



## “WHY I DON’T SPEAK LIKE MOM AND DAD”: LANGUAGE IDENTITY, MAINTENANCE AND SHIFT OF IP STUDENTS

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**Abstract:** *The study is descriptive of the status of language identity, language maintenance and language shift of Indigenous Peoples students of Philippine Normal University–North Luzon by considering their language attitude, the probable causes of language shift and language loss as variables to the inquiry. The investigation centered on describing how IP students of the institution perceive the situation of their mother tongue and other influential languages in the context of the language used and spoken by their parents as well as their environment. Language maintenance and shift was hypothesized to be connected to the IP family background of the respondents. Hence, the study identified the respondents as born of parents who are both IPs and an IP parent intermarried to a non-IP. The results reveal that IP students born of parents who are both IP are more likely to lose their home languages because their linguistic foundation is merely composed of both languages of minority compared to those whose parents are intermarried. This group is less likely to lose home languages since only one language is threatened (inferior language) while the other (superior language) is maintained since the same language is spoken by the majority group. The study desires to increase awareness of minority groups, IPs in this context, of the status of their language for possible language identity preservation and avoidance of possible language loss.*

**Keywords:** *Language identity, language maintenance, language attitude, language loss, language shift, Indigenous Peoples*

### INTRODUCTION

Language is considered as an important symbol of a minority group’s identity (Holmes, 1992). As Scovel (1998) puts it, “The use of language and speech is a window to the nature and structure of the human mind”. It is through language where people in a certain group or community communicates and understand each other. Sometimes, even the language itself is an open window through the culture and identity of an individual. It is also a powerful tool in binding the people’s action, goals and ideals for the sake of their own improvement.



Language is furthermore an expression of this group's culture thereby strengthening the identity of the group. Weiß and Schwietering (2016), professors of Social Sciences at the University of Kassel, claims that "the power of language" can breed "language of power" thereby rendering an "identity forming power of language".

Among those who advocated language as part of forming identity thereby establishing power is Joshua A. Fishman (1972) who established assumption on language and nationalism. He claimed that language is used as link to the past and authenticity and this can be achieved through the use of the mother tongue as "part of the soul" of nationalism. The same assumption is adhered upon by Weiß and Schwietering (2016) who explained that the first language acquired by an individual necessarily become his "natural language". The natural language serves as a language user's means of interpreting and understanding his thoughts and decisions. This observation touches on the double function of the first language. The first language lays the foundations for the understanding, its possibilities of grasping things and expressing them. At the same time it socializes the individual. This socialization leads to being part of a certain culture and establishing an identity with it. This identity in language has also subsumed in Fishman's (1972) idea on language and identity. Fishman (1972) claims strongly that language establishes an identity present in any group of language users. As a matter of fact, he criticized the continuing globalization that has forgotten to preserve language identity of groups and instead embraced a more superior language. His argument particularly goes to the defense of those who are part of the minority group and immigrant languages.

To clarify this point, Fishman (1968) earlier identified the concepts of language maintenance and shift. He vigorously studied these concepts ethnographically using his definition of language maintenance and language shift as the change in language usage patterns and ongoing psychological, social and cultural processes in population that utilize more than one speech variety. With this definition, it is implied that multilingual communities are vulnerable towards these phenomena. This indeed is evident in the situations discussed by Weiß and Schwietering (2016) expressing the implication of language maintenance and shifting among communities of language users. They said that problems arise in multilingual communities when language elevation and suppression arises from the fact that one language is elevated to the status of the official language and so the language of the elites



and the powerful, while other languages are relegated to a lower status and discriminated against. This was true especially among the groups where pluralities of indigenous and partly unwritten languages are subordinated to an official language in state affairs and transactions. This, according to Weiß and Schwietering(2016) is particularly clear in post-colonial Africa, where the problems of de-colonialization amidst the continuance of colonial power structures may be read off from the linguistic relations. The problems of a multilingual context show themselves in another form in Latin America in the relation between Spanish and the indigenous languages. Revealed here can be the contrast between post-colonial contexts and the situation in Eastern Europe, where in 1989 not only a phase of Soviet political predominance came to an end, but also an epoch of cultural and political influence. In the new phase of democratic orientation, complex relation in which political power stands to the conflict over linguistic-cultural hegemony, may be directly observed. This situation implies that a language inferior to another language faces threat on its maintenance and makes it vulnerable for language shifting.

Fishman (1972) further articulated his theoretical conceptualization of language maintenance and language shift. His arguments include:

- a. Language maintenance is a function of intactness of group membership or group loyalty, particularly nationalism;
- b. Urban dwellers are more inclined to shift. Rural dwellers who are more conservative and isolated are less inclined; and
- c. The most prestigious language displaces the less prestigious language.

The linguistic inequality expressed in these assumptions is among the factors that lead to language shift observable in multilingual communities. The pressure of the wider society creates a border and threat to language especially to those who belong to the minority group. Due to the greater number of speakers who migrated into a certain place where they dominated, the possibility of assimilating a minority language can lead to permanent loss of that language because of failure to maintain the language and increase shift towards the superior language.

Like any minority groups in the society, every Indigenous Peoples group is blessed with their own language or dialect that serves as their identity. However, due to the pressure of a larger population that uses more dominant language, speakers of this minor language will



likely abandon their original language because of the influence of the majority group of speakers around them. This threatens language maintenance and increases language shift. Indeed, as modernization takes place, it is a prominent thing that the language of the people might also change because of the influence created by the use of modern technology. For instance, Tonada (2006) identified that the loss of language may be caused by several factors which include natural/environmental, political/military, social, cultural/religious and linguistic circumstances and language policy. Hoffman (2009) likewise believed that factors such as media, natural/environmental and military or politics threaten minority languages to be lost. Further culture, which serves as an identity for these groups, is threatened as well because of culturally significant practices dependent on language.

In this present study, the constructs of language attitude, language shift and language loss have been included to look into the situation of identity, language maintenance and shift of natural languages. Oboil (2002) defines language attitude as “a mental disposition towards something” and it ties opinion and behavior together. Language attitude has been of interest to Fishman and Cooper (1974) when they claimed that “affective behaviors always have had a place in sociology of language studies”. In 1996, he introduced the term ethnolinguistic consciousness that ties with the concepts of language attitudes and language identity. He said that positive ethnolinguistic consciousness recognizes “a reality in which the ethnic language, the ethnic identity and the ethnic culture are completely intertwined”. Moreover, Appeland Muysken (1987) states that a social or ethnic group has a certain language attitude towards each other. Furthermore, they have observed that languages are not only detached and neutral instruments for communication or for expressing one's thoughts but it's also a clear reflection of an individual's identity who belongs in a particular group. Hence, language attitude is basically the feeling of a certain individual towards his/her mother tongue or the language of others. Ryan (1982), on the other hand, describes the concept as “any affective, cognitive or behavioral index of evaluative reactions towards language varieties or speakers.” This assumption by Ryan (1982) was regarded in two different approaches separately by Fasold (1984) and Agheyisi and Fishman (1970). Fasold (1984) takes language attitude as behavioral which is observable through people's reaction or responses to certain situations. Agheyisi and Fishman (1970) in an earlier account, on the contrary, take attitude as something cognitive since behavior is unpredictable and could



change in a matter of seconds. Nonetheless, Fasold (1984) defended that these attitudes are indeed behavioral because they are responses to a specific stimuli.

Another variable in the language identity, maintenance and shift is language shift itself. Fishman (1991) defines it as a “process whereby intergenerational continuity of the heritage language is proceeding negatively, with fewer ‘speakers, readers, writers, and even understanders’ every generation”. In simple terms, Language shift is a situation where two languages are spoken in a specific speech community and minority language speakers gradually shift to the other one that is spoken by majority. Most researches about this specific issue in languages emphasize the speaker’s attitude towards the language and its function in the community as powerful factors for shifting. Nevertheless, the most evident factor that is seen to be the most influential is through social interaction. The choice of a language to use is based on socio-linguistic factors and individual variables (Walters, 2005), proving that the influence of the society is potent.

Moreover, language shift has caught the attention of many linguists and efforts were made to reverse its effects (Grenoble & Whaley, 1996). Crystal (2000), for instance, proposed six factors to inverse the effects of language shift. He says that a language in danger of extinction can possibly be saved if speakers (1) increase their prestige within the dominant community; (2) increase their wealth; (3) increase their legitimate power in the eyes of the dominant community; (4) have a strong presence in the educational system; (5) can write down their language; (6) can make use of electronic technology.

This move to possibly salvage the language has two possible ends, one is that it can be saved as early as possible or it will completely vanish and the language of majority will dominate. This is when language loss occurs in one language because the choice of the speakers led them to abandon the “weaker” language and adopt the superior one.

Crystal (2000) illustrates language loss as a situation when no one would speak a language in a community of speakers. Haynes (2010), conversely, defined it as the gradual extinction of a minority language due to both intrinsic and extrinsic factors. The language just stops being used and thereby leading to language death. There are many reasons for the occurrence of language loss but migration and cultural assimilation is the most evident. Fishman (1991) enumerates four factors that influence language choices leading to shift or maintenance. These are the demographic factors, economic forces, social identifiers, and mass media



which forces, if not encourages, minority language speakers to assimilate their own language. Moreover, he developed a scale of stages of language loss.

**Table 1 Adaptation of Fishman's Scale for Threatened Languages**

Stages	Descriptions
Stage One	Used by higher levels of government and in higher education.
Stage Two	Used by local government and the mass media in the community.
Stage Three	Used in business and by employees in less specialized work areas.
Stage Four	Language is required in elementary schools.
Stage Five	Language is still very much alive and used in community.
Stage Six	Some intergenerational use of language.
Stage Seven	Only adults beyond child bearing age speak the language.
Stage Eight	Only a few elders speak the language.

Sasse's (1992) theory of language death, nonetheless, included cultural, historical and political forces together with economic forces in his list of external factors that may result to language loss. He claims that these mentioned forces affect the behavior of speakers towards minority languages and tends to lean more to the majority. Furthermore, he argues that the key factor to blame is the parents' failure to transfer the language to their children. As a result, youth lacks proficiency to the language and will have no choice but to adopt the dominant one. David Beck and Yvonne Lam (2003) a case study "Language loss and linguistic suicide: A case study from the Sierra Norte de Puebla, Mexico" proposed the term "Linguistic Suicide" which they defined as situations where parents belonging in a group intentionally choose not to teach their mother tongue to their children. Because of that, people tend to choose the majority language which can end up to the extinction of their mother tongue. Some possible reasons as to why parents choose not to teach their mother tongue cited in literature is the low stature attached to the concept of minority languages compared to the majority. These types of languages are commonly associated to the traditional and older ways of living. In the modern generation, the thought of wanting to be advanced in the society is really not surprising. In a case study in the Mayan community, Garzon (1992) discovered that the parents' desire for the success of their children is to blame. They think that teaching the youth about their mother tongue might hinder their



chances of learning Spanish and to do well at school. Garzon (1992) claims that internal factors are as influential as those of external factors.

There are likewise three beliefs that also contribute to language loss. Some of which are misconceptions and a result of poor logic and judgment. The first one is Individualism. Basically, it is the belief that honoring and preserving the old ways could not get you ahead in life. The next one is Pragmatism or the belief that knowing how to speak a more dominant language is more useful when compared to a language of minority since only few people understand it. The last one is Materialism which is interconnected to individualism. If one believes that their mother tongue might hinder success, then it also “won’t put bread on the table”. In rare cases, the language remains but there are no more speakers of a language of minority. However, enough notes and documentation is obtained to piece it back together where people can learn to speak it again. These types are called Sleeping Languages (Leonard, 2008). Hence, there is a possibility to restore a language that has been assumed to be loss.

Hale (1992) suggest that the protection of linguistic diversity is of utmost importance and is similar to the preservation of biological diversity. He believes that the extinction of these languages and “the cultural systems they represent” represents “a loss of intellectual and cultural wealth” and the “products of human mental industry.” If these languages are left to die and be extinct, then it appears like ties to the information embedded on these languages will also be severed.

## **THIS STUDY**

The primary purpose of this study is to describe language identity, language maintenance and shift of Indigenous Peoples students of PNU North Luzon. Having the dubbed as the Indigenous Peoples Hub, the interest to describe the language used by these students may shed light to the improvement of language pedagogy which is IP responsive.

Particularly, the study is aimed at identifying what languages are used by the respondents as mother tongue and whether this is used in communicating in various language contexts such as within the family, in school or in public places. It also aimed to determine whether there is a difference in terms of language identity, maintenance, and shift when parents are both IPs or when they are intermarried with a non-IP. Finally, the study also aims to discuss



the constructs of language attitude, language shift and language lost among IP students vis-à-vis language identity, maintenance and shift.

## **METHOD**

### ***Design***

The study is descriptive using the survey technique. Fraenkel and Wallen (2006) explained this technique as an effective way to describe aspects of characteristics. In the study at hand, characteristics of language orientation is being sought, rendering the technique appropriate. The result of the survey was further validated through interviews with chosen participants.

### ***Participant***

Through purposive and snowball sampling, the researcher identified sections mainly composed of IP students to whom the questionnaires were provided. Then, using snowball sampling, the respondents suggested other students of the same characteristics who are not part of the mentioned sections but are studying in the university as well. With this method, 65 students responded in total, 35 (53.85%) through purposive; while, 30 (46.15%) through the snowball sampling.

### ***Instruments***

The main instrument used in this research is a questionnaire designed by the researcher. It is a Likert scale consist of statements where the respondents will express agreement using this scale: 4 – strongly agree, 3- agree, 2 – disagree, and 1 – strongly disagree. The constructs in the questionnaire are focused on the use of the mother tongue compared to any other language they can speak. Moreover, the questionnaire was validated and tested in reliability through piloting to students with the same characteristics as that of the intended respondents. Also, a set of interview questions to validate their responses and further explain some of the variables in the questionnaire was also prepared and asked the respondents. The responses are studied vis-à-vis the answers to the questionnaire to get more reliable results.

### ***Procedure***

The researcher identified the respondents by considering the two (2) sections in the institution which are generally composed of IP students. Direct administration to a group was employed to ensure a high rate of response. These participants were provided the





questionnaire to answer as honestly as possible. Then the researcher asked them to recommend other students who have the same variables or characteristics. Each respondent was provided assistance in the accomplishment of the questionnaire to make ensure that the statements are responded properly and accurately. Finally, an interview for some of respondent was also conducted to validate answers to the questionnaire. The responses retrieved from the subject were tabulated to undergo statistical treatment using Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS).

## RESULTS

### *Language Used by the Respondents*

Table 2 reveals that there are several languages that the respondents use in communicating in a variety of context. It is easy to distinguish that there are two languages which are used as dominant language. These are Tagalog and Iloko. This means that these languages are dominantly utilized by the respondents in communicating at home, or outside the home. It is also notable that there are seven respondents who claim that their language at home and hence in communication, is English. There were very few speakers of languages such as binongan, finutfut, isnag, tuwali, ibaloi, kalanguya, tinongrayan, yogad, and agta. Gaddang was included since there are students who identified themselves belonging to the tribe of the Gaddang but who do not speak their language.

**Table 2. Language Used by Respondents in Communicating in various Context**

Language	Frequency	Language	Frequency
Tagalog	65	Finutfut	2
Iloko	52	Isnag	2
Calinga	13	Tuwali	1
Ibanag	9	Ibaloi	1
English	7	Kalanguya	1
Kankannaey	5	Tinongrayan	1
Ayangan	4	Yogad	1
Itneg/Isnag	6	Agta	1
Binongan	2	Gaddang	0

### *Language Orientation of Respondents when Grouped according Birth with both IP as Parents and Intermarried IP and non-IP Parents*

Table 3 shows the computed mean and the standard deviation of the minor ethnicity for the respondents born of both IP parents in connection with language attitude, language loss,



and language shift. Based on the computed mean and standard deviation for each category, it can be seen that they have a strong and positive attitude ( $M= 3.1865$ ,  $SD= .3221$ ) on preserving and using their mother tongue. In the category of language loss, ( $M=2.8265$ ,  $SD= .38364$ ) they often have the tendency to detach from their mother tongue. On language shifting ( $M=2.3393$ ,  $SD= .4928$ ), the respondents have the lesser tendency to shift to another language instead of using their mother tongue. The results illustrate that respondents, born of both IP parents, often have the tendency to lose their mother tongue regardless of their language attitude and language shift because they are more confined within their minority language. The absence, therefore, of speakers of these minority language (e.g. when parents choose a majority language to use at home) might lead to language loss on the part of the succeeding generations.

**Table 3. Language Orientation of Respondents with both Parents belonging to an IP Group**

	Mean	SD
Language Attitude	3.1865	.34221
Language Loss	2.8265	.38364
Language Shift	2.3393	.49284

Table shows the respondents born of parents who are intermarried. The computed mean and standard deviation of their language attitude ( $M= 3.0794$ ,  $SD= .36126$ ) shows that they are often positive and patriotic on their own mother tongue. On their language loss ( $M=2.5102$ ,  $SD= .41121$ ), they have the lesser tendency to be detached from their mother tongue. Also, in their language shift ( $M=2.8214$ ,  $SD=.58567$ ) they exhibit more chances of shifting in another language particularly in the language of the majority. The overall result in their language orientation ( $M=2.8037$ ,  $SD= .3080$ ) shows that they are less likely additive bilinguals where their mother tongue is maintained while there is another language they can “add” to the existing one. Compared to the respondents who have intermarried parents, the respondents with both IP parents are more likely to lose their language because their linguistic foundation is mainly composed of their mother tongue which is the language of minority.

**Table 4. Language Orientation of Respondents with an IP Parent Intermarried to a non-IP**

	Mean	SD
Language Attitude	3.0794	.36126
Language Loss	2.5102	.41121
Language Shift	2.8214	.58567



### **Factors of Language Attitude, Language Shift and Language Loss**

Table 5 determines the language attitude of the respondents. It can be gleaned that the respondents have positive attitude towards preserving their mother tongue. Particularly, the indicators “I like to use my mother tongue when talking to my friends and classmate” and “I feel like our culture is preserved when I use my mother tongue” got the highest mean. This was supported in the interview, when respondents divulged that they wanted to impart their mother tongue since they agreed that their culture is preserved when they use it.

**Table 5. Indicators of Language Attitude of the Respondents**

<b>Indicators</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>QD</b>
1. I like to use my mother tongue when talking to my friends and classmates	3.60	.873	Often
2. A lot of people around me find it useful when I'm learning my mother tongue.	2.83	.857	Often
3. In my life, learning my mother tongue is very important.	3.71	.572	Always
4. I dream to teach my mother tongue in the future.	3.57	.608	Always
5. I desire to see myself as someone who can speak my mother tongue.	3.46	.817	Always
6. I feel like our culture is preserved when I use my mother tongue.	3.60	.651	Always
7. I like to use another language instead of my mother tongue in communication.	2.63	.731	Often
8. I think that learning my mother tongue will be beneficial to me and to other people in our community.	3.14	.692	Often
9. I get frustrated when I encounter a word from my mother tongue that i do not know.	2.49	1.067	Often

As reflected in table 6, the respondents have parents who do not use their mother tongue when speaking to them at home (item 10; item 15). They also refuse to use their mother tongue when communicating with classmates and friends over the social media (item 11). Also, the use of the mother tongue is confined in their rituals, ceremonies and songs. Nevertheless, adopting the language from their own community seem to be rated low. Perhaps this might be due to the fact that the community where they belong to might still be speaking the mother tongue which they did not adopt anymore because of a majority language they chose to use.



**Table 6. Indicators of Language Loss of Students**

Indicators	Mean	SD	QD
10. Our parents do not speak to me using their mother tongue.	3.34	.938	Often
11. Whenever I communicate to my classmates and friends in social media, I never use my mother tongue.	2.71	.825	Often
12. We only use our mother tongue in our traditional rituals, ceremonies and songs.	2.57	1.092	Often
13. I want that I am the only person who knows my own mother tongue and no one else.	3.63	.690	Always
14. Majority of people in our community speak in their majority language/s which I eventually adopted.	1.77	1.003	Sometimes
15. My parents know how to speak in our mother tongue but choose to speak Tagalog/Ilokano or another language	3.17	.923	Often
16. My parents know my grandparents' language but I cannot understand it.	2.14	.944	Sometimes

The table that follows exhibits the possible indicators of language shifting of the respondents. It can be drawn from the results that the respondents engage in shifting to another language like Tagalog/ Iloko in public place (item 20) which are majority languages. They also often replace terms from their mother tongue into another language because they cannot find the equivalent term in their mother tongue. The data generally show that indeed, the tendency to shift into a language of majority is very possible to the respondents in dealing publicly or even personally (item 17, 21, 24).

**Table 7. Indicators of Language Shift**

Indicators	Mean	SD	QD
17. I understand the language but seldom use it	2.11	.832	Sometimes
18. I speak in another language, instead of my mother tongue because it is easier for me.	2.20	.964	Sometimes
19. When I speak, I interchange words/terms from my mother tongue and from another language.	2.31	.832	Sometimes
20. When I go to the market or other public places, I use another language/s(e.g. Tagalog/ Iloko) in communication.	3.17	.785	Often
21. I speak in Tagalog/Ilokano more than my mother tongue because it is more natural for me.	2.40	.914	Sometimes



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22. I choose to speak in other language/s (e.g. Tagalog/Iloko) if there are people around.	2.37	.808	Sometimes
23. I shift from my mother tongue to another language (e.g. Tagalog/English) especially when I could not find the right term to express my thoughts from my mother tongue.	2.71	.860	Often
24. I tend to speak more in another language more than my mother tongue.	2.20	.933	Sometimes

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## DISCUSSION

The primary purpose of the study is to describe the language identity, maintenance and shift of IP students. This objective has been set out to descriptively illustrate the status of language use of the respondents who are assumed as speakers of minority language.

There are three particular aims of this paper, the first one is to identify the languages used by the respondents. Results revealed that the dominant languages were Tagalog and Iloko. In the locale of the study, Northern Luzon is really dominated by Ilocanos thereby the dominant Iloko language. Nevertheless, there has been an increasing use of Tagalog as the mother tongue in households with the thought that this language is prestigious – a language in the school and spoken by many. Despite the many languages identified, there seems to be a rare use of many of the minority languages. The result somehow implies a cultural influence on the use of the majority language. Fishman (1991) and Sasse (1992) both clearly stated that extrinsic factors in language loss are really influential to speakers. If not because with the need to adapt in the society, the reason behind language shift can be the fact that majority of the speakers of the superior language really do dominate. In this case, the Iloko language being an Ilocano populated locale and Tagalog, being the language of the mass. The evidence therefore reveals that identity of the minority, as far as language is concerned, is shunned by the majority language speakers. Language maintenance is therefore threatened, whereas language shift is occurring as a result of weakened language maintenance.

However, the study is limited to what the respondents reveal. A deeper analysis would be possible if the study be done ethnographically. Also, the number of respondents belonging to various IP groups has not been equally distributed. This has been a limitation of the study because there are various IP groups in the campus but their number would not be equal



compared to other IP groups. It would also have helped statistically if the distribution was equal with the current type of research which is quantitative in nature.

Another focus of the study was on the possibility of language shift if the respondents are born of families with both parents as IP or those who are intermarried. The data revealed clearly show that the respondents born of both IP parents have the greater tendency to lose their natural language or mother tongue (probably IP). The language maintenance is negatively treated in this case. The assumption is that the parents have both languages of minority. Against a majority language, they often give in to the language spoken by the majority with the thought that this would help their children in growing up. Garzon (1992) in her study discovered that the parents' desire for the success of their children is to blame for losing the minority language. Beck and Lam (2003) called this "Linguistic Suicide" when parents abandon passing their minority language to their children.

Conversely, the respondents whose parents are intermarried have higher possibility of language maintenance. This is because the mother tongue, to begin with, may actually be the majority language spoken in the community. Despite this, the tendency is still there that the minority language will be forgotten. As Appel and Muysken (1987) puts it, a social of ethnic group has a certain language attitude towards each other. Again, the study is limited to only perceptions of the respondents. The data that could be used when done ethnographically will perhaps yield more accurate and comprehensive results.

Finally, the indicators of language attitude, shift and loss had been investigated and statistically represented. Data revealed that the respondents have observed that languages are not only detached and neutral instruments for communication or for expressing ones thoughts but it's also a clear reflection of an individual's identity who belong in a particular group. Meaning, they both agreed that using and preserving their mother tongue is a sign of belongingness and acceptance. When asked on how they feel about their mother tongue, some of the respondents admitted that even when they could not speak straight or can barely understand some terms because their parents do not talk to them using their mother tongue, they wanted to learn it so that they can also impart it to the next generation. In that way, the language will always remain in the society.

Although the respondents have positive attitude towards their mother tongue, they are generally prone to language shifting more than maintenance of their mother tongue. As



revealed earlier, the awareness of the respondents is actually high that their desire to maintain their language and culture make them want to learn their language – something that their parents could have done. In an interview with the respondents conducted by the researchers, most of them shift from another language like Tagalog or Ilokano when they do not know the terms in their own language or mother tongue. Some respondents also said that they use Tagalog or Ilokano language in public places more often than their mother tongue. Clearly, based on the definition of language shift, this happens in a situation when two languages are spoken in a specific speech community and minority language speakers gradually shifts to the other one that is spoken in majority.

In sum, the study has revealed that language identity of the Indigenous Peoples students are at risk with the growing interest of using the majority language instead of their indigenous language. The low language maintenance and high language shift concepts of the speakers of minority languages determine the identity of the language users. The preservation of the minority language calls for a shift in paradigm to the awareness that language loss, worse, language death may occur.

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