	4 (Education)
M2	Some members of the speech community perceive the benefits of reading and writing in this language, but the majority of them still do not.	5 (Developing)
M3	Members of the speech community perceive the benefits of using this language for face-to-face communication, but they perceive no benefits in reading and writing it.	6a (Vigorous)
M4	Some members of the child-bearing generation perceive the benefits of using this language for face-to-face communication, but others find more benefit in shifting to another language.	6b (Threatened)
M5	The child-bearing generation perceives no practical benefit in using this language, though they still perceive symbolic benefit.	7 (Shifting) to 9 (Dormant)
M6	Descendants of the language community associate neither practical nor symbolic benefits with the language.	10 (Extinct)

Bikol-Caramoran is Level M2 with the highest EGIDS potential of 5 (Developing) which means “Members of the speech community perceive the benefits of reading and writing in this language, but the majority of them still do not.” This level of motivation is seen by the vigorous oral sustainability of Bikol-Caramoran as it is highly spoken alongside the more dominant Bikol variety which is Bikol-Legazpi. Though they see the use of the language in reading and writing, most of them are still highly influenced by their ability to shift in Central Bikol language which they see as the more dominant variety. However, they also see learning to speak, read and write in Central Bikol as a good way of communicating with one another, and others outside of their community, including preserving their cultural identity. The locals have maintained a passion and a positive attitude towards the use of their own language as the elders are even motivated to sustain the language through its extensive use within the family and community.

Environment

This section presents the data on the Environment condition which indicates that “The policy environment (including at national, regional, and local levels) must not be hostile to the use of the language for those functions.” (Lewis & Simons, 2015:159). It deals with the external environment such as a majority group's attitudes towards the language. The Environment level of Bikol-Caramoran is measured through the consensual answers of the FGD participants using the language assessment charts and supplemented by the survey and interview responses. The data presents the people’s perception of the external support that the community receives from policy-making bodies.

Table 12.

Assessment Chart Responses Relevant to Environment

Question	Point in the Scale	Answer
Do policies support us speaking our language?	4 out of 4	Very minimal support
How do these policies affect us speaking of our language?	3 out of 3	Help
Do policies support us maintaining our identity?	4 out of 4	Strong support
How do these policies affect our identity as an ethnic group?	3 out of 3	Help
Do policies support us reading and writing our language?	4 out of 4	Very minimal support
How do these policies affect us reading and writing our language?	4 out of 4	Minimal Support

According to the participants or key informants, very minimal support in terms of local policies and initiatives are given to the community in speaking their language and maintaining

their identity. This minimal support is seen in the initiatives of the local government to raise awareness of the language by holding contests during the annual town fiesta such as poetry writing and spoken poetry in Bikol-Caramoran. There is a perception that somehow these initiatives help them speak their language and preserve their identity as an ethnic group although there is no actual records of the written outputs or works. In terms of reading and writing in Bikol-Caramoran, the initiatives only provide very minimal support including how the policies influence their reading and writing of the language.

This simply means that as to policies, there are no clear-cut policies since the existing ones are geared towards the MTB-MLE framework that advocates for the dominant Central-Bikol. There is no policy that encourages the teaching of local languages. “The curriculum shall develop proficiency in Filipino and English, provided that the learners’ first and dominant language shall serve as the fundamental language of education.” Nolasco claims that “This provision, absent in the original law, confirms suspicions that the government’s language-in-education policy is MTB-MLE in name but L2 bilingual education in practice.”

Other attempts to stop or suspend the ongoing implementation of MTB-MLE are in the form of House Bills. Under House Bill No. 5091, “An Act to Strengthen and Enhance the Use of English as the Medium of Instruction in the Educational System,” English shall be strengthened and enhanced the as the medium of instruction (MOI) in the educational system from the preschool to the tertiary level. House Bill No. 6125 was proposed to suspend the implementation of mother tongue or first language as a medium of instruction from Kindergarten to Grade 3. Meanwhile, various groups and institutions have opposed House Bill No. 6125 such as the Linguistics Society of the Philippines, Ateneo de Manila University - English Department, University of the Philippines Diliman - College of Education, UP College of Education Student Council, Talaytayan MLE Inc., and UNESCO-Bangkok. These groups call for the reinforcement of MTB-MLE implementation despite current challenges such as the lack of instructional materials.

Mainstream media usually does not report the language policy and education issues of the country; hence, people in the community are mostly not aware of these. MTB-MLE prioritizes the development of Central Bikol and other major languages, while the development of other Bikol varieties is often more rigorous due to the lack of resources. These may be the reasons why the Central Bikol community generally perceives that the policies strongly support their language despite the current national linguistic landscape. Unlike the other Bikol varieties, Central Bikol has an official orthography and graded instructional materials to transmit literacy in this language.

The Environment scale in Table 13 by Lewis and Simons (2015:167) measures how much external and internal support the community receives from the environment for sustainable use of the language. These environmental factors may include government policy

and community cohesiveness and unity that can affect language vitality. The scale provides the level and description that correspond to the EGIDS levels, as well as the highest EGIDS potential which indicates the condition for the level to be likely achieved.

Table 13.

Environment Scale (Lewis & Simons, 2015:179)

Level	Description	Highest EGIDS Potential
E1	The external policy environment calls for the cultivation of this language and cultural identity, and the policy-making bodies are putting this into practice by sanctioning an official orthography and using their institutions to transmit literacy in this language.	4 (Educational)
E2	The external policy environment encourages the development of this language, but the policy-making bodies are making no investment in the implementation of such policy.	5 (Developing)
E3	The external policy environment has nothing to say about ethnolinguistic diversity or language development and thus raises no impediment.	5 (Developing), 6a (Vigorous)
E4	The external policy environment affirms the oral use of this language, but calls for the language to be left in its current state and not developed.	6a (Vigorous), 6b Threatened)
E5	The external policy environment is hostile toward ethnolinguistic diversity and calls for the elimination or suppression of this language.	7 (shifting) to 10 (Extinct)

Bikol-Caramoran is Level E5 with the highest EGIDS potential of 5 (Developing)/6a (Vigorous) which means “The external policy environment has nothing to say about ethnolinguistic diversity or language development and thus, raises no impediment.” The local government of Caramoran has no concrete and clear policy on sustaining the local language. It has, however, maintained annual activities that somehow support the advocacy of sustaining Bikol-Caramoran. There is still a long way to go in furthering and advancing the ethnolinguistic diversity for Northern Catanduanes.

Differentiation

This section presents the data on the Differentiation condition which indicates that “Societal norms must clearly delineate the functions assigned to the local language marking them as distinct from the function for other languages in the speech community’s repertoire.”

(Lewis & Simons, 2015:159). It deals with the societal norms for regularly using the language in specific domains.

The Differentiation level of Bikol-Caramoran is based on the consensual answers of the participants during the online focus group discussions and supplemented by the survey and interview responses. The data in Table 14 give some insights into differentiation of the languages used by community members.

Table 14.

Responses about the Language Used by Members of the Speech Community

Members of the Speech Community	Language(s) Used
Grandparents	Bikol-Caramoran
Parents	Bikol-Caramoran Filipino, English
Teenagers/Adolescents	Bikol-Caramoran, Filipino, English
Children	Bikol-Caramoran, Filipino, English
Professionals	Biko-Caramoranl, Filipino, English
Members who married people outside the community	Bikol-Caramoran, Bikol-Legazpi, Filipino, English
People who were born/grew up in other parts of the country	Filipino, English
Travelers / Tourists	Filipino, English
Foreigners	English

As shown in Table 14, all locals from different generations speak Bikol-Caramoran, Filipino, and English. It was also presented in section 4.1.1 (Functions) that Bikol-Caramoran is used in all domains of the community but not in the same extent as outside the community. The language is almost exclusively used in the farm, barrio or village, and cockpit arena which are rural places, while Bikol-Legzpi or Central Bikol, Filipino and English are used as medium in mass media, education, government offices, church, and others.

The speakers' proficiency in each language was not assessed in this study. Based on observation, children who are natives of Caramoran, along with their parents and grandparents still use Bikol-Caramoran over Filipino and English. Like in most parts of the Philippines, people in Bicol are coordinate bilinguals/multilinguals who acquire two or more languages in different contexts—home and school. The only people who do not speak Bikol-Caramoran in the community are the outsiders such as travelers, tourists, foreigners, and people from other parts of the Philippines who married locals in Bicol. These outsiders use Filipino and/or English as lingua franca to communicate with the people in the community.

According to the 2015 Census of Population by the Philippine Statistics Authority, Legazpi City (capital) has 154,881 literate individuals out of the 155,686 household population comprised of ages 10 and above. The same census shows that, in Legazpi City, 28,622 of the total population are academic degree holders, 32,085 are high school graduates, 24,234 are

elementary graduates, 3,917 have no grade completed, while others reached undergraduate levels and post baccalaureate. Therefore, the literacy level of Central Bikol community is relatively high with a significant difference between those who had some schooling and those who had none at all. This underscores the predominance of Central Bikol unlike its counterpart variation of Bicol-Caramoran in Northern Catanduanes.

Table 15.

Responses about the Categories of General Knowledge and Kinds of Specific Knowledge

General knowledge	Specific knowledge	Language(s) used	Inside (I) or outside (O) knowledge	Growing (G) or losing (L) knowledge
Education	History	Bikol-Caramoran, Filipino, English	I	G
	Mathematics	Bikol-Caramoran, Filipino, English	O	G
	Leadership	Bikol, Filipino, English	I	G
Religion	Worship (Pagsimba)	Bikol-Legazpi, Filipino, English	O	L
	Panata (Vow)	Bikol-Legazpi	O	L
	Faith and Devotion	Bikol-Caramoran	O	L
	Procession	Bikol-Caramoran	O	L
	Praying the rosary	Bikol-Caramoran, English	O	L
Government	Leadership	Bikol-Caramoran, Filipino	I	G
	Good service	Bikol-Caramoran, Filipino, English	I	G
	Good governance	Bikol-Caramoran, Filipino	I	G
Tradition	Traditional games (Laro ng lahi)	Bikol-Caramoran, Filipino	I	L
	Respect for elders	Bikol-Caramoran, Filipino	I	L
Medicine	Herbal medicine	Bikol-Caramoran	I	L
	Traditional medicine (hilot, santigwar)	Bikol-Caramoran	I	L
	Ritual male circumcision	Bikol-Caramoran	I	L
Agriculture	Patronizing native products	Bikol-Caramoran, Filipino, English	I	G
	Backyard gardening	Bikol-Caramoran, Filipino	I	G
	Organic gardening	Bikol, Filipino, English	I	G
	Copra or coconut drying	Bikol-Caramoran	I	G

In table 15, the community identified various kinds of specific knowledge based on the six categories of general knowledge that they consider most important for future generations.

Most of the kinds of specific knowledge are inside knowledge or from the community’s culture, while religion and a few subjects in education are outside knowledge or from outside the community. Bikol-Caramoran is used to talk or learn about all these specific kinds of knowledge while Filipino and English are relatively limited. However, Bikol-Legazpi or Central Bikol is used in the categories of religion and church services. However, knowledge in these categories is losing especially among younger generations. Filipino remains strong in education, government, tradition, and agriculture but English is only used strongly in education. This language pattern indicates a vigorous and developing language sustainability.

The Differentiation scale in Table 18 by Lewis and Simons (2015:167) measures how two or more languages are used for different functions within a community. The stability of the usage of particular languages for certain functions determines the sustainability of the language. The scale provides the level and description that correspond to the EGIDS levels, as well as the highest EGIDS potential which indicates the condition for the level to be likely achieved.

Table 16.
Differentiation Scale (Lewis & Simons, 2015:183)

Level	Description	Highest EGIDS Potential
D1	Members of the language community have a set of shared norms as to when to use this language orally and in writing versus when to use another language.	4 (Education)
D2	Members of the speech community have a set of shared norms as to when to use this language orally versus when to use other languages, but for writing, some use this language while others use another language for many of the same Functions.	5 (Developing)
D3	Members of this speech community have a set of shared norms as to when to use this language orally versus when to use other languages and they never use this language in written form.	6a (Vigorous)
D4	Some members of the child-bearing generation use this language orally for Functions of day-to-day life, while others use a different language for many of the same Functions.	6b (Threatened)
D5	The only Functions for this language that remain for all in the speech community are identificational, and there is a set of shared norms as to when and how they use the language as a marker of their ethnic identity.	7 (Shifting) to 9 (Dormant)
D6	For some members of the speech community the only remaining Functions for this language are identificational, while others use a different language for many of the same Functions.	9 (Dormant)

Bikol-Caramoran of Northern Catanduanes is level D3 with the highest EGIDS potential of 6a (Vigorous) which means “Members of the speech community have a set of shared norms as to when to use this language orally versus when to use other languages, and they never use this language in written form.” In terms of using the language orally, Bikol-Caramoran is distinct from Filipino and English as it is used almost exclusively in rural and

remote areas, as well as in talking about traditional medicine and common, practical knowledge in the community. However, only one locally written book for instructional purposes in teaching has been written and produced using Bikol-Caramoran, because Central Bikol-Bikol-Legazpi, Filipino, and English dominate education, government, media, and business.

Level of Language Use and the Vitality of Bikol-Caramoran of Northern Catanduanes

The level of language use and the vitality of Bikol-Caramoran are measured using the Expanded Graded Intergeneration Disruption Scale (EGIDS) by Lewis and Simons (2015). The levels of the FAMED conditions discussed in the previous sections guide in determining the EGIDS potential which indicates the condition for the level to be likely achieved as shown in Table 17.

Table 17.

Levels of FAMED conditions of Central Bikol

Condition	Level	Description	Highest EGIDS Potential
Functions	F3	The language is being used orally for the functions of day-to-day life, but there is no written use of the language.	6a (Vigorous)
Acquisition	A3	There is full face-to-face transmission of this language to all children in the home and community; literacy acquisition if any, is in another language.	6a (vigorous))
Motivation	M2	Members of the speech community perceive the benefits of reading and writing in this language, but the majority of them still do not.	5 (Developing)
Environment	E1	The external policy environment has nothing to say about ethno-linguistic diversity or language development and thus, raises no impediment.”	5(Developing)/6a (Vigorous)
Differentiation	D3	Members of the speech community have a set of shared norms as to when to use this language orally versus when to use other languages, and they never use this language in written form.	6a (Vigorous)

The levels of the FAMED conditions show that the highest EGIDS potential of Bikol-Caramoran is 6a (Vigorous) which means “The language is used for face-to-face communication by all generations and the situation is sustainable.” In the light of the FAMED conditions, language-in-education policy, and empirical evidence found by this study, the suggested EGIDS level for Bikol-Caramoran is 6a described as Vigorous which simply means that it is used for communication and the situation is sustainable; although much can still be done to improve its reading and writing identity to ensure strong sustainability. Similarly,

when Goemeh (2015) assessed the language vitality of Akha language in Myanmar which was threatened by the spread of telecommunication networks and development in trade and migration, the exposure of Myanmar to social contact and external influences posed modern challenges for their culture, language and identity.

Figure 3.

Hierarchy of Sustainable Use (Lewis & Simons, 2015)



Bikol-Caramoran, based on mountain chart has sustainable orality which means that all generations in the community have the ability to speak the language but has limited use to none in terms of reading and writing in their language as there is only one identified instructional book written in Bikol-Caramoran as the local language is still eclipsed by the more dominant Central Bikol or Bikol-Legazpi.

Plans of Action for Language Sustainability

Bikol-Caramoran is used by all generations in various communication and setting. This gives a strong orality to the language. However, alongside this, only one written book has been identified and this was created for instructional purposes under a book writing grant from DepEd and the local government sometime in 1993. No other material written in Bikol-Caramoran has been identified so far by the key informants and said produced material has not been easily accessible.

Although Bikol-Caramoran generally gives the people of Northern Catanduanes in Caramporan as sense of identity and is able to preserve its culture and tradition through the local language, this is not enough because the reading and writing aspects of the local language use is not fully developed. According to the participants, the things that hinder their identity are the media, technology and mass media, including the predominance of the MTB-MLE program in education with Central Bikol as the major language of instruction. They suggested the conduct of cultural events in the community and the sustained literary contests done annual during the town fiesta.

To counter the lack of reading materials and the inability to sustain its written use, the participants suggested the revival of the book grants and the establishment of a strong partnership with the local government unit to initiate the collection of terms endemic to Caramoran and come up with a working orthography. Finally, a training program is suggested on local Bikol-Caramoran language to familiarize teachers who are teaching in the Mother Tongue but using the more dominant Central Bikol. In conclusion, the participants believe that instructional materials such as big books and other literary pieces should be produced by teachers and those able to write in Bikol-Caramoran to capacitate the stakeholders concerned in facilitating the language sustainability and vitality through efficient and effective use of these in the teaching and learning process.

None of the levels of FAMED conditions are critically low. Nevertheless, the participants consensually agree that the cultivation of Bikol-Caramoran can be enhanced if the younger members of the speech community are more motivated to read and write in their traditional language. The improvement of the youth's motivation will also boost the acquisition of Bikol-Caramoran which may lead to more internal and external supports in the environment.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The factors that determine the level of language use of Bikol-Caramoran were identified based on the FAMED conditions. The Functions of Bikol-Caramoran are constrained by the strong use of Central-Bikol-Bikol-Legazpi, Filipino and English in church and religious services, education, government, and mass media. In spite of this, Bikol-Caramoran is used in all domains of the community and in face-to-face communications, making it vigorous. The Acquisition of Bikol-Caramoran is strongly supported since it is the first language of the majority. Its acquisition is further supported by the elders and various generations of native speakers.

However, the support for the acquisition of the written form needs to be strengthened. The acquisition of Bikol-Caramoran literacy is not strongly supported by the local government, although there are initiatives to promote its use and sustainability. The Motivation of the

people to use Bikol-Caramoran is strongly supported because the language is widely spoken in the community, having a Sustainable Orality. Nevertheless, learning to read and write in Bikol-Caramoran is not emphasized because MTB-MLE implemented in K-3 utilizes Central Bikol. In terms of Environment, there may not be clear and existing policies but there are local government initiatives that people perceive to be of help in speaking their language and preserving their identity.

These initiatives, however, provide only some support to reading and writing of the language and should be supported by actual ethno-diversity policies. As regards Differentiation, the children tend to use Bikol-Caramoran alongside Filipino and English because of the influence of technology and media. Similarly, Bikol-Caramoran is used to talk or learn about all kinds of knowledge while Central Bikol, Filipino and English are relatively limited to more “formal” concerns such as church services and religious practices. Bikol-Caramoran is used in knowledge about traditional medicine. Filipino remains strong in education, government, tradition, and agriculture but English is only used strongly in education.

Considering the factors that determine the level of language use of Bikol-Caramoran in Northern Catanduanes based on the FAMED conditions, the EGIDS level of language use and the vitality of Bikol-Caramoran is 6a (Vigorous) which means “The language is used for face-to-face communication by all generations and the situation is sustainable.” Central Bikol is the standard language of the Bicol Region. Hence, it enjoys prestige relative to other Bikol varieties, as compared to Bikol-Caramoran which is a local language preferred by the natives of Caramporan in Northern Catanduanes. Although Bikol-Caramoran generally gives the people of Northern Catanduanes in Caramporan as sense of identity and is able to preserve its culture and tradition through the local language, this is not enough because the reading and writing aspects of the local language use is not fully developed.

The predominance of the MTB-MLE program in education with Central Bikol as the major language of instruction is a major issue in the local language’s sustainability. To counter this, cultural events in the community and the sustained literary contests done annually during the town fiesta should be continued and maintained including the revival of the book grants and the establishment of a strong partnership with the local government unit to initiate the collection of terms endemic to Caramoran and come up with a working orthography.

A training program is suggested on local Bikol-Caramoran language to familiarize teachers who are teaching in the Mother Tongue but using the more dominant Central Bikol. In conclusion, the participants believe that instructional materials such as big books and other literary pieces should be produced by teachers and those able to write in Bikol-Caramoran to capacitate the stakeholders concerned in facilitating the language sustainability and vitality through efficient and effective use of these in the teaching and learning process.

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