Beliefs and strategies in Filipino language learning and academic performance of indigenous students

This paper investigated the level of beliefs, strategies in learning the Filipino language, and academic performance of indigenous students. The findings in the study served as basis for an enhancement program. The 74 participants were purposively chosen based on two criteria: they were members of the PAGLAUM, an indigenous peoples’ organization of the University of Mindanao; and they were enrolled in Filipino subject. The descriptive-correlation method was used to ascertain the level of beliefs, strategies in learning language, and academic performance of indigenous students in Filipino. Likewise, the mixed method was utilized to substantiate the profile, level, correlation, and perception in learning Filipino language. Results showed that majority of the respondents were female, freshmen taking Bachelor of Science in Education, and belonged to the Manobo tribe. The levels of beliefs in acquiring the Filipino and direct and indirect strategies in learning the language were high; however, academic performance was average. Interestingly, the results showed linkage between sex and beliefs in language learning and strategies in learning language and academic performance; course and tribe; beliefs in learning language, strategies in learning and academic performance. Findings imply that sex affects the indigenous students’ beliefs and strategies in acquiring Filipino language, and academic performance.

Keywords: Beliefs and strategies, Filipino language, language learning, academic performance, indigenous people, University of Mindanao

INTRODUCTION

Over 370 million Indigenous People (IP) are living in more than 70 territories around the world. Of these numbers, approximately four thousand groups have their ethnic languages. (Tippeconnic and Faircloth, 2010). However, these Indigenous People (IP) faced common problems such as lack of education (Walker and McDonald, 1995); interest in school, absence of cultural education, destitution (Magni, 2017); and discrimination (Gerber et al., 2018; Rath, 2018; Satud, 2019).

Like any other learners in school, indigenous students also encountered several challenges such as racist stereotyping (Milne and Wotherspoon, 2020); low participation or interest (Edwards, 2017); lack of self-awareness (Sani and bin Idris, 2017); prohibition to speak their own indigenous language (Allemann, 2019); low receptive vocabularies (Pearce and Flanagan, 2019). These challenges contributed to indigenous students' withdrawal from academic institutions. Hence, students need to look for ways which could help them surpass those challenges. Shava and Manyike (2018) mentioned that educational success is highly dependent on learners' ability to access and display their linguistic skills while Riley and Pidgeon...
(2019) averred that engagement and cultural and linguistic awareness allow students to succeed.

In the Philippines, Filipino students used language learning strategies when asked to do speaking tasks in class. However, they tend to control and hold on a certain strategy (Baetiong and Cabaysa, 2010). Sison (2011) carried out a study on Language Learning Strategies, Beliefs, and Anxiety in Academic Speaking Task, in which she found that the participants used varied but inappropriate language learning strategies. Similarly, Peng-Shei (2012) underpinned that the use of inappropriate language learning strategies would definitely lead to misunderstanding of poor language learning. Likewise, Gani et al. (2015) and Yalianti (2018) opined that inappropriate use metacognitive and communication strategies lead to failure.

The researchers, being Filipino language teachers, believed that embarking on this study would somehow give light on the beliefs in language learning in relation to the learning strategies used by the indigenous students to obtain academic success. The researchers were challenged to investigate and recommend relevant strategies in dealing indigenous students. This endeavor was necessary because it could be noted that indigenous people consist of nine percent or 8.1 million of the Philippine population (Belinzario et al., 2011), which many of them are situated in the Northern and Southern Mindanao regions (Filmore, 2014). They are amongst the poorest and most marginalized group (Garscon and McIntyre-Mills, 2018).

**Framework**

This study was anchored on the four theories and propositions of language learning. The first theory is by Krashen (1982) which proposed that everyone can acquire a language following a particular order regardless of their ethnic and linguistic backgrounds. The second theory is by Chomsky (1967) which believed that each individual has the inborn capabilities to acquire a language; that each person has a Language Acquisition Device (LAD), which helps to learn a language, understand its rules and custom during the early stage of development. The third theory is by Abraham and Vann (1987), Horwitz (1989), and Wenden (1998) which asserted that individual’s preconceived beliefs on language significantly hinder their acquisition of that language. This proposition was supported by Peng (2011) who posited that learner’s language beliefs could either offer significant opportunities or trigger apprehensions. The fourth theory is by Brown (1991) which mentioned that someone’s strategies in acquiring another language significantly linked with their learning styles. In the context of this investigation, these theories and propositions were significant. The first and second theories showed a good ground that the indigenous students can acquire other languages aside from their mother tongue. Likewise, the third theory was important in understanding the indigenous students’ second language acquisition because their cultural and linguistic background may affect learning another language. The fourth theory set another dimensions; that indigenous students could acquire other language depending on their abilities, capabilities, and styles. The indigenous students although considered Filipinos but they had their own culture, norms, and belief system including language. The Filipino language, an official language in the Philippines, was formally taught in all academic institutions. Thus, acquiring Filipino was acquiring another language.

**Objectives**

This investigation was conducted to ascertain the beliefs and strategies in Filipino language learning and the academic performance of the Indigenous People (IP). It specifically aimed:

1. To determine the relationship between Filipino language learning with the respondents’ demographic information such as sex, year level, course, and tribe;
2. To ascertain the respondents’ level of beliefs on Filipino language in terms of language aptitude, challenges and strategies in learning a language, communication strategies and purpose in learning Filipino;
3. To determine the level of Filipino language learning strategies used by the respondents in terms of direct strategies and indirect strategies;
4. To identify the level of academic performance of the IP students in learning Filipino;
5. To ascertain if there is a significant relationship between demographic information and level of beliefs; profile and level of language learning strategies; profile and level of academic performance; level of beliefs and level of language learning strategies; level of beliefs and level of academic performance; and level of learning strategies and level academic performance?
6. To find if there is a significant difference when respondents are grouped into tribe; level of beliefs; strategies in learning Filipino, and academic performance;
7. To determine the perceptions of the IP students with regards topast experience of learning Filipino in high school and opportunities to speak Filipino in the class.

**METHODOLOGY**

This research used the descriptive-correlation design with both quantitative and qualitative approaches. Creswell(2005) mentioned that mixed data collection is commonly used if investigators desired to gain a facet of a phenomenon. Quantitative data were obtained through the two sets of questionnaires - BALLI by Horwitz and SILL by Oxford. Qualitative information were obtained from the crafted researcher-made open-ended questions. The combination of these two methods allowed triangulation of the information; hence, findings became reliable and valid. Golafshani (2003) and Kamana and Othman (2016) mentioned that triangulation of data is a common strategy.
(test) for improving the validity and reliability or evaluation of findings. On the other hand, Cohen et al., (2000) pointed out that triangulation overcomes the constraints of the investigation of one culture, but offers other perspectives.

This research was conducted in the University of Mindanao, the biggest university in Region 11 where a substantial number of IP students were enrolled. In addition, the university supports the constitutional mandate of Commission on Higher Education (CHED) in providing equitable access to education regardless of socio-cultural backgrounds. In fact, the university convened all indigenous students into a recognized university student organization- the PAGLAUM to smoothly transition them in the students’ life full of struggles and insecurities; thus, providing the researchers ease of access to conduct the study.

The researchers used purposive sampling in the selection of the respondents. Simon (2005) opines that purposive sampling is a cautious and decisive selection of who to include or not to obtain the desire objective. The respondents of the study were Indigenous People (IP) students of the University of Mindanao. They were enrolled in Filipino 1a subject and members of PAGLAUM, a recognized university organization for the IP students. Of the total 80 members of the PAGLAUM, 74 were selected to participate because they were enrolled in Filipino 1a. These respondents were then classified according to their courses, year levels, and tribal groups such as Manobo, Mandaya, Ata, Bagobo, B’laan, Matigsalog, Umayamnon, Calagan, Sama, Subanon, Ubo-Manobo, Maguindaan, Tagacaolo, Mansaka, and Tigwahanon.

Instruments Used

The major tools used in the data gathering process were adapted survey questionnaires and crafted open-ended questions to elicit information relevant to the investigation. The first part of the adapted questionnaires obtained the demographic profile of the IP students. On the other hand, the second part employed a 4-point Likert scale with the options “strongly agree” to “strongly disagree”. The questionnaire contained 25 items and emphasized on learners’ beliefs, specifically on language aptitude (1-5), apprehensions of learning a language (6-10), nature of learning a language (11-15), communication strategies (16-20) and purpose of learning a language (21-25). The researchers omitted the word “foreign” in the language aptitude. It was done because Filipino is not a foreign language to the respondents. The third part of the survey questionnaire was a 36-item modified researcher-made patterned from Oxford (1990). It aimed at identifying the language learning strategies of the IP students. The questionnaire had two main indicators, each with three sub-indicators. For direct strategies were memory, cognitive, and compensation, while for indirect metacognitive, affective, and social strategies. Lastly, researcher-made interview guide essay questions were used. These questions were subjected to experts’ validation.

RESULTS

Profile of the Participants

In terms of sex, male participants were out-numbered by the female with 52 (70%) while there were only 22 (30%) male. It also revealed that out of 74 participants, 38 or (51%) were first year students, 24 or (32%) were second year, nine or (12%) were third year and three (4%) were fourth year. Camaya and Tamayo (2018) said that in old times, men dominated the schools to be educated; however, this changed when women had the chance to be voted in the political power because of their passion. Gabriel et al., (2020) added that indigenous communities came to realize the role of women as preservers of their culture and the environment; hence, women needed to be educated. This implies that indigenous people (IP) which was naturally patriarchal had given women to grow not only for their personal benefits but also for the community.

In terms of courses taken, majority were taking up Bachelor of Science in Elementary Education (BEED) with 19 or (26%). Further, 17 or (23%) students were taking up Bachelor of Science in Secondary Education (BSED), followed by Social Work students with 10 or (14%), followed by nine or (12%) criminology students, five or (7%) were taking up accountancy, three or (4%) were taking hotel and restaurant management, nursing and tourism courses respectively, two or (3%) were taking engineering and lastly, with one or (1%) was business and administration student, information technology and arts and sciences students (Table 1). The choice of education courses of most indigenous students may be influenced by the realities of their communities. Dutta (2018) mentioned that indigenous communities are geographically isolated and illiterate. Moreover, their decision may be impacted by the long standing problem of the Philippines, the shortage of teachers (Alegado, 2018; Lopez and Irene, 2017; Mohammad, 2016; Pacana et al., 2019; Ulla, 2019). Likewise, the indigenous student may also be influenced by the affordable tuition fees and financial assistance offered by the university.

The 74 participants were from the 15 indigenous people tribes in Mindanao. Majority were members of the Manobo tribe with 28 or (38%). It was followed by the Mandaya tribe with 23 or (31%); third was from the Ata tribe with 12 or (16%); fourth were from the Bagobo with nine or (13%); fifth were members of the B’laan tribe with seven or (9%); the sixth and seventh tribes were Matigsalog and Umayamnon; both had five or (7%); eighth tribe were the Calagan with four or (5%); ninth, tenth and eleventh tribes which had three or (4%) were the Sama, Subanon, and Ubo-Manobo respectively; Maguindianoan, Tagacaolo, Mansaka and Tigwahanon tribes had one each or (1%). The influx of indigenous people in academic institutions was caused by the institutionalization of the Indigenous People’s Rights. According to Cornelio and de Castro (2016), the Philippines was the first country in Asia to pass a law recognizing the specific needs of the indigenous
Table 1. Demographic information of the participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Demographic Information</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Hotel and Restaurant Management</td>
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<td>4.05</td>
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<tr>
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<td>12.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nursing</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4.05</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Tribe</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Umayamnon</td>
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<tr>
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<td>3.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subanon</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3.65</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ubo Manobo</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3.65</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

people of access to basic health and education. Perez et al., (2020) mentioned that indigenous people want their children to finish their studies to improve their economic situations; interestingly, parents and children are hand-in-hand in deciding the career paths to take. However, Alangui (2017) reported that despite the positive implication on indigenous people’s education, government reports showed relatively low survival rates of indigenous students finishing their courses.

Level of Beliefs about Language Learning

Level of beliefs on learning a language was measured based on the indicators set forth in this study mentioned as language ability, language learning difficulty, language learning strategy, communication strategy, and drive to learn a language. Among these five indicators, motivation comprised the highest mean of 3.45 in which the participants strongly agreed that they learned to speak Filipino very well most likely because they appreciated their teacher in such a way that the latter was able to connect the lessons to reality. Also, they felt that it was important to speak Filipino for better communication and relationship. Moreover, for them learning Filipino was important for higher education like graduate program because higher educational attainments meant higher income; thus, greater chances of helping their community. Lastly, they believed could gain their identity in their community through language learning. These findings agreed with the findings of Papi and Hiver (2020) who established that gaining identity means success in language learning. Likewise Nikitina and Furuoka (2006); Errihani (2008); San Jose and Mortos (2017) mentioned that learning another language opens various opportunities to the members of the community.

Second was the difficulty of language learning with a mean of 3.12 indicating a high verbal description. This means that the respondents agreed that Filipino language
was hard to learn within an hour in a day in every class session, nevertheless; they believed that language could be acquired in a particular order. Learning Filipino grammar was difficult for most respondents because they were not provided with sufficient affordances to self-regulate learning actions. The respondents also agreed pronunciation was the hardest part in learning Filipino language. The results above agreed to Peng (2011); Ancheta and Perez (2017) who mentioned that Filipino language was one of the challenging languages to learn. They observed that speaking and listening were difficult compared to reading and writing. Garcia et al., (2020) described Filipino as a complex language with reliable system of morphosyntactic markers.

Third was the nature of language learning with a mean of 3.07 indicating a high level of description. This means that learning new Filipino words and grammar was essential, and that Filipino language can be understood better in actual encounter with the native speakers. The respondents also agreed to Krashen's theory that learning Filipino language involved a lot of memorization and it was different from learning academic subjects. In addition, Riley (1996) asserted that someone's view of a language influenced his attitudes, motivation or behavior in the process of learning. The IP students had difficulty learning Filipino but they were motivated to learn Filipino because it was different from learning other subjects. These findings were in agreement with Chang and Shen (2010); Fielden-Burns and Rico-Garcia (2017); Mohseni et al., (2017) who found that motivation is an essential factor in language learning.

In terms of language aptitude, majority of the respondents believed that some individuals have extraordinary skills in learning Filipino with a mean of 3.61. This means that Filipino language can be acquired regardless of the person's cultural and linguistic background. In addition, participants agreed that young learners acquire Filipino better compared to the adults with a mean of 3.22 with a high level of description. This is supported Krashen's by theory that acquisition of language is achieved in a particular order. Furthermore, the respondents were highly convinced that polyglots are linguistically superior with a mean of 3.01 and people from their places are good at learning Filipino language with a mean of 2.96 which implies that people were motivated to learn Filipino because they have positive experiences in language learning. However, they turned out the idea that individuals who were mathematically and scientifically proficient had less competence in learning Filipino language with a mean of 2.00 or low descriptive level. This means that learning Math and Science is just the same in learning Filipino or learning Math and Science does not affect one's ability to learn Filipino language.

The level of belief of indigenous students in terms of language aptitude was high with 2.96 weighted mean. Further, the finding revealed that time element was an essential factor in learning Filipino. Indeed, it is very challenging on the part of the indigenous students to learn Filipino language in a very limited time especially when they had unfavorable experiences in learning the Filipino language during their high school life. In terms of difficulty of language learning, the participants strongly agreed that learning Filipino was not easily done in limited time and that learning grammar was difficult. Both yielded a mean of 3.42 and 3.39 respectively. The data showed that the mentioned items tell exactly the beliefs of the respondents. Fithriani (2019) mentioned that learning grammar of a certain language is essential because grammar improves someone's fluency of the language being learned. Glushchenko et al., (2019) also said that grammar is important for programmatic language learning while Rustembaeva (2020) pointed out that grammar makes it possible to someone to speak about the language. Moreover, the respondents agreed that Filipino language was difficult to understand with a mean of 3.04; speaking and listening were challenging compared to reading and writing with a mean of 3.01; and pronunciation of Filipino words was a struggle for them with a mean of 2.74. These results were supported by Guerra (2001) who stressed phonological aspects of learning new language was the most challenging aspect.

In terms of nature of learning a language, one of the essential parts of learning Filipino was knowing new words and grammar with a mean of 3.40 with a very high description. This implies that the respondents strongly agreed with the item presented. Gilakjani and Sabouri (2016) averred that poor vocabulary of a language results to poor listening comprehension. Thus, Kepinska et al., (2017) said that learning words is undeniably one of the most important building blocks of acquiring a new language. Tanaka (2017) mentioned that competent language learners enjoyed learning new words and vocabulary.

Further, the participants favored that the best way to learn Filipino was through emerging themselves in a Filipino speaking environment with a mean of 3.32; that it was easier to learn about Filipino speaking cultures in order to speak Filipino. Ó Ceallaigh et al., (2018) agreed that immersion creates meaningful and relevant context which promotes language learning and development for the language learner. Likewise, Morcom and Roy (2019) mentioned that immersion is the most expeditious and effective way to learn and acquire language. Immersion according to Yang (2018) helps learners of the language change their attitudes and become high achiever. Also, the participants agreed that learning Filipino language involved a lot of memorization and they also agreed that learning Filipino language was different from learning academic subjects with a mean of 2.70. These results conform the findings of Nikitina and Furouka (2007) about the Russian students who believed that memorization of new essential words, learning formation of words, and doing different approaches were important in learning new language.

In terms of communication strategies, the respondents believed that speaking in perfectly sounded Filipino words was important and practiced should be done regularly with
means of 3.47 and 3.34 respectively and verbal description of very high. This implies that the two statements say exactly the belief of the respondents. Truly, practice according to Young and West (2018) promotes awareness and an important factor for language learning. However, Kasprówicz et al., (2019); DeKeyser (2015); Rogers (2015), frequency of language practice is needed to maximize the effect of learning. In addition, the respondents also agreed that it was essential to use body gestures when they could not utter a Filipino word and that it was important to practice with cassette tapes or CD with means of 2.86 and 2.51 respectively and with high verbal description. De Wit et al., (2020) said that gestures improve learning of second language vocabulary while Kushch et al. (2018) opined that gestures boost mnemonic processes. However, the respondents contradicted the statement that there was no room for mistakes for a beginner in language learning with a mean of 2.43.

It can be deduced from the above findings that Filipino language could be better learned if it is taught in context so that language learners could connect. Moreover, time was an essential element; thus, Filipino teachers may consider extending time in their lessons and activities. Additionally, Filipino teachers may focus on vocabulary building and grammar.

**Level of Direct Strategies Used by IP Students**

Among the three indicators under the direct strategies, it revealed that the memory strategy got the highest mean rating of 3.04. This means that the participants often thought of the Filipino words they already obtained and the words they need to know, hence, they sometimes use Filipino words or phrases to learn them. In order to remember new Filipino words or phrases, the respondents made visual image in their minds and associated the sounds with those images. Moreover, they also used rhyming technique of new Filipino words to remember them easily. Biggs (2001) mentioned that the purpose of memory strategy is limited to memorization and involves mostly surface processing. Likewise, compensation strategy had a mean of 2.85 or high verbal description. It implies that the respondents often use a word or phrase that means the same thing and they used gestures whenever they could utter the word correctly. This finding agrees with the study of Chang and Shen (2010) which revealed that Taiwanese language learners preferred to employ compensation strategy than any other. On the other hand, compensation strategy had a mean score of 1.64 or very low verbal description. This indicated that the respondents didn't have the interest to communicate with the native speakers and they could not make gist of the information they obtained when Filipino was spoken to them.

**Level of Indirect Strategies Used by IP Students**

The level of indirect strategies obtained an overall mean rating of 2.80 which means that the respondents had high degree of application of indirect strategies. Furthermore, three indicators under this type of strategies were social, affective, and meta-cognitive. The indicators had mean ratings of 3.01, 2.73 and 2.67 respectively. It was noted that the respondents applied various approaches in learning Filipino. They realized that they could use their mistakes to learn more. They manifested clear objectives to improve their understanding of Filipino. They set timetable for reading and took extra effort to study Filipino language. Moreover, the respondents took the risk of speaking in Filipino even when they committed errors. They also composed essays and gave themselves rewards when they perform well in Filipino subjects. Moreover, they also share their difficulties in learning the Filipino language to their friends and they also write on their diary their experiences in learning Filipino.

Specifically, in terms of meta-cognitive strategy, all the indicators mentioned obtained mean ratings of 2.82, 2.77, 2.65, 2.55 and 2.42, all with descriptive equivalent of high. This means that the respondents had high degree of utilization of their metacognition. These results suggest that respondents often try to use Filipino language in different occasions. They became reflective by assessing their performance in using Filipino language. They also become observant of their errors and mistakes.

The affective strategy got an overall mean of 2.73 described as high. This indicated that respondents had high degree of application of their emotions and feelings. The results revealed that although they had apprehension of committing phonological errors, they were willing to use Filipino in conversation. Likewise, they considered their errors as part of their learning; thus, they didn't make their situations stressful. Notably, they take break whenever they had performed well. Likewise, they were happy to share to their colleagues their second language experiences to release their tensions while other formally wrote their feelings on their diaries.

The social strategy indicator was high with an overall mean rating of 3.01. It indicated that the respondents didn't use this strategy most often. However, it was noted that the respondents asked Filipino native speakers to slow down if they didn't understand the words. Conversely, they were not interested to know the culture of those native Filipinos. They seldom use Filipino language with their tribe mates. They lacked the courage to ask native Filipino speakers to correct their utterances. These results which showed respondents' introverted behavior affect their leaning of the Filipino language.

Dator (2018) and Quiri (2019) mentioned that shyness, conservativeness, and wariness are usual characteristics of some indigenous people of the Philippines like the Badjao, Mangyan, T’boli, Bagobo, Manobo, and Agta tribes. These findings collaborated with the study of Rao (2006) which found that cultural differences and attitudes of second language learners were linked for the low use of
Table 2. Academic performance of indigenous students

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
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social strategy.

**Academic Performance of Indigenous Students**

Among the 74 respondents, 16 (21.62%) obtained a grade of 80, followed by 82 and 76 both with six participants (8.11%); 91 and 85 were achieved by five (6.76%) respectively. Four respondents (5.41%) got 89, 84, and 83 respectively. Grades of 94, 77, and 76 were obtained by three respondents (4.05%); 92, 87, and 86 were obtained by two (2.70%) respectively. Lastly, one (1.35%) received the grade of 98, 96, 95, 79, 78, and 70(Table 2).

It can be seen that among the 74 participants, one student got a grade of 70 which can be interpreted as failure in the subject. These results reflected Sicat and David (2011) findings which considered that the respondents’ level of academic performance was average because they were able to adapt to the educational set up. However, these findings showed different findings on the study of De Bortoli and Creswell (2004); De Bortoli and Thomson (2010) who found that Indigenous People (IP) in Australia had performed low in academics. This implies that IP in different parts of the world are not similar. Some are inclined in academics and others are not. It is probably based on their cultural norms.

In the test of correlation between the respondents’ profile and language learning beliefs, learning strategies and academic performance, it showed that sex in relation with level of beliefs has a Pearson r-value of -0.27 which was lesser than 0.045; thus, it led to the rejection of the null hypothesis. Undoubtedly, sex of the respondents had a low correlation with the level of language learning beliefs. These findings agreed with Chang and Shen (2010) who found that generally females had better language learning beliefs and higher frequency of language learning strategies.

In addition, the course taken by the respondents in relation with level of beliefs has a Pearson r-value of 0.002 which was lesser than 0.91; thus, it led to the non-rejection of the null hypothesis. Furthermore, when tribe was correlated with level of beliefs, it yielded a Pearson r-value of -0.06 which was lesser than 0.63; thus, it led to the non-rejection of the null hypothesis (Table 3). The finding simply that course taken and tribe of the respondents had no significant relationship with the level of language beliefs. These results challenged the findings of Siebert (2003) who found that tribe and race influenced students’ beliefs in learning English. However, the findings of this study confirmed Bontuyan et al. (2013) that cultural background and psychological experiences of indigenous students affect their learning of new language and that there is a significant interplay between the learners and their upbringings.

Moreover, when sex was correlated with language learning strategies it obtained a Pearson r-value of 0.39 which was greater than 0.05; thus, led to the rejection of the null hypothesis. This showed that there was a link between the sex and language learning strategies. The findings supported the study of Chang and Shen (2010) that female respondents were inclined to learning other language. Also, the course taken in relation with level of language learning strategies had a Pearson r-value of -0.11 which was lesser than 0.61; thus, it led to the acceptance of the null hypothesis. It implies that there was no interconnection between the courses taken to language learning strategies. When tribe was linked with language learning strategies, it obtained a P-value of 0.09. This result was lesser than 0.87; thus, it led to the rejection of the null hypothesis. It implies that tribe and the level of language learning beliefs were inter-connected.

Further, sex in relation to academic performance had gained a Pearson r-value of -0.07 which was lesser than 0.052 degree of significance; thus, it led to the rejection of the null hypothesis. It implies that there sex and academic performance were significantly correlated. When course was correlated with academic performance, it obtained a Pearson r-value of 0.07 which was lesser than 0.78; thus, it failed to reject the null hypothesis. When tribe and academic performance were correlated, it yielded a Pearson r-value of 0.13 which was lesser than 0.55, thus, it failed to reject the null hypothesis. The findings imply that sex, course taken, and tribe had no significant relationship with the academic performance among the indigenous students. This results support the findings of Dyer et al., (2017); Vizeshfar and Torabizadeh (2018) that sex does not affect academic achievement. However, the results contradict Schluter et al., (2018) who found that the prominent factor which
influence academic achievement are personality and sex.

**Link between Language Learning Beliefs, Language Learning Strategies, and Academic Performance**

The level of language learning beliefs in relation to language learning strategies obtained a Pearson r-value of 0.47 which was higher than 0.02; thus, the study rejected the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant relationship between language learning beliefs and language learning strategies. This implies that there is a substantial link between language learning beliefs and language learning strategies. Further, it can be deduced that there is a direct connection between language learning beliefs of the students and their application of language learning strategies in learning Filipino. These findings are in line with the study of Abraham and Vann (1987), Horwitz (1989), Liu (2004), Wenden (1986), Chang and Shen (2010) which mentioned that students' language concept directly affected their utilization of strategies in learning. Likewise, students’ learning second language commonly used the compensation strategies.

In addition, when language belief was correlated with the academic performance, it obtained a Pearson r-value of 0.11 which was lesser than 0.66. This finding led to the acceptance of the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant relationship between language belief and academic performance. This implies that language learning beliefs and the academic performance didn't have significant relationship. This result negated the study of Valentine et al., (2004) which found students’ beliefs impacted their academic achievements.

The data on the correlation between the language learning strategies and academic performance obtained a Pearson r-value of 0.06 which was lesser than 0.45. This finding led to the acceptance of the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant relationship between learning strategies and academic performance. This implies that the two indicators had no significant relationship. This finding supported the claim of Napil (2002) which found no link between language learning strategies and academic performance in Filipino. It implies that learning Filipino language depends on any other factors.

**Significant Difference of Level of Beliefs, Language Learning Strategies, and Academic Performance when Grouped according to Tribe**

The results of the one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA), the computed f-ratio values corresponding to 12 and 61 degrees of freedom (df) at 0.05 level of significance was 2.63. Examining the data, the critical value of 2.63 was greater than the computed f-ratio of 1.70. Thus, the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant difference on the beliefs when grouped according to tribes was accepted. This indicates that the tribe of the respondents showed no significant difference in the level of language learning beliefs.

Further, the computed f-ratio was lesser than the tabular f-value of 0.37 which means that the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant difference on language learning strategies when grouped according to tribe was accepted. This indicates that the language learning strategies of the respondents was not influenced by their tribes.

Lastly, the computed f-ratio of 1.14 was lesser than the tabular f-value which was 2.63; thus, the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant difference on academic performance when grouped according to tribes was accepted. This indicates that the academic performance of the participants was not influenced by their tribes. These findings challenged the study of Davies et al., (2012) which stated that African-American students’ low academic achievements were associated to their being from a collectivist culture.

**Perceptions of the Indigenous Students in Learning Filipino Languages**

In the qualitative questions about the perceptions of the indigenous students on their experiences while learning Filipino language in high school years; they revealed favorable and unfavorable experiences. The participants revealed that learning Filipino language was fun, interesting, and exciting. However, in some instances they also experienced challenges such as boredom, difficulty in comprehending unfamiliar
words, and tasted punishment.

Additionally, the participants identified opportunities where they could apply the Filipino language such as recitation, sharing of opinions, reporting, dramatizing, and explaining concepts.

Fun is considered by the participants as one of the favorable experiences in learning Filipino language because they were looking forward to hear and learn new words and that the participants were very much excited to attend the class because their teacher provides some activities that connect the lessons to reality. Furthermore, the language was more appreciated than in the elementary years because they were able to read and dramatize some of the chapters in Florante at Laura, a popular Filipino classic drama, and sometimes would be a substitute of written exams. Interesting was also highlighted because for them they considered every day in their Filipino class as another day of learning new vocabulary and new grammar rules. In addition, respondents were interested in learning new words and vocabulary especially when the teacher used the quiz bee strategy where students needed to compete with each other. Whoever wins in the contest will be given additional point in the recitation. Likewise, the students loved to hear their teacher talkedin Filipino spontaneously and fluently so that they could check their dictions and enunciations.

For the unfavorable experience, the participants revealed that sometimes they felt bored especially when the teacher became so strict; when they cannot understand what the teacher was talking; and when they found learning grammar so difficult. They also felt bad when they were punished by the teacher for not speaking in Filipino. No deep understanding of the Filipino language was considered as a typical problem encountered by the participants. The reason for lack of deep understanding was due to lack of motivating strategies employed by the teachers in class. Moreover, some participants considered attending Filipino classes not a priority. Some of them cut classes during Filipino classes to find extra income to augment their family’s financial needs or they escaped Filipino classes to take rest to prepare for the next class.

The participants also revealed that they had difficulty learning Filipino grammar because of the limited reading materials such as books. In addition, the participants mentioned that they were bored because the teachers lack teaching strategies appropriate to their learning styles; nevertheless, they tried their best to speak in Filipino but with crooked enunciation. Most often, they stuttered. Unfortunately, the participants were usually punished by their teachers if they didn’t speak in Filipino. The Filipino teachers fined them and tasked them to write a 200-word essay if they were caught speaking in the vernacular.

In terms of opportunities in speaking Filipino in class, the participants shared that the teachers tasked them to do recitation in front of the class; share their opinions; deliver reports of a certain topic; dramatize an event; and explain concepts. During recitation, the teacher let the student come in front of the class and the teacher asked questions.

Sharing of thoughts gave the students to have exchange of knowledge with their classmates. Reporting gave the opportunity to use Filipino language in more formal form of conversation. Dramatizing was another opportunity where students could truly relate to the real world, specially their views and convictions in life. Through these opportunities, the participants were able to build open communication with other students. Explaining concepts allowed the participants to express themselves in Filipino where they were pushed to think deeply.

Summary

1. Most respondents were female freshmen indigenous students. This implies that the naturally patriarchal tribal communities have realized the role of women in the development of their tribes. Moreover, most respondents were pursuing Bachelor of Elementary Education (BEd). This is an indication that the participants’ choice of course is influenced by the realities of their communities, where most of the constituents are illiterate.
2. The level of language learning beliefs of the indigenous students is high.
3. The respondents’ level of direct and indirect strategies in learning Filipino language is high.
4. Significant correlation exists between sex and language learning beliefs, language learning strategies, and academic performance. Also, tribe and the level of language learning beliefs are inter-connected while no significant correlation exists between course and language learning strategies and academic performance.
5. Significant correlation exists between language beliefs and learning language strategies while no link exists between language beliefs and academic performance.
6. No correlation exists between academic performances and language strategies.
7. No relevant difference in the level of language learning beliefs, language learning strategies and academic performance when grouped according to tribes.
8. The participants reveal favorable and unfavorable experiences in learning Filipino in high school. The favorable experiences are fun, interesting, and exciting. For the unfavorable experience, the participants experience boredom, difficulty in comprehend unfamiliar words, and taste punishment.
9. Recitation, sharing of opinions, reporting, dramatizing, and explaining concepts are the identified opportunities of the participants where they can apply the Filipino language.

Conclusion

Accommodating another language is inevitable especially in the Philippines not only because of its geographical situation but also its cultural aspects. Filipinos are naturally
multilingual, thus, adopting a language which is Filipino, can lead to understanding and unification of nations. The results significantly show that tribal communities are now opening their doors to the modern ideology which is learning another language. They are no longer cloistered in their traditional norms as manifested by letting their women to educate themselves; having high level of language learning beliefs and direct and indirect strategies in learning Filipino. The significant correlation between sex and language learning beliefs, language learning strategies, and academic performance show that tribal groups are conscious on the potentials of their learners especially the women. Notably, it shows that tribe and language learning beliefs and language beliefs and learning language strategies are inter-connected. It is an indication that learning another language is deeply rooted with the tribes' norms. This is an indication that even in the contemporary time; indigenous people give value to the belief system of their communities. With positive and negative experiences in learning Filipino, the participants realized that learning another language is not easy, thus, academic institutions like the University of Mindanao may intensify the implementation of the NCIP.

This study proves the point of Abraham and Vann (1987), Horwitz (1989), and Wenden (1998) which states that persons beliefs essentially affect the acquisition of language while challenges Chomsky (1967) who states that language can be acquired regardless of linguistic background.

Conflict of interests

The authors declare that they have no conflict of interests.

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