

The Role of *Linguistic Capital* in Filipino Ethnic Intermarriage and Identity: A Bourdieuan Analysis

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Abstract

The Ilokano's intermarriage with the Ibanags and Itawes of Cagayan, Philippines raises various practical and theoretical issues concerning Iloko culture and language. How do Ilokans who married an Ibanag or Itawes fare when they live in communities where they are a minority group? What critical practices do they consciously or unconsciously perform to live and affirm their identity? What is the role of *linguistic capital* in this process? In what way does *linguistic capital* influence ethnic intermarriage and identity construction? How would a sociological analysis of Ilokano intermarriage contribute to the existing discourse on Ilokano consciousness, language, identity and culture? The study examines the power culture of the Ilokans using Pierre Bourdieu's analytical framework. It fundamentally explores the *habitus* and *linguistic capital* of Ilokans within the context of their *field* (i.e., marriage, family and community life) in these cultural communities of Cagayan, Philippines. Also identified were the other factors that preserve *Ilokanoness* in a diversified community. The paper proffers that Ilokano intermarriage to a diversified community can be viewed as a meaningful representation and analysis that can be tapped to understand the unique and vital aspects of Ilokano culture, language and society.

1. Introduction

The Philippines is a rich tapestry of ethnic diversity (SIM, 2008). With an archipelago of more than 7,100 islands, its geographical setting has caused considerable number of ethnic and linguistic differences. The Philippines is the 8th most multi-ethnic nation in the world (Kok Keng, 2001). A total of 114 distinct ethnic groups inhabit the country (SIM, 2008) and 171 native languages are spoken across the island (Bright, 1986). There are 13 indigenous languages with at least one million native speakers: Tagalog, Cebuano, Ilokano, Hiligaynon, Waray-Waray, Kapampangan, Bikol, Albay Bikol.

The Ilokanos as one of the major ethnic groups in the country occupy the narrow, barren strip of land in the northwestern tip of Luzon, squeezed in between the inhospitable Cordillera mountain range to the east and the South China Sea to the west. The four provinces of the Ilocano homeland (Ilocos Norte, Ilocos Sur, La Union, and landlocked Abra) stretch from Cape Bojeador at the northwestern tip of Luzon down to the Gulf of Lingayen. Most of the population is concentrated along a narrow coastal plain that has only a few good harbors. This environment is harsh, forcing Ilokanos to be hard-working and thrifty. Many Ilokanos have left their homeland to seek employment elsewhere. The population of the four provinces is about 1.8 million. Ilocano speakers, however, numbered 11 percent of the national population of 66 million, or 7.26 million people. Among all Filipino groups, the Ilokanos are the most famed as migrants, settling since the nineteenth century in sparsely populated expanses of the northern Central Plain of Luzon (provinces of Pangasinan, Tarlac, and Nueva Ecija) and of the Cagayan Valley in the northeast. In addition, many Ilokanos have established themselves in Manila and other major cities of the country, as well as in frontier lands on Mindanao. Ilokano men left to find work as migrant laborers on sugar plantations in Hawaii and on farms in California in the first decades of the twentieth century. They were the first Filipinos to immigrate to the United States of America (JWEWC, 1999).

The Ibanags and Itawes, on the other hand, are minority groups who are aborigines of Cagayan province. The Ibanags and Itawes are culturally and linguistically close. Though they were known by different labels, they were one ethnic family evidenced by their oneness, similarities in their features, common elements in their language, beliefs

and practices and the unchanging reference among all of them to the same legendary heroes, Biuag and Malana. The Ibanags are mostly found occupying the coastal settlements of Abulug, Pamplona, Buguey and settlements along the banks of Cagayan River in Camalaniugan, Lal-lo, Gattaran, Tuguegarao and Solana. In contrast, the Itawes communities are mostly found in towns along the lower Chico and Matalag Rivers in Cagayan with settlements in Enrile, Piat, Tuao, Iguig, Penablanca, Amulung and the barrios of Tuguegarao. Local historians classify the Itawes as Christianized Kalingas and were known to be farmers and pottery makers of Cagayan (Mallo, 1987).

In the Philippines, one of the channels whereby these different ethnic groups come into contact with each other is migration. As a process, migration plays an important role in creating opportunities for social connection like ethnic intermarriage. The migration of the Ilokanos to Cagayan, Philippines is one such case. The influx of Ilokanos ushered greater contact with the Ibanags and Itawes who are the natives of the province. This contact provided the opportunity for intermarriage but as in all intermarriages, this phenomenon means not only entering another family or another set of life-histories but also involves adopting, or at least, adapting to elements of a different culture.

The intermarriage of the Ilokanos with the Ibanags and Itawes of Cagayan raises various practical and theoretical issues concerning Iloko culture. How do Ilokanos who marry Ibanags or Itawes fare when they live in communities of which they are of numerical minority? What critical practices do they consciously or unconsciously perform to live and affirm their identity? What is the role of *linguistic capital* in this process? In what way does *linguistic capital* influence ethnic intermarriage and identity construction? How would a sociological analysis of Ilokano intermarriage contribute to the existing discourse on Ilokano consciousness?

This paper examines the dominance of Iloko culture in an Ibanag and Itawes social landscape. It is the basic assumption of the study that examining the intermarriage of Ilokanos with other ethnic groups can be a sound basis for a meaningful representation to understand the strengths and vital aspects of Iloko culture and society. Through this analysis, it shall uncover the power culture of the Ilokanos most especially when immersed in a non-Ilokano milieu.

The study addressed these questions using ethnographic research design. Field work was conducted and data were collected through in-depth structured interview and focus group discussion with 50 couples composed of either Ilokano and Ibanag or Ilokano and Itawes residing in Tuguegarao City, Solana, Iguig and Penablanca, Cagayan, Philippines.

The study used the analytical framework of Pierre Bourdieu who argued that in modern societies, there are two (2) distinct systems of social hierarchization. The first is economic, in which position and power are determined by money and property. The second system is cultural or symbolic. In this, one's status is determined by how much cultural capital one possesses. Culture, along this line, is also a source of domination, in which intellectuals are in the key role as specialists of cultural production and creators of symbolic power. Bourdieu further explains this second system by asserting that cultural capital can become species of power, and the original power of capital is its capacity to generate worth or value (Bourdieu 1986).

For this study, the second system of Bourdieu's social hierarchization, that is, the cultural or symbolic capital was used. This is explicated using his conceptual triad on habitus, field and capital. Habitus is a person's character and way of thinking. It is an acquired disposition that an individual has learned from his/her social world. It also refers to the mental or cognitive structures through which people deal with the social world. On the other hand, the field can be any structure of social relations or social space. It is a site of struggle for positions and is constituted by the conflict created when individuals or groups endeavor to establish what comprises valuable and legitimate capital within that space. (Ritzer, 1992)

Meanwhile, cultural capital constitutes knowledge, skills, symbols, belief systems and aptitude that provide some comparative advantage to individuals who possess it because it is highly valued and appreciated. Habitus is also important to the concept of cultural capital, inasmuch as cultural capital can be derived from an individual's habitus. It is formed not only by the habitus of the family but also by the objective chances of the culture to which the individual belongs in their daily interactions and it changes as the individual's position within a field changes. (Ritzer, 1992).

Linguistic capital as crafted by Bourdieu (1986) is also a form of cultural capital, which Dijkstra and Peschar refer to in part, as "the linguistic characteristics of the

family.” It is a “symbolic capital” that producers use, most often unwittingly, “to maximize the symbolic profit” that can be gained in linguistic practices. This capital, and affiliated forms of embodied taste, style and ideology, constitutes a key marker of one’s social class position and mobility. Linguistic capital is deployed in specific social fields, which constitute “linguistic markets”. Each market, each institutional context, in turn has variable rules and conventions of exchange, whereby linguistic competence and literate proficiency in specific languages is valued or not. There language use – as class marker and tool – has exchange value and power only in relation to other forms of capital, including social capital (e.g., networks, institutional access), economic capital, formal institutional credentials, artifacts and so forth.

2. Ilokano and Ibanag or Itawes Marriage and Family

The study generated that Iloko culture surfaces in a marriage between an Ilokano and Ibanag or Itawes. Although they are migrants and minority in the place where they were married, their culture dominates in the family as the Ibanag and Itawes partners subscribe to them. The Ilokanos have accumulated sufficient *cultural capital* that proved to be effective catalysts for the maintenance and propagation of their culture which conferred them *power* and *status* in Cagayan. This is concretely manifested and transmitted through intermarriage between an Ilokano and a non-Ilokano where the strengths and vital aspects of Iloko culture prevail.

The overriding culture of the Ilokanos is seen in the conscious or unconscious transmission of their language, food culture, music, magazine, drama, poem, and values orientation to the Ibanag or Itawes partners. As regards language, the Ilokano partners continue to speak their native tongue while their spouses easily adapt to their language. Such is transmitted to their children making Ilokano as the main language of the whole family. There are valuable reasons that could possibly explain this fact. First, the Ibanag and Itawes spouses easily adapt to the Ilokano language as they find it easy to pronounce, understand and learn. On the contrary, the Ilokano spouses have difficulty speaking Ibanag or Itawes as they perceive these languages to be totally different from their native tongue in terms of sentence structure and usage of double consonants. These conditions necessitate that the Ibanag or Itawes spouses must be the ones to adjust in

communicating. There are nonetheless isolated cases wherein Ilokano spouses would learn Ibanag and Itawes but this needs longer immersion, time and open-mindedness for them to appreciate and master these languages. In this study, however, most Ilokano informants know and understand a little of Ibanag and Itawes only.

Second, the Ilokano spouses perceive Ibanag and Itawes languages to be unappealing to learn because the intonation and the manner by which the language is spoken seem to be *quarrelsome*, rude, fast and loud. They, too, find no benefit or value learning these languages because their spouses adjust to them and the community folks can speak Ilokano anyway. This gives them a very low interest or language motivation to learn and speak the language. As most informants have noted; “*There is no need to go into the rigors of learning the Ibanag and Itawes languages because the native speakers of these languages nevertheless speak Ilokano and understand us. As a matter of fact, when they get to know that you are an Ilokano, they force themselves to speak the language, thus, there is no urgency of learning their language*”. This perception affirms the concept of Haviland (1990) who noted that culture change is basically caused by social factors like the importance and functionality of learning something to one’s life.

In the family, the Ilokano spouse introduces a relatively different food preparation from the Ibanags or Itawes. Example, most Ilokano foods are in the form of several vegetables cooked with *bagoong* (fish paste) or with a *sagpaw* (meat or fish placed in vegetable dish). The Ilokanos love using *bagoong* in their food such as *pinakbet*, *dinengdeng* (both are vegetable dish) and vegetable salads which is seldom used by their partners as they usually use salt or at times *patis* (condiment). Contrary to these ways of cooking, the Ibanags and Itawes generally *saute* their food using lard or cooking oil. They also prefer more soup in their food compared to the Ilokano spouse who chooses the contrary. With constant exposure to this food preparation, the Ibanags and Itawes are then assimilated to prepare or cook their food in the Ilokano way. In case this food preparation creates disagreement between the couple, the Ilokano partner cooks the same menu but prepares his/her food in a manner that fits his/her taste. For instance, *adobo* is cooked dry among Ilokanos but the Ibanags and Itawes like it with a little soup and with fat. *Pinakbet*, on the other hand, is sauted among Ibanags and Itawes but it is cooked by mixing all ingredients together among Ilokanos.

Music is another index of Ilokano influence in the family and in the community. The Ilokano spouse brings into the family his or her native music ranging from traditional to modern. With frequent playing and with the contemporary packaging of this music, the Ibanag or Itawes spouses get to listen and appreciate it. In the Ibanag and Itawes community, Ilokano music is played not only during ordinary days but also during weddings, *fiestas*, (local festival celebrating the feast of a patron saint) and other celebrations. This occurs because Ilokano music recordings in CDs, tapes, and *karaokes* are readily available in their communities. Few of these music are the old Ilokano songs and contemporary songs like *Abalayan*, *Isem*, *Kiddaw*, *Basol mo Lalaki*, *Nagguapo kan Manong*, which are perceived to be appealing and entertaining. As succinctly narrated by an informant; “*Ilokano music is frequently played in this community even if we are generally Itawes. This is played in ordinary days and community celebrations because we find it fascinating and enjoyable*”.

Ilokano magazines, drama and poem (*daniw*) aired over AM, FM and community radios are another influencing factors to Ibanag and Itawes assimilation. For families who have the capacity to buy *Bannawag* (Ilokano weekly magazine) and similar Ilokano reading materials, these items are helpful in exposing their family members to read and understand Ilokano language and culture better. Meanwhile, the drama series aired over Bombo Radio like *Mang Bianong*, *Pagsarmingan*, *Dagiti Tugot iti Dana ti Biag*, *Doming Doming Mabalín Amin*, *Once There Was A Love* and poem read in radio programs of DWPE like *Ilokanong Cowboy* and *Ray-aw ti Sardam* are equally influential. Ilokano spouses, particularly women, keep track of these radio programs which consequently entice their partners and children to be listeners of the same.

The slow or difficult adaptation process of the Ilokano spouse to Ibanag and Itawes culture can, in a way, be attributed to the non-congruence of their partner’s values orientation. Cadiz (1990) points out that the stereotype that Ilocanos are thrifty, industrious, patient and adventurous is still pervasive today. These characteristics are partly a product of their unique adaptation to their precarious environment. The lands are no longer fertile and cultivation requires extra hard work if the farm has to be productive.

In contrast, the Ibanags and Itawes are known to have grand celebrations of family affairs and *fiesta* which does not jibe with the Ilokano’s value orientation. A *fiesta* for the

Ibanags and Itawes is a time for thanksgiving where they invite visitors or friends and serve them sumptuous food. *Fiesta* among Ilokanos, on the other hand, is celebrated in a simple manner centered on the conduct of series of communal religious, sports and socio-cultural activities but this is not associated with food lavishly served to visitors as Ibanags and Itawes do. Serving food is the *essence* of *fiesta* for the Ibanags and Itawes, a reason why they have to save money or raise pigs, chickens and the like long before the celebration. The long period of preparation explains, in part, why almost all households in the Ibanag or Itawes community celebrate *fiesta*. With the marriage of Ibanags and Itawes to Ilokanos, the grand celebration of *fiesta* and other family occasions is made simple, if not, minimized or avoided entirely. This is further reinforced by the increasing cost of living and that austerity measures must be observed to appropriate money to some important family needs. As one informant narrates; “*The concept of foregoing the celebration of fiesta upon the advice of my Ilokano wife did not sound good, initially. The celebration happens only once a year and stopping a tradition practiced in my family for a long time is difficult. However, with constant suggestion and persuasion of my wife to either make the celebration simpler or to save money for the more essential needs of our children, I subscribed to the idea to stop celebrating fiesta the way we used to*”.

The Ilokano spouses also perceive their Ibanag or Itawes partners to be relaxed and *playful* since they are not conscientious of their time. They have the tendency to be carefree and are fond of social activities and festivities. With a show of industriousness, their Ibanag and Itawes partners are influenced to a great extent. Moreover, the use of Ilokano’s term of respect (*panagdayaw*) is something the Ilokano spouses would like to transmit to their family members. This is because Ibanags and Itawes do not have an equivalent term for *manang* (older sister), *manong* (older brother) and *adding* (younger brother or sister). They generally call or address their older and younger siblings in their first names. This does not mean, however, that Ibanags and Itawes are not respectful. They, too, make use of terms of respect by addressing the olds as *tiyu* (uncle) *tiya* (auntie), not only with their immediate relatives but also with strangers of significant age difference from them. It is just that their language is not rich to provide them different terms of respect to address people across ages. However, when they get to know that they are speaking to an Ilokano, they are influenced to make use of the same terms of respect

and adopt them as a basic norm in the family and community relations. The use of these terms of respect clearly articulates that the Ibanag and Itawes partners have great appreciation of these valuable and endearing characters of the Ilokanos.

3. The Ilokano *Habitus* and *Cultural Capital*

It is very clear in the study that the *power culture* of the Ilokanos starts from their very *being* or *core values* which consequently radiates to the family and community. Values that give strength to the Ilokano character, include among others, their ethnocentricity, frugality, industry, perseverance, peace-loving, and being a “searcher”. In the Ibanag and Itawes social milieu, these values surface manifesting a very strong *habitus* among Ilokano spouses and enabling them to maintain a distinct identity and consciousness. Their *Ilokanoness* is intact causing acculturation process from the Ibanag and Itawes to be slow, difficult, if not impossible. Wherever they are in Cagayan, they speak their language and remain committed to their cultural traits making other cultures *subordinate* to them. As propounded by Tamayao (1999), the most important source of Ilokanos’ cultural preservation and continuity is their own consciousness and identity. The concept of their being an Ilokano is clear as manifested in their broad knowledge of their own language, culture and history.

Moreover, the *cultural capital* of the Ilokanos explains, in part, its great influence to other cultural communities in Cagayan. While Ibanags and Itawes have their own respective *habitus*, they nonetheless show little effort in asserting it in their marriage, making it dormant and less influential. On the other hand, the Ilokanos’ *cultural assets* i.e., knowledge, skills, belief system and aptitudes as Ilokanos vividly speak of their own identity and *cultural competence*. Because these *cultural assets* are well-imbedded in their way of life, it becomes *species of power* that has the capacity to influence, generate worth or value in the Ibanag and Itawes social landscape and thus, express or reinforce distinctions of cultural profundity.

Compared to the Ibanags and Itawes, the Ilokanos give more value to their *habitus* and identity causing them to refrain from adaptation. They are proud of their culture making other cultural communities adjust to them. One great influence to this

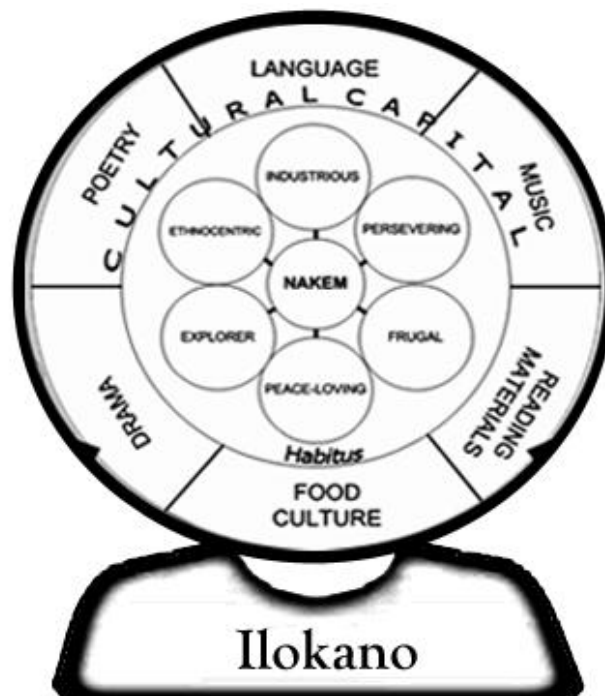
phenomenon is that Ibanags and Itawes are exposed to the numerous Ilokano *cultural capital* which is a sound vehicle for their partial assimilation. The proliferation of the Iloko *cultural capital* (through music, magazines, poem, and drama in radio) which is made accessible among the Ibanags and Itawes is a potent instrument for the unconscious internalization of the Ilokano *habitus*. It is this resource (*cultural capital*), which enables the Ilokanos to wield great influence to the Ibanags and Itawes and lead the social relations at their advantage. There is no showing though that the Ibanags and Itawes perceive the Ilokanos with a sense of condescension with this influence. They find this phenomenon to be normal, acceptable and inevitable. It is just unfortunate that they do not have the same influential and dynamic *cultural capital* like the Ilokanos making them vulnerable to influence. This might be because their specialists and intellectuals for cultural production are not as active as the Ilokanos in making vigorous effort to preserve, enrich and propagate their language, culture and history. Conversely, the well preserved and enriched Ilokano *cultural capital* elevated the status of the Ilokanos against the Ibanags and Itawes in the *social hierarchy* in Cagayan. This proves Bourdieu's thesis that one's ethnic status is determined by how much *cultural* or *symbolic capital* one possesses.

It is interesting to note that the partial assimilation of the Ibanags and Itawes due to the Ilokano *cultural capital* ensues a positive effect of social interaction maintaining family and community cohesion, consensus, reciprocity, stability and harmony. This phenomenon illuminates the openness of the Ibanags and Itawes to readily exchange the *cultural capital* of their ethnic background for their benefit and advantage. In return, however, this poses a great threat to the perpetuation of their identity as a social group.

The relatively *loose habitus* of the Ibanags and Itawes causing their partial assimilation to the Ilokanos may perhaps be attributed to their historical experiences. These social groups have social experiences which are completely different from the Ilokanos. They did not have much experience of hardship due to a very harsh environment and climatic conditions. They settled in the rich and bountiful resources of Cagayan and Isabela thereby making them accommodating, relaxed, *playful* and carefree. A proof to this is the experience of the Ilokanos in their migration to Cagayan as early as 1900. The host communities (Ibanags, Itawes) were generally good, amiable and

hospitable to the Ilokano migrants. The original inhabitants had a friendly reception of the Ilokanos. They did not perceive them as resource competitors or an economic threat considering that food source and food supply was bountiful (Tamayao, 1999).

Figure 1. Schematic Diagram Showing the Core Values of the Ilokanos (*habitus*) vis-à-vis their *Cultural Capital* in Cagayan



Meanwhile, the precarious environment (inherent in its land and climatic condition) experienced by the Ilokanos could possibly explain their *habitus* manifested by their character in dealing with their social world. This is exacerbated by the structural condition that the Spanish Colonial Government did not allow much food production like rice due to the sugarcane, *tayum* (dye) and tobacco monopolies in the Ilocos Region. Having these *lived experiences* may possibly explain the Ilokano's character of being strong, influential, resilient, and powerful. Another important factor for the contrasting *habitus* of the Ilokanos from the Ibanags and Itawes is due to the fact that Ilokano is a majority culture in the country and the Ibanags and Itawes are minority groups. This presupposes that the Ilokanos have advanced culture not to mention that they compose the greatest number of populace in Cagayan. The NSO 2000 Census indicates that the

Ilocanos comprise about 68.57% of Cagayan's population while the Ibanags and Itawes have 8.51% and 16.44%, respectively. Hence, Ilocanos tend to *dominate* the minority groups in the province.

4. Role of Linguistic Capital in Ethnic Inter-marriage

Bourdieu (1986) claims that language is the key factor in reproducing and maintaining the conventions and traditions of cultures and societies since social reproduction is driven by interpersonal communication. This suggests that language is regarded as an important form of *cultural capital* to learn and appreciate the dominant culture and thus capable of reproducing itself.

The ethnic inter-marriage between the Ilocanos and Ibanags or Itawes creates a *symbolic struggle* for social distinction, which for Bourdieu is a fundamental dimension of all social life (Bourdieu, 1998). This *symbolic struggle* is revealed in critical questions such as; whose language counts? whose language and culture should prevail?, with what material and social consequences and benefits?, and whose values should be imbibed by the children?

In the case of Ilokano and Ibanag or Ilokano and Itawes inter-marriage, the cultural dominance of the Ilocanos is made possible primarily because of its language. Central to the *Ilokanoization* of the Ibanags and Itawes spouses and children is credited to the learning of Ilokano language. Mastering this language capacitates them to understand and broaden their interest about Iloko culture making it a *linguistic capital* that facilitates other forms of Ilokano influences along music, food culture, drama, poem and value orientation. In short, language competence in Ilokano equips the non-Ilokano spouses and children to socialize and eventually learn, appreciate and deepen their immersion in the Ilokano culture. This finding reveals that the prevailing language used in the family plays an essential role in determining the culture that should prevail in the family. Language, in this regard, becomes an important agent of cultural assimilation enabling the Ilocanos to reproduce its power, control and influence over the Ibanags and Itawes communities. Along this line, marriage and family life becomes the "primary site" of such ethnic reproduction.

Among Ibanag or Itawes spouses and children, investing to know how to speak Ilokano language bestows numerous advantages, which in Edwards' (1984) terms correspond to the *communicative value* of a language. First, learning and exhibiting competence in Ilokano which is pervasive in Cagayan and in other parts of the country means greater acceptance in this large community. Ilokano has wider usage as it is being known by almost all ethnic groups not only in the province but the northern part of the Philippines. It is then of great benefit and advantage to learn it for its interactive functions as it ensures a more extensive contact in school, market, community and other social space. Even non Ilokano parents realize the need for their children to be socialized in the Ilokano language and culture as it gives greater advantage over children who are not.

Discourse competence in Ilokano gives the children the confidence to express themselves, confront people and extend wider social network and opportunities for growth and development. This makes the Ilokano as the principal language that parents want their children to know and use. Meanwhile, teaching Ibanag and Itawes languages which belong to the minority groups may somewhat isolate their children and prevent them from participation in broader social networks. In cultural terms, the ability to speak the Ilokano language produces greater benefits as it aids them to participate in the activities of Ilokano culture and to be integrated into the mainstream. As Ferraro (1999) propounds, "*People are motivated to change their culture by a host of factors like the desire for prestige, economic and social gains or a new and more efficient way of solving problems*".

Second, speaking a new language which is widely spoken in the country is a great pride as well as a social incentive among the Ibanags and Itawes. The pride is seen in one's ability to speak a new language and the social incentive is experienced in the remote possibility of being "sold" or "fooled" in a discussion or social grouping composed of Ilokanos. In addition, a lack of competence in Ilokano may result in miscommunication and bring about misunderstanding and thus restrict one's ability to fully engage in any social and cultural activities.

On a larger scale, knowledge of the Ilokano language (instead of Ibanags and Itawes) is positively associated with better understanding of pertinent social issues and concerns discussed in the radio, television, school, church and market. It is a fact that Ibanag and

Itawes spouses and their children generally receive information through the Ilokano language in television, magazines, and the like. The use of the Ilokano language by these type of media does not only facilitate wider and proper understanding of the information conveyed but it also *legitimizes* the Ilokano language as the prominent or *lingua franca* in the northern part of the Philippines.

Clearly, in the ethnic intermarriage between Ilokano and Ibanag or Ilokano and Itawes, the Ilokano language becomes a vehicle for power to introduce Iloko culture upon their spouses and children. In contrast, non-Ilokano spouses acknowledge that adopting to the Ilokano language is their “connection” to the Ilokano culture and a vehicle to their “survival” in the *field* dominated by the Ilokanos. This justifies Bourdieu’s claim that language is not only a means of communication but also a medium of power. It is important to stress, though, that the adoption of Ilokano language and culture is not done with force, threat or intimidation but because of its own power to generate worth or value in the life of the Ibanag or Itawes spouses and children. This brings to light that Ilokano language has *instrumental* and *integrative* purpose in the marriage and family of Ilokano and Ibanag or Ilokano and Itawes. Ilokano language is *instrumental* in making non-Ilokano spouses and children learn it for its practical purpose, i.e., for adoption and connection. To adapt to the prevailing life situation and to connect themselves with the mainstream, they are necessitated to use the Ilokano language.

Other practical purposes of Ilokano language is to usher in a more extensive social contact and increase participation in the activities of Ilokano culture used in radio, television, school, church, community and other social space. Meanwhile, Ilokano language has *integrative* purpose as it is the entry point of the non-Ilokano spouse to be accepted into the wider social circle (in the province, region and country). In return, their acceptance eventually helps them to adopt and establish a better family and community relations.

5. Role of Linguistic Capital in Ethnic Identity

Language knowledge is often identified as an ethnic attribute (Grin and Sfreddo, 1998). It is a primary characteristic and an always present characteristic of ethnicity. Without language, one would have an incomplete description of ethnicity as it is the

primary component of ethnicity (Jenkin, 2005). Basically, language is conceived as a cultural characteristic where speech and speech communities may be viewed as expressions of identity, ethnic background, ethnic ties and ethnic group membership. This approach on language generally holds true in the Philippines as language acts as a means of identifying ethnic difference like the case of the Ilokanos, Ibanags and Itawes. Differentiating these ethnic groups through their languages serves as a major dimension of ethnicity and basis for classifying whether or not it belongs to minority or majority culture.

However, Rampton (1990) claims that “using a language as an instrument of communication” does not mean that the person necessarily sees the language as “a symbol of social identification”, and vice versa. This means that language competence does not always dictate one’s ethnicity. From this argument, differentiating ethnic groups based on their language usage is superficial as there are other dynamics in the relationship between language and social identity. Peirce (1995) presents three defining characteristics of social identity: the *multiple nature of identity*, *identity as a site of struggle*, and *identity as changing over time*. “Social identity” in Peirce’s (1993, 1995) work refers to “the relationship between the individual and the larger social world, as mediated through institutions such as families, school, workplaces, social services, and law courts” (Norton, 1997). Peirce (1993), separates “social identity” from “cultural identity,” which she defines as “the relationship between individuals and members of a group who share a common history, a common language, and similar ways of understanding the world” (Norton, 1997). “

Heritage identity,” on the other hand, is often considered to entail “those attributes of the self that are linked with one’s race, language, religion, and ethnicity” (Syed, 1999). For the purpose of this study, identity is taken to mean both “cultural identity” and “heritage identity” in congruence with the argument of Syed (1999) that (a) both terms are understood as types of “social identity” (b) it is almost impossible to draw a clear line between these terms and (c) there are areas that overlap in one person’s identity, and a single person can reveal more than one identity.

It is a fundamental finding of the study that there is an essential relationship between the language that prevails in the family and the family's ethnic identity and consciousness construction. With the *instrumental* and *integrative* value of Ilokano language in the family, non Ilokano partners as well as their children are able to identify themselves as Ilokanos due to the advantages attached to it. This finding goes with the assumption that language is the site where the speaker creates his/her identity in relation to the social world. Adopting the "the social constructionist framework" espoused by Holmes (1997) and Ochs (1993), the Ilokano language may be considered as the site of creating, negotiating, and redefining one's identity, and speakers as "*agents* in the production of their own and others' social selves" (Ochs, 1993).

It must be stressed that while non-Ilokano spouses acquired competence in a new language (Ilokano), they nonetheless remained proficient in Ibanag or Ilokano languages and retained their own ethnic identity. In the terms of Bourdieu, they maintained their own *habitus* as Ibanags or Itawes even if they use Ilokano as their language.

However, the need to identify themselves as Ilokanos for their advantage is another issue. Using their discourse competence in Ilokano language, they identify themselves as Ilokanos especially when they see the need or practical value of doing so. This is done, for example, in a gathering where Ilokano dominates and the feeling of isolation is experienced, or when there is a relative disadvantage in social, cultural and educational transactions or involvement where Ilokanos "call the shots", or where they would like to participate in activities of the Ilokanos or those that give them more benefits or advantages.

With constant identification to Ilokano due to its functionality, usefulness and social returns, Ibanag or Itawes spouses have developed greater appreciation of the Ilokano language and culture causing their partial assimilation to the Ilokano. Such partial assimilation has caused them to readily give up a part of their ethnic identity for their benefit and advantage. This case is a sheer example of the "social constructionist framework" positing that language learners are not simply gaining their skills in the target language but also are constantly positioning, negotiating, and redefining themselves using the language in the social world.

On the other hand, a different case happens with the ethnic identity construction of the children born out of the marriage of Ilokanos and Ibanag or Ilokanos and Itawes. With the great influence of Ilokano spouse in their family, children do not only learn the Ilokano language but the traditions and cultural values of the Ilokanos as well, thus positively identifying themselves as Ilokanos. Children do not claim identity as half Ilokano-Ibanag or half Ilokano-Itawes descent the fact that either their mother or father is an Ibanag or Itawes. They relate to and master best the Ilokano language as they frequently use it for interaction and in participating in Ilokano cultural leisure activities such as listening to Ilokano music in cd's, tapes and radio stations, listening to Ilokano drama over the radio, reading Ilokano magazines, and singing Ilokano songs in *karaoke*. These are proofs that the Ilokano spouses have not only linguistically but also culturally influenced the life and the social identity of their children. In this influence, the role of Ilokano language is truly indispensable.

Like their Ibanag or Itawes parents, children also perceive the advantages of identifying themselves as Ilokanos. They recognize that competence in Ilokano gives worth in terms of connection with the wider social space, and participation in activities led by Ilokanos. With these gains, claiming an identity as Ilokanos, which is a majority ethnic group, confers them higher status in Cagayan and in the Philippines.

Conclusion

This paper goes to show that every linguistic interaction reflects the social structure in a given space or field and that social identity is a social fact shaped by social structure controlled by the dominant cultural group.

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