

Philippine Ethnolinguistics: A Hundred Years of Inquiry¹

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Abstract

This paper attempts to survey a century of ethnolinguistic scholarship in the Philippines alongside the work of the University of the Philippines Department of Linguistics, tracing its intellectual trajectory from early lexical studies to contemporary semantic, diachronic, and

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interdisciplinary approaches.² Revisiting Malicsi's (1978) critique of the field's lack of theoretical grounding and distinction from other interdisciplinary language studies, we examine how subsequent works, both published and unpublished, have responded to these concerns and discuss how ethnolinguistics holds potential for articulating local knowledge systems and practices and foregrounding culturally grounded worldviews. In doing so, we highlight how the field offers important contributions to current efforts toward conducting research in the humanities and social sciences in the Philippines.

Keywords: ethnolinguistics, knowledge systems, semantics, metaphors, culture

1 Introduction

The relationship between language and culture has long been a topic of interest for scholars in the humanities and social sciences. Language, as a system of communication used by a particular group of people, has always been linked to culture; just as culture, as a system of shared beliefs,

²This survey does not claim to be exhaustive and any oversights are entirely our own. The majority of studies featured in this article are published and unpublished works, including undergraduate and graduate term papers and theses produced by faculty members and alumni of the UP Department of Linguistics. Also included are publications by several local and foreign scholars who pioneered studies on specific domains, as well as introduced new approaches to ethnolinguistic research. Onsite and online presentations were excluded unless accompanied by a written paper.

values, and practices within a community, has always been linked to language. The two are mutually constitutive forces, with each shaping and giving form to the other. Language is a cultural product, just as culture is expressed and transmitted through language (Halliday, 1978). Language reflects the values, beliefs, and practices of a community, while culture, in turn, shapes how the former is used, structured, and interpreted (Gumperz, 1982). As Whorf (1956) asserts, neither can be fully understood in isolation or apart from the other.

Many linguists and language studies scholars affirm that languages are inherently culture-bound. Sapir (1921) argues that language is not merely a system of arbitrary symbols for communication but one that encodes the worldview of its speakers, with its vocabulary and structure reflecting many aspects of the culture of the people who speak it. Pike (1967) emphasizes that language operates as a system of choices, and that those choices are themselves shaped by culture. In this view, the structure of language is inseparable from the structure of reality as it is perceived within a culture that extends not only to fundamental categories of thought, such as time and space, but also to social organization, kinship systems, and religious beliefs.

The interplay between language and culture serves as the foundation for linguistic inquiry and cultural investigation. This interplay lies at the heart of collaborations between linguistics and anthropology, disciplines that share an interest in language and culture but approach it from different vantage points. Anthropology, particularly linguistic anthropology, takes a holistic perspective that considers culture, language, religion, politics, and economics, using an ethnographic lens to examine their interconnections. Linguistics, by contrast, focuses

on the structure and use of language and its relationship to thought, employing linguistic methodologies and frameworks to investigate how language and culture inform one another. Ethnolinguistics sits at this intersection, drawing from both traditions to investigate how meaning, worldview, and social practice are embedded in language.

In this paper, we define ethnolinguistics, following Malicsi (1978), as the study of cultural inferences drawn from linguistic data, and grounded in the methodologies and theoretical frameworks of linguistics.³ It examines how language use within specific communities reflects cultural norms and values, paying close attention to nuances and subtle variations. Approaches range from phonetic and phonological analysis to morphological and syntactic study, lexicography, and semantic investigation, each offering a lens for uncovering the cultural knowledge encoded in language.

The aim of this paper is threefold: first, to survey and provide an overview of the range of ethnolinguistic research conducted in the Philippine context alongside the work of the Department of Linguistics at the University of the Philippines Diliman; second, to trace the methodological and thematic developments that have shaped the field; and third, to outline directions for future study.

We begin with Malicsi's (1978) "Ethnolinguistic Concerns in the Philippines," which provides a benchmark for assessing the state of the field. This is followed by a chronological review of key works,

³Ethnolinguistic research employs different approaches depending on the topic or objective of the study. These include metaphor studies (e.g., as in Lakoff & Johnson, 1980), historical-comparative methods (e.g., for cultural reconstruction projects), and semantic analysis. These frameworks and methodologies are usually used to analyze data at the lexical and semantic levels.

an analysis of recurring themes, and the need for ethnolinguistics. Throughout, we emphasize the potential of the ethnolinguistic lens to advance local knowledge systems, cultural understanding, and research in the humanities and social sciences. From here, we trace how Philippine ethnolinguistics evolved, building on global perspectives but following its own trajectory.

2 Revisiting “Ethnolinguistic Concerns in the Philippines” (1978)

While classic perspectives laid the groundwork for understanding how language encodes worldview and social reality, Philippine ethnolinguistics unfolded along a distinct path. Jonathan Malicsi’s (1978) “Ethnolinguistic Concerns in the Philippines” offers one of the earliest attempts to define the field locally, highlighting the analysis of cultural knowledge through linguistic data. At a time when sociolinguistics and psycholinguistics dominated scholarly discussions, particularly around language policy, Malicsi argued that ethnolinguistics remained marginal, too often confined to the study of small, peripheral groups. He called for a stronger integration of linguistics and ethnography, emphasizing that “ethnography without linguistics is blind, linguistics without ethnography is sterile” (Hockett, 1954, as cited in Malicsi, 1978).

Malicsi identified key challenges: neglect of the field; its mistaken confinement to cultures of less populous groups;⁴ lack of disciplinary

⁴The phrase “cultures of less populous groups” reflects Malicsi’s original wording, though contemporary scholarship would frame these as “non-dominant,” “marginalized,” or “indigenous” communities.

identity; and the absence of coherent theoretical and methodological frameworks. To clarify its scope, Malicsi proposed that ethnolinguistics address worldviews, cultural foci, lexical and semantic fields, and specific topics such as place names, writing systems, and semantic reconstruction. He illustrated ethnolinguistics' range through studies of Gaddang time segmentation (Troyer, 1969), Hanunóo color categories (Conklin, 1955), diagnosis of disease among the Subanons⁵ (Frake, 1961), and Sambal Ayta concepts of self, society, and beauty (Malicsi, 1975). He stressed the field's promise and called for firmer theoretical foundations, stronger networks, and collaborations among scholars.

Malicsi's essay thus marked both a critique and a challenge: Ethnolinguistics in the Philippines needed clearer theoretical grounding and a stronger institutional presence if it were to flourish alongside other subfields of linguistics. His observations revealed the field at a crossroads—broad in scope yet uncertain in direction.

3 A Survey of Philippine Ethnolinguistics Across Decades⁶

In the decades that followed, Philippine ethnolinguistics began to respond to this challenge. Although Malicsi noted in 1978 that few scholars pursued ethnolinguistic research, subsequent years saw the emergence of new voices, approaches, and thematic interests. This section surveys those developments, tracing how ethnolinguistic

⁵Malicsi (1978) used the ethnonym "Subanon" in citing Frake's (1961) work, although Frake's original article employed the form "Subanun." We retain Malicsi's usage in this paper while noting the orthographic discrepancy.

⁶An annotated bibliography of the works surveyed is provided in Appendix A.

scholarship gradually moved from seemingly isolated studies into ongoing and varied lines of research.

To capture this progression, the discussion is organized into temporal phases, each marked by distinct trends and contributions to the field. The review begins with the pioneering works of the 1950s to the 1970s, before moving into later decades when the field expanded in scope and methodology, reflecting its increasingly multidisciplinary character.

3.1 1950s-1970s: Pioneering Inquiries

The formative phase of Philippine ethnolinguistics produced landmark studies that linked language with cultural categories. Conklin (1955) looked at the Hanunóo color system; Scott (1967, as cited in Malicsi, 1978) traced Sagada Igorot religious expressions; Rayala (1970, as cited in Malicsi, 1978) compared color terms across Tagalog, Ilokano, and Sambal; and Macdonald and Macdonald (1974, as cited in Malicsi, 1978)⁷ described Palawanon meal types. Malicsi (1975, as cited in Malicsi, 1978) analyzed aspects of the worldview of the Sambal Ayta, work that he would later expand in the 1980s, while Chan-Yap (1976) examined Hokkien kinship loans in Tagalog.

Methodologically, most of these studies relied on elicitation and lexical analysis, with Rayala's (1970, as cited in Malicsi, 1978) comparative study signaling an early move toward cross-linguistic approaches. These works, though modest in scale, model how linguistic tools could uncover

⁷This appears as *Macdonald, Nicole R. (1974). Perspectives d'enquete à partir de catégories de repas palawan. Information en Sciences Sociales (UNESCO)* in Malicsi's (1978) article.

cultural nuance and reflect an emerging interest in using language to explore worldviews, social structures, and everyday life.

3.2 1980s-1990s: Expanding Methods and Domains

The 1980s and 1990s marked a period in Philippine ethnolinguistics when studies moved beyond primarily lexical description and categorization and toward broader inquiries into cultural models, cognition, and verb-centered semantics. Malicsi (1980, 1982, 1990) explored Sambal Ayta concepts of self and body-related verb semantics, while Postma (1985) analyzed Mangyan temporal concepts. Malicsi's (1990) "A Search for Semantic Primitives" shifts focus from nouns to verbs, analyzing 459 lexical stems in Botolan Sambal Ayta alongside Tagalog and English to probe categories of action, activity, and bodily experience. By highlighting the limits of componential analysis in noun-centered semantic studies, he underscored the need for approaches attentive to verb-centered semantics and sought to develop a method of semantic analysis that could test for equivalences both among Philippine languages and between Philippine and foreign languages.

Approaches employing cognitive and diachronic methods also emerged, such as Lynch and Himes' (1982) cognitive mapping of Tagalog domains, which demonstrated how lexical categories reflect cultural knowledge structures and conceptual schemas. Reid (1994) reconstructed a set of terms for wet rice agriculture across Central Cordilleran languages, providing linguistic evidence that pondfield construction predated the split of Proto-Nuclear Cordilleran. His analysis suggests that its speakers had already mastered stone-walled

pondfield terrace construction in a mountainous environment, as well as irrigation technology. Collectively, this period reflects a shift from descriptive lexical studies toward more structural, cognitive, and semantic analyses.

3.3 2000s Onwards: Diversification and Continued Expansion

From the early 2000s, Philippine ethnolinguistics entered a phase of diversification and expansion, as scholars adopted a broader range of analytical perspectives and pursued increasingly diverse cultural domains. For instance, Moriguchi's (2005) study demonstrated how linguistic data could be paired with an ethnographic lens to track semantic shifts, while Luquin (2006) showed the value of integrating structural analysis with cultural context in her work on the polysemy of *'āpu*.

Another decisive turn came through the works of Consuelo J. Paz (2008a, 2008b, 2008c), whose diachronic studies of *ginhawa* 'well-being,' *dalamhati* 'anguish,' and *kapalaran* 'fate, destiny' showed how core cultural concepts are encoded in Philippine lexicons. Her methodological innovation ushered in a wave of diachronic and comparative research with an ethnolinguistic perspective that extended into kinship, cosmology, temporality, and embodiment (e.g., Talavera, 2014; Gallego, 2015, 2018; Pototanon, 2020; Cruz, 2022; J. F. C. Hernandez, 2022).

Together with this diachronic turn, semantic and metaphorical approaches further deepened the field's reach. Studies in this period examined how metaphors structure everyday discourse (Bacolod, 2010),

spoke about humans using animal-related expressions (Klimenko, 2010), tackled indigenous understandings of time (Cunanan, 2010), and studied Filipino conceptualizations of happiness-related terms (Petras, 2013). Subsequent work by students at both the graduate and undergraduate levels further expanded the range of ethnolinguistic inquiry and carried this momentum forward: Cabazares (2017) investigated Matigsalug spirit concepts; Pasion (2018) examined Ilubu notions of justice; and Jamindang (2022)⁸ and Manahan (2022)⁹ analyzed the semantics of pain in Filipino. These works show how ethnolinguistic inquiry in the Philippine context became a space where student contributions actively shape the field's intellectual trajectory.

Taken together, these developments are evidence of a field that had not only widened methodologically by combining diachronic, semantic, metaphorical, and ethnographic approaches, but had also broadened in scope by examining cultural models across domains of health, emotion, kinship, temporality, cosmology, and embodiment. This pluralism of methods and approaches and the field's sustained growth reflect both a response to early critiques of the discipline's limits and a reaffirmed commitment to understanding the complex interrelation of language, culture, and history in the Philippine setting.

⁸Paper originally submitted to Assoc. Prof. Jesus Federico C. Hernandez for the class *Lingg 199 Research Method in Linguistics* (2nd Semester 2021-2022) in the University of the Philippines Diliman.

⁹Paper originally submitted to Assoc. Prof. Jesus Federico C. Hernandez for the class *Lingg 270 Ethnolinguistics* (2nd Semester 2021-2022) in the University of the Philippines Diliman.

4 Thematic Trajectories in Philippine Ethnolinguistics¹⁰

Whereas Section 3 traced Philippine ethnolinguistics through chronology and methodology, this section examined its thematic orientations. Two broad domains emerge: (a) human nature, experience, and relationships, and (b) environment. The first highlights language as a window into the self, the body, emotions, kinship, and the social order. The second shows how linguistic systems encode perceptions of color, time, weather, space, and spirits, demonstrating the environment's intimate role in shaping meaning. Together, they reveal how Philippine ethnolinguistics has cultivated a diverse intellectual landscape that continues to expand.

¹⁰Aside from prospective topics, themes, and approaches, ethnolinguistics can restore its previously established connections with other areas of study. The tie-up between linguistics and folklore, for example, can be revisited and strengthened since the latter is also an abundant source of cultural information. Some works that may be avenues for future ethnolinguistic research are epics of the Kalinga (Constantino & Gaano Laudi (Chanter), 2002) and Negritos (Constantino & Baket Anag (Chanter), 2001; Constantino & Baket Anag (Chanter), 2003) documented by Ernesto Constantino for the Endangered Languages of the Pacific Rim project. These works of Constantino are cited here as examples of documented folklore texts, not as ethnolinguistic analyses.

4.1 Human Nature, Experience, and Relationships¹¹

At the heart of Philippine ethnolinguistics lies an enduring concern with what it means to be human and how this humanity is expressed through language. Scholars have examined the lexicons of selfhood, well-being, and destiny; traced emotional life through terms of sorrow, joy, and pain; and explored how mental health is linguistically framed. Attention to the body, kinship, social order, and spirituality further demonstrates that language does not merely describe human experience but actively organizes it, shaping moral values, relationships, and worldviews.

4.1.1 Self and Well-being

Some of the earliest ethnolinguistic studies in the Philippine context placed the self at the center of cultural inquiry. Malicsi's (1975, 1980, 1982) work with the Sambal Ayta examined their vocabulary of self, society, and beauty. For the Sambal Ayta, beauty lies not only in balance and symmetry, but also in practical ornamentation that highlights an aesthetic where form and function are inseparable. This pragmatic view illustrates how values of utility and embodied form shape cultural standards of attractiveness. Paz's later work deepened the focus on selfhood by examining *ginhawa* 'well-being.' Through comparative analysis across Philippine languages, Paz (2008b) showed that *ginhawa* exceeds material prosperity, encompassing aspiration, social harmony,

¹¹The various studies on human senses (e.g., smell, taste), emotions (e.g., *dalamhati*), and other experiences (e.g., *kasawian*, *pagkakasakit*), as conducted, for instance, by undergraduate students, are a good starting point for a more refined search for values and categories that possibly characterize us as a people. But it is hoped that scholars will take on the challenge of exploring beyond Tagalog and the regional *lingua francas*.

and spiritual intercession, while being closely tied to environmental conditions.

4.1.2 Destiny and Fate

Paz (2008c) further interrogated the concepts of opportunity, destiny, and fate, particularly *kapalaran* which is etymologically linked to *palad* ‘palm’ within Philippine ethnolinguistic groups. Unlike Western notions of fate, Philippine ethnolinguistic perspectives frame it as a realm subject to human control and one that is responsive to diligence, determination, capabilities, and moral agency. This shows how language encodes culturally distinct conceptual frameworks that provide a contrast to Western ideologies.

4.1.3 Sorrow and Happiness

Language also serves as a window into emotional life. Paz (2008a) traced the etymology of *dalamhati*, showing how sorrow is rooted in the *atay* ‘liver,’ long viewed as a seat of profound emotion. J. F. C. Hernandez (2022) supported and expanded this by situating *atay* in a wider lexical network of feelings and emotions while demonstrating continuity with earlier studies. In contrast, Petras (2013), using the Natural Semantic Metalanguage (NSM) framework in a synchronic study, examined the vocabulary of happiness in Filipino. The study highlighted how words such as *aliw*, *galák*, *ligáya*, *lugód*, *luwalhati*, *sayá*, *siyá*, *tuwâ*, and *wili* carve out distinct shades of joy and reflect a cultural understanding of happiness as multifaceted and contextually embedded rather than monolithic.

4.1.4 Pain and Mental Health

Studies of pain extend this interest in emotion. Manahan (2022) demonstrated that *sakit* serves as an umbrella for both physical and emotional pain, with *hapdi* linked to external causes and *kirot* to internal ones. This framing shows that the concept of pain is readily employed to encapsulate instances characterized by sentiments of sadness-like experiences and feelings. Meanwhile, Jamindang (2022) showed that *sakit* can be represented syntactically as a process, quality, and entity—versatility that allows pain to appear as experience, attribute, or agent. Through pain, ethnolinguistic scholarship can be linked to mental health. J. F. C. Hernandez (2016) examined Tagalog discourse, where the idea of *sariling mundo* ‘one’s own world’ illustrates how Tagalog speakers conceptualize altered states of mind within the context of mental health and illness. He argued that such terms shape both caregiving practices and cultural models of sanity, while also offering contributions from Tagalog to global mental health discourse.

4.1.5 Body and Metaphor

Beyond emotions, attention to the body and the senses has also yielded important insights. For example, Cruz (2022) traced diachronic shifts in odor vocabulary across 25 Philippine languages, showing how the lexicon of smell ties into indigenous notions of breath and comfort. Moriguchi (2005) analyzed Ivatan registers of urination, where euphemistic terms differed between land and sea contexts; at sea, superstition dictates the use of metaphorical terms to avoid attracting harm from spirits.

Research such as Idio’s (2019) unpublished undergraduate paper and studies such as Bacolod’s (2010) undertook a descriptive analysis of

metaphors embedded in day-to-day conversations in Filipino, spanning semantic and structural strata. Drawing upon insights garnered from language consultants, Bacolod (2010) extracted diverse expressions of meaning from commonplace metaphors, encircling domains such as animal and body metaphors, alongside variances in structural attributes, lexical categories, and linguistic borrowings. Additionally, her paper probed the motivations driving speakers' utilization of metaphors, revealing the cognitive processes at play. Idio (2019), meanwhile, offered a focused analysis of the Tagalog concept *paa* 'foot,' arguing that its meaning transcends the literal body part. Drawing on textual sources, such as dictionaries and various literary works, Idio demonstrated that *paa* functions as a conceptual metaphor for an individual's state and progress in life. The concept is specifically linked to mobility, movement, and the navigation of life pathways, thus making it a salient framework for understanding personal trajectory and advancement.

4.1.6 Kinship, Social Order, and Justice

The social dimension of human relationships has also been a parallel focus in ethnolinguistic studies. Chan-Yap (1976) examined Hokkien-influenced kinship terms in Tagalog and showed how loanwords (e.g., *kúya*, *âte*, *díko*, *ditsé*) are integrated not simply as borrowings but as structural solutions to gaps in the system, especially in marking of birth order. From a different vantage point, Gallego (2015) painted a thorough analysis of Philippine kinship and social organization based on reconstructions of relevant terminologies. Her investigation examined reconstructed Proto-Philippine (PPh) kinship terms and the functional determinants that potentially underpinned

their evolutionary trajectory. Luquin (2006) analyzed Mangyan Patag *’āpu*, demonstrating that the term integrates notions of leadership, relation, and ancestry, thus blurring distinctions between hierarchy and kinship. Beyond kinship, Pasion (2018) examined the Ilubu concept of justice (*bumaruon*), rooted in *baru* ‘beauty.’ For the Ilubu, justice is not adversarial but restorative, aimed at reestablishing harmony and moral beauty in social relations.

4.1.7 Spirituality and Death

Finally, ethnolinguistic research has also considered the spiritual dimension of human existence. Talavera (2014) reconstructed proto-forms of death and afterlife terms across ten Philippine languages, building on earlier reconstructions. Talavera’s work underscored the centrality of mortality in Philippine worldviews and the shared cultural threads that bind diverse ethnolinguistic groups through a common lexical heritage.

4.2 Environment

Understanding the environment through an ethnolinguistic lens in the Philippines illustrates how language mediates the relationship between people and the natural world. These works show that categories of color, time, weather, direction, and even spirit beings are not merely descriptive but embed cultural knowledge, ecological practice, and cosmological order.

4.2.1 Color and Perception

The pioneering study in this domain is Conklin's (1955) research on Hanunóo color categories, which remains one of the most cited works in ethnoscience. Conklin showed that while human perceptual capacity for color is universal, languages differ in how they partition this spectrum. The Hanunóo system organizes color around four core contrasts: *(ma)biru* 'blackness,' *(ma)lagti?* 'whiteness,' *(ma)rara?* 'redness,' and *(ma)latuy* 'greenness' which are linked not only to hue but to experiential dimensions like wet-dry and dark-light. Secondary terms, derived or compounded, allow for finer distinctions such as *(ma)dapug* 'gray' or *madilawdilaw* 'weak yellow.' This system manifests how color categories map onto ecology, agriculture, and embodied perception. Later studies extended this inquiry: Rayala (1970, as cited in Malicsi, 1978) compared color terms in three languages spoken in Zambales, while Zubiri (2011) contrasted Tagalog, Bikol, and Hiligaynon terms.

4.2.2 Time and Weather

Temporal systems provide another lens to view environmental perception. Postma's (1985) study of Mangyan temporal concepts revealed a reliance on celestial bodies and seasonal cycles tied to agriculture. Building on this, Cunanan (2010) revisited the cultural stereotype of "Filipino time," arguing that tardiness is better understood against agricultural rhythms rather than as an inherent aspect of Filipino behavior. She linked these findings to Postma's data, reframing punctuality as relative to ecological context.

Meanwhile, Cruz's (2019) effort to map the evolution of the temporal system in Tagalog drew on the available reconstructions by Blust et al. (2023). This research uncovered that the term *panahon*, which pertains to both 'time' and 'weather,' embodies two distinct notions resulting from a semantic transformation. Cruz pointed out that celestial bodies and environmental phenomena, akin to other Philippine ethnolinguistic groups, serve as primary temporal markers in Tagalog. Additionally, the study revealed that external influences and technological progress have been instrumental in shaping the temporal system of the Tagalog-speaking population. Pototanon (2020), in a related study, analyzed 12 Philippine languages and proto-forms and compared lexical data from dictionaries and historical lists. He highlighted how the "metonymy of *panahon*" integrates weather and temporality into a unified experiential domain, while also revealing variation produced by borrowing and innovation. Collectively, these works demonstrate that time in Philippine languages is inseparable from climate, landscape, and subsistence.

4.2.3 Meteorological and Natural Phenomena

Beyond ordinary weather, natural phenomena are also culturally encoded. V. V. Hernandez and Zayas (2022) documented Ayta beliefs around lightning as the ultimate punishment for breaking taboos such as wearing red with copper or gold ornaments and gold teeth, or eating proscribed food combinations such as mushrooms and jackfruit, shrimp and red chili, or pumpkin and chicken. For the Aytas, lightning embodies ancestral justice, tying meteorology to morality and heritage. Lee (2019) undertook a parallel inquiry into natural phenomena. He

connected these natural phenomena to disaster discourse, showing how Philippine languages metaphorize calamities. By examining terms and metaphors for typhoons, floods, and storm surges, Lee argued that metaphorization is essential for conceptualizing rare but devastating disasters. He emphasized the role of linguistic documentation in disaster risk reduction, policy-making, and community resilience in a nation situated on the Pacific Ring of Fire.

4.2.4 Space and Direction

Gallego (2018) delivered an exhaustive analysis of how various ethnolinguistic groups navigate their surroundings in the Philippines. Her focus is primarily on the directional terms employed across 54 Philippine languages, a domain characterized by marked diversity that precludes the construction of a uniform directional system. Gallego identified four prevailing spheres of reference through which directions are encoded: the trajectory of the sun, the demarcation between land and sea, the intricacies of wind and monsoon patterns, and systems of location. These linguistic markers reveal profound insights into the maritime lifestyles and practices inherent to the speech communities found across the Philippines and the broader Austronesian context. Moreover, Gallego discerned intriguing implicational relationships within the lexical encoding of directions. Specifically, a proclivity emerges for the east-west axis to be prioritized over the north-south axis. This preference can be attributed to the inherent significance of the former within the context of the sun's movement, an overarching determinant across speech communities.

4.2.5 Spiritual Cosmology

Finally, the environment is deeply intertwined with spiritual cosmologies. Cabazares (2017) examined Matigsalug spirit names and their semantic properties by analyzing how nouns and verbs depict spirits as participants in human and ecological interactions. Spirit names, he argued, reflect domains of action (i.e., perception, behavior, environmental connection) and reveal favored or disfavored lexical patterns. These patterns highlight how spiritual beings are linguistically embedded within environmental and social life, blurring the boundaries between ontology, cosmology, and ecology.

5 The Need for Philippine Ethnolinguistics

Classifying the works surveyed in this paper based on the prospective topics proposed by Malicsi (1978), we learn that the majority of them are explorations of lexical domains and semantic reconstructions guided by historical-comparative methods, while grammatical categories and place names remain the least studied ones. Nonetheless, this survey shows the variety of topics and approaches that compose ethnolinguistics. The description of the studies' premises also gives us an idea of what this field is capable of achieving and why studies and endeavors with a primarily ethnolinguistic lens are necessary.

5.1 Ethnolinguistics and Local Knowledge

As the surveyed works imply, ethnolinguistics can deepen our comprehension of local knowledge systems and practices and, by extension, our appreciation of both distinct and shared aspects of

cultural life. Through careful linguistic inquiry, we gain access to certain ways of conceptualization and categorization that communities adhere to and continue to live by. A glimpse into how the Sambal Aytas conceptualize personality (Malicsi, 1980) and beauty (Malicsi, 1975, 1982), or how the Hanunóos categorize colors based on their own parameters (Conklin, 1955), for example, offers a preview of how groups of people organize ideas and embody particular notions about the self and the world.

An investigation of culture informed by linguistics can also help trace and account for changes that occurred within communities. For instance, the terms for male and female urination in the Batanic languages exhibit an intricate interplay between the land and fishermen's registers and the people's effort to deceive evil spirits. Interestingly, the decrease in the fishermen's population and reduced dependency on the sea has had an effect on urination terms: *peteg* or *otod* 'urination in the sea' now denotes male urination since the fishermen are all male, while *opis*, the land register, denotes female urination (Moriguchi, 2005).

Additionally, turning to ethnolinguistics to identify patterns and explain concepts can provide evidence for the complexity and sophistication of extant structures and practices. Attempts to describe and unpack culture-specific principles and processes reveal systematic reasoning as to why the Mangyans have a more extensive vocabulary for seasonal and monthly recurrences than for historical events and daily or hourly practices (Postma, 1985), or as to how directional systems in Philippine languages are encoded based on several intersecting fields of reference (Gallego, 2018).

Ethnolinguistics has the capacity to reorient approaches to understanding our world. For Paz (2008b), as demonstrated by her study on the state of well-being encoded in various Philippine languages, linguistic data have the potential to explain differences while also recognizing important similarities among groups. She highlighted how language can account for both uniqueness and similitude without dismissing diversity among speech cultures. Furthermore, she emphasized that knowledge uncovered by such studies “should help eradicate existing discrimination and/or marginalization of [ethnolinguistic groups], or even smaller groups within larger ones” (p. 11).

5.2 Ethnolinguistics and Social Relevance

Crucially, ethnolinguistic approaches can inform us of contexts and meanings that are also crucial in addressing real-life concerns that we face today. This is exemplified by how J. F. C. Hernandez (2016) problematized the language associated with mental health and illness and categories within Philippine psychiatry, which are both formulated based on Western orientations. By decoding linguistic markers, features, and devices in Tagalog words and concepts, and classifying lexical items related to mental health and illness into domains, he hopes to forge a more nuanced understanding between local healthcare providers and their patients. More recent studies on the Tagalog *sakit* (Manahan, 2022; Jamindang, 2022) share the same view regarding the importance of dissecting pain in terms of language- and culture-specific explanations.

The daunting challenge perhaps lies in how we process what we learn from local communities and how this acquired understanding can

benefit not only the scholars in pursuit of discoveries and credit, but also, more importantly, the people and communities who impart their traditional knowledge.

5.3 Ethnolinguistics as Complementary to Other Disciplines

Finally, it is necessary to acknowledge ethnolinguistics' capability to contribute to other disciplines in the humanities and the social sciences. Mendoza (2007) observed that in an effort to reform the fields of history, psychology, anthropology, and political science beginning in the 1960s and 1970s, interdisciplinary action was carried out to "search for new concepts, categories, instruments, and theoretical frameworks better suited to Philippine cultural and social realities" (p. 163).

In line with this, it should be underscored that ethnolinguistics qualifies to play a role in redescribing, if not entirely reconstructing, various aspects of Filipino identity/ies that the social sciences are concerned with. For instance, it can supply a lens to revisit and reexamine values that are considered central in *Sikolohiyang Pilipino* (SP) (i.e., *kapwa* 'shared identity,' *pakikiramdam* 'shared inner perception,' *kagandahang-loob* 'shared humanity,' and other societal values such as *karangalan* 'dignity,' *katarungan* 'justice,' and *kalayaan* 'freedom') (Pe-Pua & Protacio-Marcelino, 2000)—terms which are arguably only drawn from Tagalog lexicon. Ethnolinguistics can suitably take part in executing an "indigenization from within" which SP's proponents envisioned in order to create a more grounded paradigm. And given that SP recognizes the necessity of drawing input

from ethnolinguistic communities in the country, it is only appropriate to trace evidence from our local languages, which undeniably bear important cultural imprints.

Related indigenization discourses, such as anthropology's *Pilipinolohiya* and history's *Pantayong Pananaw*, also consider the essence of deciphering and grasping codes, concepts, and meanings contained within language/s (Mendoza, 2007). However, more crucial than using a common language for writing and discussions is the examination of the languages themselves: What can we actually find and learn from our languages' respective morphologies, lexicons, and structures that can give insights into cultural dynamics and historical realities? Ethnolinguistics, by complementing other disciplines, serves as a reminder that language, aside from being an instrument, is also a locus from which ideas can be drawn and expounded. Ethnolinguistics, in this sense, can also examine newer linguistic phenomena, including those that reflect conflict, prejudice, or emerging social alignments. This broad view treats language as both a mirror of culture and a lens for understanding change, encouraging critical as well as descriptive engagement with linguistic data.

6 Conclusion

One might wonder about the seemingly slow progression of ethnolinguistics scholarship in the Philippines. Looking at the history of the UP Department of Linguistics, deemed "home to the oldest linguistics program in the country" (UP Department of Linguistics, 2022), it can be discerned that its formative years focused on synchronic

and diachronic linguistics, apart from the need to establish itself and identify its goals. Through time, the eventual specialization of faculty members and the gradual cultivation of the students' interest paved the way for the field's long-awaited expansion. And by capitalizing on the accessibility of works that expose the intertwining of language and culture, ethnolinguistics can even draw the attention of more Filipinos to the relevance of linguistics as a field of study.

This brings us full circle to Malicsi's (1978) ethnolinguistic concerns in the Philippines. His call to expand the scope of ethnolinguistics beyond narrow descriptive confines was, in hindsight, not only prescient but profoundly urgent. He envisioned a field that was at once attentive to grammar, semantics, and place names, but also equally concerned with the lived realities embedded in them. The subsequent decades of research confirm his foresight: Ethnolinguistics has illuminated the Filipino lifeworld in its breadth—from self and kinship, to justice and spirituality, to environment and cosmology. The challenge before us now is to heed Malicsi's enduring concern: that ethnolinguistics must matter not only for academia but also for the communities it studies. Only then can the field fulfill its deepest purpose of helping us understand ourselves as a people and ensuring that our many languages continue to speak meaning into the future.

A final note. Those who will venture into this exploit must always be reminded of Malicsi's long-standing invitation and challenge: "...the field of ethnolinguistics awaits the work and dedication of more Filipinos, particularly those who will see to it that their findings get circulated for the examination and enlightenment of all interested students and scholars" (p. 34).

7 References

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8 Annotated Bibliography

Bacolod, Mary Ann G. (2010). Ang metapora sa wikang Filipino: Isang descriptive na pag-aaral sa metaporang ginagamit sa pang-araw-araw na diskurso. *Philippine Social Sciences Review*, 62(1), 1–33. <https://journals.upd.edu.ph/index.php/pssr/article/view/2033>

Bacolod's (2010) preliminary investigation employs a descriptive linguistic analysis that leads to the categorization of metaphors used in everyday discourses according to semantic aspects, manner of expressing metaphorical meanings, forms, and structures of the use of metaphors in Filipino constructions. Drawing upon insights from language consultants, Bacolod extracts diverse expressions of meaning from commonplace metaphors, encompassing domains such as animal and body metaphors, alongside variances in structural attributes, lexical categories, and linguistic borrowings. Additionally, her paper probes the motivations driving speakers' utilization of metaphors, casting light upon the cognitive processes at play.

Cabazares, Janus Ruel. (2017). *Inserepan te marusen: Using semantic analysis in describing Matigsalug concepts of spirits* [Unpublished master's thesis]. University of the Philippines Diliman.

It is a well-accepted notion that numerous ethnolinguistic groups in the country acknowledge the existence of what could be termed “supernatural entities”

or spiritual beings. This forms the crux of Cabazares' (2017) thesis analyzing the semantics of spirit names in the Matigsalug language. Emphasis lies in dissecting the interplay between nouns and verbs in sentences that delineate the actions and engagements of spirits. He claims that these actions attributed to spiritual entities unveil culture-specific insights about the environment and interactions among entities. Cabazares is principally concerned with two pivotal ideas: (a) identifying patterns of favored and disfavored word combinations, as well as the deployment of verbs as a framework for depicting spirits, unveils distinctive semantic attributes such as their form as entities, their perception, actions, and the domains they are connected to; and (b) sentences containing spirit names depict the interplay between humans and spirits. These spirit names assume participant roles contingent on their semantic attributes and their correlation with environmental and behavioral domains. This study highlights the nexus between semantic analysis and extra-linguistic concepts frequently explored in anthropology, including interpersonal relationships and the environment. Furthermore, it advocates for an ethnolinguistic trajectory that is particularly insightful for language components that are predominantly shaped by their semantic content.

Chan-Yap, Gloria. (1976). The semantics of Tagalog kinship terms of Hokkien Chinese origin. *Philippine Journal of Linguistics*, 7 (1-2), 1-17.
<https://www.pjl-phil.com/article/1976/7/Gloria-Chan-Yap>

Employing componential analysis as the principal analytical method, Chan-Yap's (1976) study unveils the dynamics governing the use of kinship terms referring to elder siblings, such as *kúya*, *âte*, *díko*, *ditsé*, *sangkó*, *sansé*, and *déte*. These findings illuminate the inherent significance of the nuclear family within the Tagalog kinship structure that are of Hokkien Chinese origin. Chan-Yap's study underscores a certain cyclicity enveloping this subset of kinship terms: their presence within the Tagalog kinship lexicon spurred the inclusion of birth order as a dimension within the componential analysis framework. This, in turn, enabled the analysis to uncover the birth order dimension's role in kinship terms. Subsequently, Chan-Yap posits that the incorporation of affinal terms was prompted by their structural role in signifying the inherent relationships. Contrary to the prevailing notion that these terms were adopted due to an assimilative stance towards the Chinese influence, Chan-Yap contends that their incorporation addresses structural gaps within the Tagalog kinship system.

Conklin, Harold C. (1955). Hanunóo color categories. *Southwestern Journal of Anthropology*, 11(4), 339–344. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/3628909>

One of the most influential ethnolinguistic inquiries concerning language, human perception, and environment is Conklin's (1955) research on Hanunóo color categories. His study presents how diverse ethnographic field techniques can be strategically harnessed to explore lexical sets associated with perceptual categorization. Conklin asserts that the capacity of all human populations to distinguish between colors remains consistent across languages under laboratory conditions. However, what differs is how languages categorize the multitude of colors discernible by individuals. This work reveals that Hanunóo color distinctions operate at two levels of contrast: The primary level centers on a coordinated four-way classification forming the color system's core, comprised of *(ma)biru* 'blackness,' *(ma)lagti?* 'whiteness,' *(ma)rara?* 'redness,' and *(ma)latuy* 'greenness.' These colors function as pairs, forming gradients such as dark-light and wet-dry. The second set of categories comes into play when referencing color terms or when more intricate specifications are required, and it includes a range of distinct colors that sometimes overlap. This category comprises relatively specific color words like *(ma)dapug* 'gray,' alongside constructions based on names from the other set or on specific terms but with

additional derivations, such as *mabiru* (*gid*) ‘very black’ and *madilawdilaw* ‘weak yellow.’ Conklin’s comprehensive study showcases the complexities of the Hanunóo color categorization system, which can be distilled to its core colors associated with lightness, darkness, wetness, and dryness. Through intracultural analyses of perception, Conklin notes that individuals accustomed to a different color system might initially encounter confusion due to limited familiarity with the internal structure of foreign systems, thereby affecting the bridge between sensory reception and perceptual categorization.

Cruz, Noah D.U. (2019). *Ang konsepto ng panahon sa wikang Tagalog: Isang leksikal at morpolohikal na pagsusuri* [Unpublished undergraduate research]. Lingg 199 Research Methods in Linguistics, University of the Philippines Diliman.

Cruz’s (2019) effort to map the evolution of the temporal system in Tagalog maximized the available reconstructions by Blust et al. (2023). This research uncovers that the term *panahon*, which pertains to both ‘time’ and ‘weather,’ embodies two distinct notions resulting from a semantic transformation. Cruz points out that celestial bodies and environmental phenomena serve as primary temporal markers in Tagalog, akin to other Philippine ethnolinguistic groups. Additionally, he discerns that external influences and technological

progress have both been instrumental in shaping the temporal system of the Tagalog-speaking population.

Cruz, Noah D.U. (2022). The odor lexica of Philippine languages. *International Christian University Working Papers in Linguistics*, 18, 33–42. <https://icu.repo.nii.ac.jp/records/5243>

Cruz (2022) gives a diachronic analysis of lexical items linked to the sense of smell across 25 Philippine languages. Cruz posits that several instances of semantic shifts have punctuated the evolution of the olfactory lexica across these languages. These shifts, in turn, facilitated a nuanced enrichment of the odor lexica of Philippine languages. Moreover, this study substantiates the proposition that indigenous conceptions of well-being and comfort find profound roots in the very essence of respiration—a phenomenon that resonates at the core of humans’ engagement with their surroundings.

Cunanan, Farah C. (2010). Hindi ka pa huli: An ethnolinguistic approach to Filipino time [Conference proceedings paper]. *The 15th Graduate Student Philippine Studies Forum of Japan*.

Cunanan’s (2010) concise discussion of the prevalent concept of “Filipino time” serves as an example of the numerous efforts aimed at comprehensively elucidating the distinct native temporal systems within the country. In this work, Cunanan challenges the widely held belief that tardiness is an inherent aspect of Filipino behavior. She

suggests that the emphasis on punctuality might not be deeply ingrained in the Filipino mindset. By connecting the sentiments expressed by her informant to Postma's (1985) findings in his study of temporal concepts among the Mangyans of Mindoro, Cunanan highlights the potential association between the concept of "Filipino time" and the agricultural traditions unique to the nation.

Frake, Charles O. (1961). The diagnosis of disease among the Subanun of Mindanao. *American Anthropologist, New Series*, 63(1), 113–132. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/667341?origin=JSTOR-pdf>

Frake (1961) provides an ethnolinguistic analysis of Subanun disease terminology using methods from ethnosemantics to map how illnesses are named, categorized, and diagnosed. Drawing on extensive results from fieldwork, he identifies 186 disease names and demonstrates that diagnosis is a linguistic and social process. He explains that Subanun diagnostic categories are conceptually distinct, mutually exclusive, and widely agreed upon in definition, but disagreements arise in applying them to real cases because symptoms exist on a continuum.

Gallego, Maria Kristina S. (2015). Philippine kinship and social organization from the perspective of historical linguistics. *Philippine Studies: Historical and Ethnographic Viewpoints*, 63(4), 477–506. <https://muse.jhu.edu/article/601705/pdf>

Gallego (2015) paints a thorough picture of Philippine kinship and social organization based on reconstructions of relevant terminologies. This investigation examines reconstructed Proto-Philippine (PPh) kinship terms and the functional determinants that potentially underpinned their evolutionary trajectory. Gallego advances the proposition that the evolution of kinship terms is intrinsically linked to transformations in behavioral dynamics concerning the respective kin. Conversely, a shift in conduct towards one's kin may initiate subsequent evolutionary shifts in kinship terminologies. This phenomenon is aptly illustrated in the transition to Tagalog from PPh, where the alteration in kinship nomenclature parallels the evolution of the daughter society. The transition from a generational to a lineal terminology, where collaterality and affinity criteria hold significance, signifies shifts in the regulations of residence and the ensuing transformation in interactions with affinal and lineal kin.

Gallego, Maria Kristina S. (2018). Directional systems in Philippine languages. *Oceanic Linguistics*, 57 (1), 63–100. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/26779821>

Gallego (2018) delivers an exhaustive analysis of how various ethnolinguistic groups navigate their surroundings in the Philippines. She focused primarily on the directional terms employed across 54 Philippine languages, a realm characterized by marked diversity that precludes the construction of a uniform directional system for the entire nation. Gallego identifies four prevailing spheres of reference through which directions are encoded: the trajectory of the sun, the demarcation between land and sea, the intricacies of wind and monsoon patterns, and location-based systems. These linguistic markers reveal profound insights into the maritime lifestyles and practices inherent to the speech communities found across the Philippines and the broader Austronesian context. Further, Gallego discerns intriguing implicational relationships within the lexical encoding of directions. Specifically, a proclivity emerges for the east-west axis to be prioritized over the north-south axis. This preference can be attributed to the inherent significance of the former within the context of the sun's movement, an overarching determinant across speech communities.

Hernandez, Jesus Federico C. (2016). Descent to the *sariling mundo*: Discovering the complexities of the language of mental illness and healing in Tagalog. In Eufracio C. Abaya (Ed.), *Tagalog notions of mental illness and healing* (pp. 145–158). Philippine Psychiatric Association.

J. F. C. Hernandez (2016) probes the language associated with mental health and illness in Tagalog. He identifies terms and expressions pivotal for comprehending how the Tagalog-speaking population perceives both the world and their *sariling mundo* ‘own world’ within the context of mental health and illness discourse. He asserts that these linguistic traits bear significance in shaping the behaviors of those who seek and provide assistance to individuals grappling with mental health challenges, including their close companions and caregivers. Furthermore, Hernandez posits that the intricate lexicon within the Tagalog narrative of mental health and illness enriches the broader dialogue surrounding global discussions on these matters. This paper demonstrates that an exploration into the language of mental health and illness unveils more than a mere compilation of lexical elements characterizing degrees of perceived sanity. By unraveling various dimensions, the study uncovers the intricate interplay connecting illness to the self, as well as to the physical, mental, societal, and spiritual states, experiences, beliefs, and exchanges.

Hernandez, Jesus Federico C. (2022). Atay, the heart of the matter. In Wystan de la Peña (Ed.), *The legacy of Consuelo J. Paz: A festschrift* (pp. 109–126). UP Center for International Studies.

J. F. C. Hernandez (2022) builds on Paz's (2008a) work and extends the diachronic analyses of the provenance and expansions of the terms related to *atay* 'liver.' Hernandez furnishes a succinct overview of existing research endeavors that have investigated the role of *atay* as an emotional wellspring. He duly acknowledges the contributions of Mojares (1997) and Arriola (1993) on this theme. This ultimately demonstrates how ethnolinguistic study of a single term can illuminate wider intersections of language, body, and culture, making *atay* emblematic of how Filipinos conceptualize their seat of emotions.

Hernandez, Viveca V., & Zayas, Cynthia N. (2022). Tamaan ka ng kidlat – tsibi, parusa ng Ayta. In Wystan de la Peña (Ed.), *The legacy of Consuelo J. Paz: A festschrift* (pp. 127–138). UP Center for International Studies.

V. V. Hernandez and Zayas (2022) shed light on how the Ayta community residing around Mount Pinatubo perceives lightning and being struck by it as the gravest form of retribution for transgressing their cultural taboos. Their research delineates a roster of these proscribed behaviors, which must be strictly avoided to avert falling victim to a lightning strike. Such taboos encompass

donning red attire paired with copper or gold ornaments and golden teeth and combining specific food items, such as mushrooms and jackfruit, shrimp and red chili, or pumpkin and chicken, in culinary preparations. Hernandez and Zayas stress that for the Aytas, this belief transcends mere tradition—it represents a cherished heritage passed down from their ancestors.

Idio, Czarmaine Dorothy H. (2019). *Understanding paa in Tagalog* [Unpublished undergraduate research], Lingg 199 Research Methods in Linguistics, University of the Philippines Diliman.

Idio's (2019) work, grounded in Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT), offers an in-depth analysis of the Tagalog concept *paa* 'foot' and demonstrates how its meaning extends significantly beyond a literal body part. Drawing on textual data from Jose Villa Panganiban's *Diksyunaryo-Tesaurus: Pilipino-Ingles* (1972) and various Tagalog literary works, Idio argues that *paa* also functions as a conceptual metaphor reflecting an individual's state and progress in life. Specifically, the concept is strongly associated with mobility, movement, and the navigation of different life pathways, suggesting that the concept of *paa* provides a framework for understanding personal trajectory and advancement.

Jamindang, Mary Dianne O. (2022). Sakit: A preliminary linguistic analysis of Tagalog pain concept and language. *UP Working Papers in Linguistics*, 1(1), 64–105. <https://linguistics.upd.edu.ph/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/12-Sakit-A-Preliminary-Linguistic-Analysis-of-Tagalog-Pain-Concept-and-Language.pdf>

Jamindang (2022) conducts a study that centers on the topic of *sakit*. What sets her investigation apart from other related studies is its dual focus on semantic and syntactic analysis. Jamindang observes that in Tagalog, *sakit* encompasses a diverse range of experiences that vary based on sensations, location, and causes. She further posits that *sakit* primarily emanates from external factors such as accidents, commonplace objects, and illnesses, as well as internal factors rooted within the body's confines. In the context of sentence-level analysis, the study contends that Tagalog predominantly conceptualizes pain as a process, with secondary aspects attributing it as a quality and entity. This contrasts with English, Greek, and Thai constructions. Additionally, gleaned from the sentence-level analysis, Jamindang's conclusions are as follows: (a) *sakit* as a process delineates active and passive pain experiences along with participants; (b) *sakit* as a quality assumes the role of a bodily attribute and an attribute intrinsic to the pain experience itself; and (c) *sakit* as an entity unveils pain's versatility, serving as an undesired possession, an agent causing pain, a modifier of nouns, and even a subject within sentences. Transitioning

to the interpretation of metaphors, the research identifies pain as an unseen or identified force that intrudes upon the body and also as a persona or entity originating from the sufferer's surroundings.

Klimenko, Sergey B. (2010). *Speaking about humans in animal terms: Animal metaphors in Tagalog* [Unpublished term paper]. Lingg 270 Ethnolinguistics, University of the Philippines Diliman.

Klimenko (2010) utilizes both Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT) and the Conventional Figurative Language Theory (CFLT) to identify cultural values embedded in Tagalog animal metaphors. These metaphors primarily relate to human traits, covering physical, mental, and moral characteristics.

Lee, Aldrin P. (2019). Understanding disaster terms in a Pacific rim country: The case of the Philippines. *Journal of Global and Area Studies*, 3, 25–41. <https://www.dbpia.co.kr/Journal/articleDetail?nodeId=NODE10752177>

Readers of Lee (2019) are provided with an exploration of the importance of linguistics, particularly the practice of language documentation, within the domain of disaster risk reduction and management. He explains the utilization of linguistic metaphors to lexicalize terms related to disasters in select Philippine languages—an endeavor all the more pertinent given the country's positioning in the Pacific Rim. He contends that the

process of metaphorizing disaster terms is instrumental in establishing mental frameworks that enable language users to conceptualize and respond to distinct types of calamities appropriately. Furthermore, Lee maintains that the act of metaphorization is indispensable for characterizing infrequent disaster types (e.g., storm surges) and encapsulating the populace's comprehension of such phenomena. Through this paper, Lee aspires to contribute to the literature on the crucial role of language documentation in comprehending human behavior during disasters, formulating effective policies to mitigate their impact, and fostering resilience within local communities across the Philippines and beyond.

Luquin, Elisabeth. (2006). 'To be in relation: Ancestors' or the polysemy of the Minangyan (Hanunoo) term 'āpu. *Philippine Journal of Linguistics*, 37(1), 87–94. <https://www.pssc.org.ph/wp-content/pssc-archives/Philippine%20Journal%20of%20Linguistics/2006/JUNE%202006,%20VOL%2037%20No%201.pdf>

Luquin (2006) combines the use of linguistic analysis and ethnographic observations in understanding the polysemy of the Hanunóo term 'āpu. In an attempt to challenge the common yet insufficient translations of anthropologists of 'āpu as 'owner,' 'master,' 'spirit possessor,' or 'leader,' Luquin uses ethnographic insights to reveal how 'āpu is used and understood within the Mangyan Patag's cultural context. Similarly, linguistic

analysis is also employed to dissect the different grammatical forms and derivations of *'āpu* and reveal its relational nature. The utilization of both ethnographic and linguistic methods as primary analytical approaches facilitates Luquin's discovery that *'āpu* implies an asymmetrical relationship where one element has a higher position than the other, and that the term carries a complex interplay of meanings, encompassing relations, ancestors, and a sense of completeness in the Mangyan Patag community.

Lynch, Frank, & Himes, Ronald S. (1982). Cognitive mapping in the Tagalog area. In Walden F. Bello & Maria Clara Roldan (Eds.), *Modernization: Its impact in the Philippine* (pp. 9–52). Institute of Philippine Culture, Ateneo de Manila University.

Lynch and Himes' (1982) cognitive mapping in the Tagalog area is an ethnolinguistic investigation of how Tagalog speakers in and around Greater Manila conceptualize several domains of reality (kinship, disease, ownership, causality). It is part of a broader modernization project and aims particularly to bridge communication gaps between “modernized” and more traditional or rural populations with language and the understanding of its nuances as its entry point.

Malicsi, Jonathan C. (1980). Ingkatao: The Sambal Ayta concept of self. In Leonardo N. Mercado (Ed.), *Filipino thought on man and society* (pp. 26–41). Divine Word University Publications.

Malicsi (1980) emphasizes descriptive linguistic analysis centered on the Sambal Ayta concept of personality captured in their use of the term *ingkatao*. Other aspects of the concept of personality were also examined by exploring the meanings and cultural implications of the Sambal Ayta words *kalayawán* ‘aptitude in the sense of talent, developed or acquired abilities,’ *kanakéman* ‘inner self,’ *tanám* ‘emotion,’ *kalabayán* ‘desire,’ *ugáliq* ‘habitual action,’ and *pamagaláq* ‘values.’ Through his examination, Malicsi is able to demonstrate the overwhelming amount of information that can be gathered from the lexicon of a language.

Malicsi, Jonathan C. (1982). On the Sambal Ayta concept of beauty. *Philippine Journal of Linguistics*, 3(1), 1–8. <https://www.pjl-phil.com/article/1982/13/Jonathan-Malicsi>

Malicsi’s (1982) analysis of the lexicon pertaining to beauty reveals that the Sambal Aytas predominantly center their expressions around the human body. He shows that their concept of beauty hinges on the human form, where notions of balance, symmetry, and regularity form the bedrock of their overarching concept of aesthetic harmony. In this context, the concept of elaboration as an additional requirement for beauty unfolds, driven

by the intention to contrast one's enhanced beauty with the norm. Malicsi's findings indicate that the Sambal Aytas readily accept enhancements through ornamentation, provided they remain within the bounds of practicality and align with a pragmatic rationale. From this foundation, Malicsi deduces that beauty for the Sambal Aytas essentially emanates from well-formedness, given its ability to evoke attraction, an affirmative behavioral response. Consequently, an objective is never approached impartially; rather, a comprehensive aesthetic assessment entails the observer's close proximity to the object under scrutiny. Furthermore, Malicsi expounds that the Sambal Aytas' inclination towards functional form—contrasting with a mere appreciation of art for art's sake—stems from their beauty criteria, which continue to acknowledge the utilitarian worth of the object and the subsequent psychophysiological reaction it evokes.

Malicsi, Jonathan C. (1990). A search for semantic primitives. In *Proceedings of the 5th Philippine Linguistics Congress*. University of the Philippines. <https://linguistics.upd.edu.ph/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/5PLC-Proceedings.pdf>

An innovation in ethnolinguistic research was presented by Malicsi (1990) in his work on semantic primitives which highlights the semantic intricacies of verbs and verbals and their relation to the body. Intending to discover a method for semantic analysis that could be used in testing

for equivalences among Philippine languages, and between Philippine and foreign languages, Malicsi analyzes 459 Sambal Ayta lexical stems cross-referred to their Tagalog and English equivalents, denoting actions specific to the body. Such analysis frames Malicsi's study of the semantic features of verbs that pertain to actions specific to certain parts of the body as agent or actor, by way of going deeper than allowed by descriptive semantics into the concept of body action.

Manahan, Michael S. (2022). *Sakit unpacked* [Unpublished term paper]. Lingg 270 Ethnolinguistics, University of the Philippines Diliman.

Utilizing the Natural Semantic Metalanguage (NSM) approach, Manahan (2022) unpacks the concept of *sakit* 'pain' in the Filipino language. Through this study, he endeavors to demonstrate how the notion of pain in Filipino extends beyond what is physical, as it is said to encompass both physical and emotional pain. Drawing upon the NSM explications of *sakit* and its associated terms, *hapdi* and *kirot*, Manahan deduces two distinct sources of physical bodily pain. *Hapdi* is construed as stemming primarily from external factors, whereas *kirot* originates from internal factors. Within the domain of emotional pain, an examination of the usages of the three terms—*sakit*, *hapdi*, and *kirot*—reveals that the concept of pain is readily employed to encapsulate instances

characterized by sentiments of sadness, loss, and/or depression.

Moriguchi, Tsunekazu. (2005). Lexical variations in the Batanic language group: Male and female urination. In Hsiu-Chan S. Liao & Carl R. G. Rubino (Eds.), *Current issues in Philippine linguistics and anthropology: Parangal kay Lawrence A. Reid* (pp. 248–260). Linguistic Society of the Philippines; SIL Philippines.

Moriguchi (2005) examines the rationale behind the utilization of distinct terms for urination within the Batanic language group: *opis* ‘female urination’ and *peteg* or *otod* ‘male urination.’ This linguistic phenomenon can be traced back to the existence of a land register and a fishermen’s register among the older Ivatan people. Remarkably, the fishermen’s register possesses a unique characteristic: a penchant for veiling their intentions by employing metaphors or the reverse/opposite as a form of encoding. Moriguchi reports that this precaution is driven by superstition, as the Ivatan believe that sea spirits could inflict harm upon them if they were privy to their thoughts and conversations. Euphemistically, urination is alluded to through reference to nearby body parts: *peteg* ‘navel’ or *otod* ‘knee.’ Based on Moriguchi’s analysis, the distinction between these two registers became less distinct over time, leading to the perpetuation of *peteg* or *otod* to denote male urination due to the prevalence of male fishermen. Meanwhile, the term for urination

in the land register became exclusive to female usage. In response to the loss of vocabulary pertaining to the navel and knee, the words *pusod* and *tohod* are assimilated from southern language groups, likely facilitated by increased tourism and intercultural interactions. The Ivatans' case illustrates a prime example of culture exerting its influence on language, with speakers deliberately adjusting language usage based on specific contexts and locales.

Pasion, Daryl. (2018). *Ang bumaruon ng mga Ilubu: Isang etnolinggwistikong pag-aaral* [Unpublished master's thesis]. University of the Philippines Diliman.

Pasion (2018) delves into a distinct facet of an ethnolinguistic group's culture—their justice system. This ethnolinguistic inquiry attempts to elucidate the essence of justice as understood by the Ilubu, an indigenous subgroup of the Ikalingas, through a comprehensive exploration of the semantics underpinning this concept. The study unveils that the Ilubu understanding of justice finds expression through *bumaruon*, a term derived from *baru*, signifying 'beauty.' The investigation firmly establishes that the heart of the concept revolves around humanity, capturing the inherent elegance of one's character and the interrelations among individuals. Pasion's findings underscore that when conflicts arise, the central objective of the Ilubu is to restore the harmonious bonds between the disputing parties.

Paz, Consuelo J. (2008a). Bukal ng emosyon. In Consuelo J. Paz (Ed.), *Ginhawa, kapalaran, dalamhati: Essays on well being, opportunity/destiny, and anguish* (pp. 147–153). University of the Philippines Press.

Paz (2008a) employs both the comparative method and diachronic reconstruction in her examination of the proto-forms related to *dalamhati*. She investigates the concepts of destiny, fate, and opportunity—encapsulated by the term *kapalaran*—within Philippine ethnolinguistic communities. Using a cognate-based analytical framework, the analysis looks at the nuances of the word *kapalaran* and those of the equivalences in the lexicon of different ethnolinguistic groups.

Paz, Consuelo J. (2008b). *Ginhawa: Well-being as expressed in Philippine languages*. In Consuelo J. Paz (Ed.), *Ginhawa, kapalaran, dalamhati: Essays on well being, opportunity/destiny, and anguish* (pp. 3–12). University of the Philippines Press.

Paz's (2008b) study on *ginhawa* offers a fresh take on the concept of well-being among ethnolinguistic groups in the country. By tracing the origin and the development of the term *ginhawa* and its cognates across different Philippine languages, Paz uncovers a nuanced understanding of well-being that transcends mere material prosperity. The study reveals that well-being for some Philippine ethnolinguistic groups is attained through the realization of one's aspirations, the intercession

of spiritual entities, and the cultivation of active and harmonious social interactions. Such a state of well-being is maintained and heavily influenced by what is happening in the environment.

Paz, Consuelo J. (2008c). Sino ang me'y pasya. In Consuelo J. Paz (Ed.), *Ginhawa, kapalaran, dalamhati: Essays on well being, opportunity/destiny, and anguish* (pp. 87–98). University of the Philippines Press.

Paz (2008c) interrogates the concepts of opportunity, destiny, and fate within Philippine ethnolinguistic communities. Employing a different approach, she highlights the divergent perspectives of various communities in contrast to Western ideologies. Paz's work unveils that fate is perceived by ethnolinguistic groups as a realm subject to human control. Evident in the etymology of *kapalaran*, a word derived from the root word *palad* 'palm,' the concept is seen as influenced by one's diligence, determination, and capabilities.

Petras, Jayson D. (2013). Ang pagsasakatutubo mula sa loob/kultural na pagpapatibay ng mga salitang pandamdaming tumutukoy sa “sayá”: Isang semantikal na elaborasyon ng wikang Filipino sa larangan ng sikolohiya. *Humanities Diliman*, 10(2), 56–84. <https://journals.upd.edu.ph/index.php/humanitiesdiliman/article/view/4169>

Petras (2013) undertakes an examination of the congruences and divergences within Filipino vocabulary related to happiness using the Natural Semantic Metalanguage (NSM) approach. Specifically, Petras investigates the nuances of the following cluster of Filipino terms: *aliw*, *galák*, *ligáya*, *lugód*, *luwalhati*, *sayá*, *siyá*, *tuwâ*, and *wili*.

Postma, Antoon. (1985). The concept of time among the Mangyans. *Asian Folklore Studies*, 44, 231–240. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1178509>

Postma (1985) scrutinizes the Mangyan names for celestial bodies, seasons, time-related activities, time-telling, and other linguistic expressions to describe notions of temporal understanding. By extension, he examines the Mangyan’s ability to gauge time based on celestial and natural cues and on weather changes, and the use of such indicators to direct important agricultural activities, like sowing and harvesting. This study provides a model for the process of unpacking rich cultural concepts encoded in the vocabulary of a language.

Pototanon, Ruchie Mark D. (2020). Reimagining panahon: Exploring the nexus of time and weather in Philippine languages. *The Archive*, 1(1-2), 75–112. <https://www.journals.upd.edu.ph/index.php/archive/article/view/8484>

The concept of *panahon* comes under renewed scrutiny in Pototanon's (2020) study, which looks into the complex interplay of time and weather in Philippine languages. Pototanon seeks to broaden the discourse surrounding *panahon* by drawing from a corpus of data collected from 12 Philippine languages. Complementing this empirical data are lexical entries extracted from historical word lists and dictionaries, encompassing terminologies associated with both weather phenomena and temporal constructs in the Philippine context. The study also integrates existing reconstructions of proto-morphemes at various levels (i.e., PAn, PMP, and PPh). Through thoughtful contrasts and insightful comparisons, this inquiry aims to further reconstruct the nuanced experiences of subgroups, particularly those related to underrepresented weather phenomena. A thorough analysis of lexical items underscores the transcendent nature of the “metonymy of *panahon*” in relation to human activities and the inherent “relativity of time,” extending its influence beyond the confines of the Tagalog ethnolinguistic subgroup. Additionally, this study contends that instances of lexical borrowing, innovative linguistic developments, and shifts in semantic connotations not only illuminate

the interconnection of time and weather but also expose diverse experiences across various ethnolinguistic groups throughout the Philippines. Pototanon ultimately highlights the distinctive nature of Philippine indigenous knowledge systems, wherein time and weather are not only interconnected but are seamlessly integrated into a unified domain.

Reid, Lawrence A. (1994). Terms for rice agriculture and terrace building in some Cordilleran languages of the Philippines. In Andrew Pawley & Malcom Ross (Eds.), *Austronesian terminologies: Continuity and change* (pp. 363–388). The Australian National University.

Reid (1994) examines a reconstructable set of terms for wet rice agriculture across Central Cordilleran languages, showing that speakers of Proto Cordilleran not only knew rice but harvested, stored, pounded, and cooked it. He notes that while rice appears to have been a primary staple for a considerable period, the absence of a single term for cooked rice in Proto Cordilleran may indicate that taro and millet were once equally or more significant. His analysis provides strong linguistic evidence that pondfield construction predates the split of Proto Nuclear Cordilleran whose speakers mastered stone-walled pondfield terrace construction in a mountainous environment and irrigation technology. While it is not certain whether all early terraces were used for rice, reconstructed terms for rice plant, rice seed, and

rice seedling point to pondfield rice agriculture though some terraces may have supported taro, consistent with ethnohistorical data.

Talavera, Ma. Jezia. (2014). *Tears of the soul: A reconstruction of proto-Philippine forms on death and afterlife* [Unpublished undergraduate research], Lingg 199 Research Methods in Linguistics, University of the Philippines Diliman.

Talavera's (2014) work centers on the cultural aspects of death and the afterlife in Philippine languages. Employing methods from historical linguistics, the study offers a tentative reconstruction of protoforms associated with these concepts found in ten Philippine languages. Talavera's study treats the reconstructed protoforms proposed by Charles (1974) and Paz (1981) as foundational references. The noteworthy abundance of linguistic reconstructions related to the themes of death and the afterlife not only highlights the cultural significance embedded within the Philippine ethnolinguistic groups but also spotlights the cultural affinities and cohesiveness shared by these groups, a cohesion that reflects their underlying unique identity, despite their marked diversity.

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