

Islandness in the Province: The Language of a Migrated Ivatan

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ABSTRACT

This paper explores the experiences of an Ivatan who migrated to the Province of Mindanao. It focuses on the challenges in their migration experiences and describes the linguistic situation of an Ivatan who migrated. A qualitative research design using a case study approach was used. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews and thematic analysis to develop themes. It came out of the study that they migrated to be saved from disaster, especially from the typhoon experienced on Batanes Island. Most of all, the migrating Ivatans are worried because they can no longer use their first language due to their location and socialization, resulting in mixed language.

KEYWORDS: *islandness, migration, Ivatan, case study, language*

INTRODUCTION

The island of Batanes brings the melody of peace, tranquility, and the taste of simple living. However, behind the beauty of this island, which can be seen in the northernmost part of the Philippines, are the hidden stories of the people who live there – stories of moving houses and migration. There may be reasons that compelled the locals to migrate, remain on the island, or live on the outskirts of the islands and build new homes. It was recorded in the study of van der Geest, Burkett, Fitzpatrick, Stege, and Wheeler (2020) that one of the possible reasons for migration is climate change, which is projected to have a more solid impact on environmental change in the forthcoming than at present-day. Second, the most environmentally induced migration is within state borders and short geographic remoteness in which prominent exclusions are border areas and small states, tiny island developing states. Third, migration is frequently perceived as a catastrophe in adapting to environmental changes. As a result, climate change will not only force masses of individuals to migrate but will also force them into susceptible environments from which they cannot leave because of the absence of ways to migrate.

Further, in Kelman's (2014) study, nature runs a root through environmental events that are feasible for hazards, such as volcanic explosions, famines, or even climate changes. But there is also a factor for human movements; not only the people directly affected but also those distant from them experienced the consequences of their decisions, putting people and property at risk without adequate measures to deal with it. As to Conell (2010), one contribution of migration is the neglect of the Government, which results in an unfavorable valuation of products.

In relation to this, the migration of one tribe to another tribe affected the languages involved, especially in an archipelago country like the Philippines, which claims to have many languages and dialects. In the migration situation, the first language influences the second language in the vocabulary or lexicon on how they pronounce the language and even how to use it grammatically (Samarca, 2022). Because there is a need to interconnect with each other,

migrants learn to use not only their native language but also the language of their neighboring group or tribe or the tribe they migrated to. However, their language remains the one that identifies their distinctiveness even though they are far from their place of origin.

Thus, this paper aims to present an analysis and description of the challenges of migration experiences and describe the linguistic situation of an Ivatan who migrated. Although this study is not comprehensive on their culture, it can start the development of understanding and appreciating Ivatans who are included as minorities in society, especially those Ivatans who migrated.

METHODOLOGY

This qualitative study focuses on a case study as an intensive study about a person, a group of people, or a unit, which aims to generalize some units (Heale & Twycross, 2018). A case study is also described as an intensive, systematic investigation of an individual, group, community, or another unit where the researcher analyzes in-depth data correlated to some variable.

To reach the objective and in-depth inquiry, purposeful sampling was used. The researcher chose an Ivatan having experience with migration in the Province of Mindanao. The data collected was through a semi-structured interview using a validated interview guide to ensure compliance with the objectives of the study.

The participant's experience was recorded and later recorded. The participant signed an informed consent form to ensure that the data obtained in this study is genuine and certain, thereby ensuring the confidentiality of the data collected. A thematic analysis was conducted to generate themes. These themes were generated from the interviews of the participant.

RESULTS

Three (3) themes were generated from participant responses. Developed themes were based on interview transcription and clustering of codes from the responses of the participant. Above all, the theme focuses only on the objectives of the study.

Migration for survival

The participant's statement was precise and detailed on the natural origin of their ethnic group. It also shared the exact place of the first settlement of their groups until their migration. Moving the place to live is one of the things that the natives do to adapt their way of life to what they are used to or venture into a new way of life. But the calamity is what motivated the participant's family to migrate. Although it can be noticed that there are tribes that are venturing into other communities, there are a few who still live in the land that was entrusted to them by their ancestors to maintain and preserve their ethnic group (Guanzon-de Guzman, 2010).

The day-to-day life of the natives involved in endless efforts and search for a living is what concretizes the period of crossing or the so-called migration. Various ethnic groups have done this since then to find resources to live. Migration factors may reflect environmental catastrophes and other disasters and situations, but this does not mean their lives are no longer practical as they adapted their doings away from their original place. This only proves that the natives have the ability to become accustomed to themselves and adapt to the characteristics of their new environment just to continue living even though they are in another place. As a result, they transform themselves far away from their tribe's culture by adapting to society and their environment, and because in the migrated place, they have found a job to survive (Guanzon-de

Guzman, 2010). According to Mulungu (2021), education is also a significant factor in migration to progress. Education offers opportunities to get a job for a living and to survive.

Mixed language

Learning another language is not new in a country, especially in a tribe or group. Because language is dynamic, it can be used in any communication in the day-to-day socialization of people. As a child grows up, even if he learned his first language at home, it still changes due to the influence of the environment. Aside from that, even if their ancestors pass their tribe members their first language to every generation, it is inevitable for them that they will also learn other languages due to daily communication with others that is not part of their tribe. Then a mixed language occurs, which is a type of contact language that results from two languages that are mixed due to a condition of bilingualism that emerges in times of social change, and it serves to express a new identity or preserve an older identity (Meakins, 2013).

That happened in the language of a migrated Ivatan because usually, the majority uses a dialect that is not their first language, yet they need to adapt it for them to understand and communicate. They often use the Bisaya dialect even in their own home, which is unavoidable because the participant migrated to Mindanao. They learned not only Bisaya but also Filipino and English at school and even in the community they migrated from, resulting in rarely using their native language. Consequently, they will no longer be observed as fluent in their first language resulting in mixed languages.

In the study of Villanueva (2016), a language community occurs when a group of people understands the purpose and style of communication even if they do not belong to the same tribe or group. In continuous communication between groups of people and other groups of a community, words acquire characteristics that differ from other groups. This causes the existence of different communities of speakers or linguistic communities.

Change over time

Language is constantly changing; the number of emerging languages is increasing over time, and words have taken on many meanings, especially with the fast and vast technology in social media. Along with changes in society and the development of modern technology, new words are invented that are more suitable for people's lives. Like culture, language is shaped by events over time. We need to understand that the passing of old words or vernaculars is part of the evolution of our language and a sign of its vitality. It does not mean that the language is destroyed when the word is overshadowed, and informal expressions are not used anymore by the new generations. This is just proof of the continuous expansion of the vocabulary of the Filipino language due to the creativity of the people who use it.

It can be seen that the Ivatans have their own unique culture, and they need to interact with other ethnic groups having different cultures. Because of the need to communicate, they learn to use not only their native language but also the language of their neighboring group or tribe, especially in the town where they migrated to. In the case of the participant, their first language is affected because few of them use it. After all, it was mixed with other languages as a result of migration. Younger generations and Ivatans who married other tribes were no longer using their native language instead, they were using the language in their migrated place, and only the elders or their ancestors who were still alive in that place used their first language.

According to Nuncio, Pontemayor, Monforte, and Lumigis (2020), the varieties of language are developed due to the continuous interaction of people with others—in their own group and other groups in society. Through socialization, he is exposed to different characteristics of the languages he uses. Different cultures, statuses, and classes in society are some of the main factors affecting language variety. This takes place in a place rich in different types of people like Mindanao. From Aitchison (2017), speakers use various forms to express meaning. The change in language is the result of the influence of social and cultural factors that might result from contact and borrowing or imagination of the human mind. The basic knowledge is that people use different languages and other varieties of that language, and the use of that language gives different meanings.

CONCLUSION

Due to the distance from the place where the migrated tribe lives and the presence of many languages used in their respective areas, their language is influenced by other languages spoken in the community. Ethnic groups have adapted to different aspects, such as their speech, in order not to be underestimated or experience discrimination. They are also influenced by their interactions with other groups. So, their language also changes due to living with other groups. A characteristic of a language of a certain tribe is unique and different from many languages of other tribes. For one, the Ivatan language can be considered a unique language and is distinctively different from the languages in the Philippines because this difference serves to recognize their difference from other ethnic groups. Therefore, it is helpful to launch programs or projects to provide opportunities for the new generation of their tribe to promote equitable development.

Further, it is shown in this study that it is necessary to respect the dialects and accept the change brought by the mixed language, especially in the case of the native language and its variation that can be used in transactional and interactional needs. Above all, mixed languages present a unique opportunity to study the extreme changes in language through interaction.

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