

Title	Expanding Philippine Language Education through Offering Ilokano as a Foreign Language Elective
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Citation	外国語教育のフロンティア. 2023, 6, p. 145-158
Version Type	VoR
URL	<a href="https://doi.org/10.18910/91035">https://doi.org/10.18910/91035</a>
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Osaka University

## Expanding Philippine Language Education through Offering Ilokano as a Foreign Language Elective

### 選択外国語科目としてのイロカノ語の提供を通じた フィリピン語教育の拡大

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#### Abstract

Starting from April 2022, an Ilokano language elective began to be offered in Osaka University. This paper is a report on this Ilokano class, フィリピン語 Va (Filipino Va), and focuses on description and evaluation of class activities and challenges faced. The class is open to undergraduate students. There was a total of six third year students from the undergraduate Filipino program. The students enrolled are multiple language learners of Filipino, English, and other foreign languages. Disadvantages on simultaneous learning of two foreign languages have been observed. The students in this Ilokano class often mix Ilokano and Filipino words. However, the students seem to show confidence in constructing sentences using various patterns that have not yet been discussed in class. In addition, examination of dialogue construction and final drama presentation showed that the students who had prior experience learning Filipino were creative in making dialogues and created original plots and sentences. This is attributed to their awareness of the similarities in linguistic features of Ilokano and Filipino.

#### 要約

2022年4月から、大阪大学外国語学部ではフィリピン諸言語のひとつであるイロカノ語の選択科目が開講された。本稿は、このイロカノ語授業における授業内活動の概説とそれに対する評価基準について報告するものである。この授業は学部生を対象としており、履修者はフィリピン語専攻所属の学部3年生6名であった。これらの履修者は、フィリピン語、英語、その他の外国語の多言語学習者である。2つの外国語の同時学習については、デメリットも報告されている。このイロカノ語クラスでも、イロカノ語とフィリピン語の単語使用が混在している例が散見された。一方で、既習のタガログ語知識の応用が、授業内で未履修のパターンを用いたイロカノ語作文に活かされているケースも観察された。また、最終課題としての言語劇への取り組みや台詞の組み立てを調べたところ、フィリピン語の学習経験がある学生は、台詞の作り方に工夫を凝らし、オリジナルのプロットや文章を作り上げていることが明らかとなった。これは、イロカノ語とフィリピン語の言語的特徴の類似性を意識していることに起因するものとして評価された。

**Keywords:** Ilokano, Filipino, simultaneous learning of languages, Philippine languages

キーワード：イロカノ語、フィリピン語、同時学習、フィリピン諸言語

## 1. Introduction

Article XIV Section 6 of the 1987 Republic of the Philippines Constitution establishes Filipino as the national language of the country. The Filipino language is developed and enriched through existing Philippine and other languages. Filipino is based on Tagalog, the native language of Manila and its surrounding provinces (Reid 2005). In the Philippines, the month of August is designated as “Buwan ng Wika” or National Language Month. It is an annual celebration that was signed by former President Fidel V. Ramos on February 15, 1997, under Presidential Proclamation No. 1041, Series of 1997. The theme for 2022 was “Filipino at mga Katutubong Wika: Kasangkapan sa Pagtuklas at Paglikha.” (Filipino and other Philippine Languages: Instruments for Discovery and Creation). In 2022, the Philippines did not only celebrate Filipino, the country’s national language, but also other Philippine languages.

According to the Summer Institute of Linguistics, there are about 186 Philippine languages (Eberhard, Simons, and Fennig 2022)<sup>1)</sup>. One of the major languages in the Philippines is Ilokano. Ilokano is the third most spoken language in the Philippines and is the lingua franca of Northern Philippines. It is a Western Austronesian language related to other Filipino languages, Malayo-Polynesian, Taiwanese indigenous languages, and Malagasy. There are more than 7.7 million native speakers in the Philippines alone (Apostol and Malicdem 2019). Areas defined to be populated by Ilokano speakers during the time of Spanish contact were the provinces of Ilocos Sur, Ilocos Norte, Abra, and La Union. At present, Ilokano predominate many areas in Northern Philippines, such as the Cagayan Valley Region and Cordillera Administrative Region. Ilokano also have a significant population in Mindoro and the southernmost island of the country, Mindanao (Rubino 2000). The Ilokano people are said to be the most migratory of all Philippine ethnolinguistic groups not only within the Philippines but also internationally (Nagasaka 1999). Ilokano is spoken in migrant communities in many parts of the world especially in Hawai'i, USA. In a 2016 Statistical Report by the State of Hawai'i, the top languages spoken at home other than English in the state are Tagalog (58,345 speakers), Ilokano (54,005 speakers) and Japanese (45,633 speakers).

Recently in Japan, Osaka University and Tokyo University of Foreign Studies (TUFS) offer Ilokano language electives. Ilokano was taught in TUFS from 2018 to 2020. Starting from April 2022, an Ilokano language elective is offered in Osaka University for undergraduates and graduate students. The undergraduate Ilokano class comes with the course code フィリピン語 Va (Filipino Va). This paper is a report on the undergraduate Ilokano class in Osaka University and focuses on description and evaluation of class activities and challenges faced.

This paper is composed of five parts. The introduction provides basic information about Filipino and other Philippine languages, specifically Ilokano. The second part describes the Ilokano class. The third section cites previous studies conducted about learning two languages at the same time and provides case examples on the impact of learning different languages

simultaneously. The findings of these studies are considered in the observations and post-semester evaluation of the Osaka University Ilokano class and to initiate interest to conduct further research about learning two Philippine languages at the same time. The fourth section describes the activities that were conducted in the class. The last part contains the discussion and evaluation of the class activities.

## 2. Description of the Class

Osaka University (under the former Osaka University of Foreign Studies) started offering courses related to the Philippines in 1984. Currently, it is one of the only two universities in Japan that offer an undergraduate degree in Filipino<sup>2)</sup>. Starting from Spring-Summer 2022 semester, an Ilokano language class was offered. The class is for undergraduate students and is officially registered under the course codes フィリピン語 Va (Filipino Va, offered during the Spring-Summer term) and フィリピン語 Vb (Filipino Vb, offered during the Fall-Winter term) and carries the title Philippine Languages: Elementary Ilokano. The subject is taught in English. The class meets 15 times during the term. The lessons are held once a week and lasts 90 minutes. The instructor and students meet physically in a set time and classroom in Minoh Campus. The フィリピン語 Va (Filipino Va) class plan for the Spring-Summer 2022 term is as follows:

Table 1. フィリピン語 Va (Filipino Va) Class Plan

Week 1	Class Orientation (The Ilocos Region. Ilokanos in Philippine History. Ilokano Society and Culture. Places of Interest. Greetings and Self-introduction)
Week 2	Introducing Myself (Ilokano pronunciation. Daily expressions.)
Week 3	Introducing My Family (Introducing your family. Kinship Terminology. How to count.)
Week 4	Quiz and Class Activity 1 (Review of Units 2 and 3 (Introducing myself and my family))
Week 5	My Favorite Things (Expressing likes and dislikes. Expressing your favorite food, sports, music, etc.)
Week 6	Quiz and Class Activity 2 (Review of Unit 4 (My Favorite Things))
Week 7	My Everyday Life 1 (Talking about your daily life. Daily meals. Destination. Indicating time. Indicating means/method.)
Week 8	My Everyday Life 2 (Verbs for daily activities. Places. Daily activities/events. Means of transportation.)
Week 9	Quiz and Class Activity 3 (Review of My Everyday Life (Unit 5))
Week 10	Present and Past Activities (Talking about how you spend or spent your weekend. Adjectives.)
Week 11	Future Activities (Talking about going out with your friends, family, etc.)
Week 12	Invitations and Offers (Offering something to someone. Inviting someone to do something. Offering someone to do something together. Inviting someone to do something immediately. Offering someone to do something for them.)
Week 13	Brainstorming and Practice for Final Presentation
Week 14	Final Presentations
Week 15	Final Evaluation

During the Spring-Summer 2022 semester, there were six students who enrolled in フィリピン語 Va (Filipino Va). All are third year undergraduate students from the Filipino program. Filipino majors should pass the Filipino language classes in their first and second year as well as pass a semestral ender language assessment exam in their first and second years to be able to continue to the second and third year, respectively. Students who are in the Filipino Program are required to take the class as an elective course.

According to the syllabus, the course objective is for the students to learn basic grammar rules so that they can communicate in Ilokano. The specific goals of the class are that after the course: (1) The students will be able to start the formation of correct Ilokano pronunciation; (2) The students will be able to use everyday expressions; and (3) The students will be able to grasp basic grammatical patterns to enable them to express themselves. The students will understand how to use basic grammar rules and their construction through pronunciation practices, pattern practices, paired work, and various class activities. Students will also be introduced to Ilokano culture and society (ex. food, music, rituals, places of interest) while learning a new language.

The main references are Ilokano Lessons by Emma Bernabe, Virginia Lapid, and Bonifacio Sibayan, Ilokano Dictionary by Ernesto Constantino, and Ilokano Book 1 by the Christian Language Study Center (CLSC) Staff. Ilokano Lessons and Ilokano Dictionary are published by the University of Hawai'i and are available for download online through the University of Hawai'i Press Open Access webpage. The CLSC Ilokano Book 1 is a personal copy of one of the professors in the program. There is no required textbook for the class.

### **3. Simultaneous Learning of Two Foreign Languages**

There are advantages and disadvantages of learning two languages together. Vera Tauchmanova (2016) states that foreign languages learners often make mistakes in applying linguistic features from one language to another. In a study conducted about mutual similarity between Japanese and Chinese for simultaneous learning, Obataya (2018) reveals that one of the difficulties for students in learning these two languages at the same time is the complexity of Chinese ideograms used both in Japanese and Chinese. The differences in the method of simplification in the Chinese ideograms in Japanese and Chinese is said to disturb the learning of ideograms and add to the confusion of simultaneous learners, specifically those who are complete beginners. The study concludes that graphic resemblance of Chinese ideograms between Japanese and Chinese reduces the fear of interference by students of learning these two East Asian languages at the same time.

Another positive outcome of simultaneous learning of two languages is reported by Rahmatian and Farshadjou (2013). In “Simultaneous Learning of Two Foreign Languages, English and French, by Adult Persian-Speaking Learners,” Rahmatian and Farshadjou cites the need for individuals to be experts in more than two foreign languages in the modern world

as context to language learning by Iranians. In addition, they reveal that the foreign languages which could be of any benefit to students are neither similar to Persian nor have any use in daily life. Given this condition, the researchers intend to promote linguistic ability by improving the methods of simultaneous teaching of two foreign languages in Iran. They compared three different groups of learners: a) students who are taking up both French and English in the beginner level, b) students who are taking up both French and English in the intermediate level, and c) students who are only learning either French or English. Their study found out that simultaneous learning is not an impeding factor but reinforces learning of French and English.

Ruby Punt (2021) of the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) University of London shares her experiences on learning Korean and Mandarin. She says that learning two languages simultaneously can be advantageous if a person would like to gain proficiency in multiple languages over the course of a few years. Also, learning two languages at the same time can also help an individual be aware of the similarities between languages and cultures. Linguistic similarities in Korean and Mandarin makes it easier for her to remember translations of words. Punt admits that while multi-language learning can be an exciting challenge, there are downsides to learning two languages at the same time. These are mixing of words and less time to focus on the individual languages.

While mother tongue as the medium of instruction<sup>3)</sup> in the Philippines has garnered some interest among scholars to conduct research on this matter after its implementation, literature on simultaneous learning of two or more Philippine languages are lacking.

#### **4. Class Activities**

During the class orientation, the フィリピン語 Va (Filipino Va) students were provided with an overview of the course. The final project was explained, which is to present an original drama in class using the grammar points that will be tackled in the semester. The students were given basic information about the Philippines' Ilocos Region, Ilokano in Philippine history, Ilokano society and culture, and places of interest. After these, information on Ilokano language was provided and the students were taught basic self-introduction and greetings. The parts that comprise sentences and the grammar structure of how the phrases were formed were not yet tackled in the initial class meeting. Rather, the students were directed to change underlined words in the phrases listed in their handouts to suit their own during their self-introduction.

The typical flow of the lesson started with class greetings and roll call, this was followed by a recap of the previous lesson. Then, new words that are related to the specific topic of the week were given to build and develop the student's vocabulary. The correct pronunciation of the words was practiced through pronunciation drills. Afterwards, new grammar points were discussed. Finally, individual and/or group in-class exercises were conducted to evaluate the student's understanding of the lesson. Homework was assigned as necessary for retention of

what was learned during class. Quizzes were also given after two to three meetings. During the start of the class and during in-class exercises, drills were utilized. The students were made to practice saying vocabulary, grammar conjugations, sounds or phrases multiple times throughout the class.

#### **4.1. Additional Reference Materials and Handouts**

Aside from the main references, Ilokano Lessons by Bernabe, et. al., Ilokano Dictionary by Constantino, and Ilokano Book 1 by the CLSC, additional materials were used in class and distributed to the students. These are audio visual materials, tourism-related promotional guidebook, summary of the main classes of Ilokano words by Precy Espiritu, colored picture book, and handouts.

##### **4.1.1. Audio Visual Materials**

The use of audio-visual aids in language education is widely practiced. Playing audio-visuals in class is said to foster interest and motivation in learning a language (Liu 2019, Kondo 2007). There were three videos that were shown in class. In the first half of the semester, I played “Diak maawatan” (“I don’t understand”) (Globe Telecom 2003), a TV commercial about a young man who gets lost in an Ilokano-speaking village and “Lolita is IN,” an Ilocos Norte travel promotional video (Ilocos Norte Tourism 2022). In the last half of the semester, an Ilokano-dubbed satire of a small segment of a Disney cartoon (@kadamavlogs 2020) was shown. The objectives for showing the first two videos were to make the learners attuned to the sound of Ilokano phrases, to aid in the familiarization in speech sounds, and to show places in Ilocos Norte and its environs. The longer Ilokano-dubbed cartoon was showed to the students towards the end of the class after the learners were evaluated to have a grasp of the basic grammar structure, common phrases, and words. The stories in the videos were used to test listening comprehension. Before watching the “Lolita is IN” video, the students were given questions of which they should answer through writing grammatically correct sentences.

##### **4.1.2. Philippines Guidebook**

The 48-paged guidebook is published by the Philippine Department of Tourism (DOT). As a tourism promotional material, it contains maps, food, touristic spots, and other information that could be of use to visitors or potential visitors to the Philippines. The guidebook was distributed to the students in the first meeting and was initially intended to show where Ilokano speakers are located in the Philippines. The material was used again as reference for constructing sentences with a focus on the use of locative words.

##### **4.1.3. Colored Picture Book**

Picture books are said to help build reading comprehension and provide concise writing models for student writing. Picture books help tie ideas and words to pictures or artwork and early learners can easily define unknown words through context clues (Kochiyama 2016). The

class used “My First 100 Words: My School (English/Filipino/Ilokano) Pictionary” published by Anvil Publishing Inc. in 2016. The colored picture book has 46 pages and contains words that are commonly used in school. The book was both used to develop vocabulary and grammar skills among the students.

#### **4.1.4. Summary of the Main Classes of Ilokano Words by Precy Espiritu**

This three-paged material is from the glossary of Precy Espiritu’s “Let’s Speak Ilokano” (1984). It is an easy, one-glance reference material and has concise tables of pronouns, demonstratives, locative words, time words, and determiners.

#### **4.1.5. Handouts**

Handouts were distributed every start of the lesson or a new topic. The handouts that were given contained an outline, vocabulary list, summary of main grammar points, exercises, and activities for the given meeting.

### **4.2. Active Learning**

Active learning is said to be student-centered, collaborative, participative, and self-reflective (Waniek and Nae 2017). The Japan Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports Science & Technology (MEXT) encourages the use of active learning as stated in “The Second Basic Plan for the Promotion of Education” published in 2013. To achieve the primary target of acquiring the ability to explore and tackle issues, MEXT states that it is important to “promote activities to change the quality of education, such as active learning (learning in which students proactively find issues and solutions), interactive lectures, practice, and experiments.” According to Kamegai and Crocker (2017), the term active learning comprises of six themes in academic literature. These are active, interactive, cognitively engaging, emotionally involving, individualized, and independent learning. The following activities in フィリピン語 Va (Filipino Va) were conducted with an aim to promote active learning among the learners.

#### **4.2.1. Drills**

Many of the activities in class (and those that will be discussed later) were made through question-and-answer drills. This strategy puts emphasis on repeating structural patterns through oral practice. Question-and-answer drills help learners to practice both their listening and speaking skills. Since the students in the class are also learners of two or more languages, the drills may assist them to pronounce difficult Ilokano sounds by imitating the intonation used by the instructor. Repetition drills were also utilized wherein learners were made to repeat Ilokano words or phrases for them to acquire acceptable pronunciation using the proper stress, rhythm, and intonation. Another type of drilling used was substitution. In this type of drill, I first modeled a word or a sentence and then the learners had to repeat it similar to a repetition drill. Then, I substituted one or more key words, or changed the prompt, and the learners were urged to say the new structure. Transformation drills were also conducted. Here, I modeled to the



students a sentence pattern, for example an affirmative sentence. Then, the students were asked to transform the affirmative sentence into a negative sentence. Another was asking the students to change a singular sentence into a plural sentence.

#### **4.2.2. Skit Performances and Role Play**

Throughout the semester, students were asked to form pairs or groups to practice basic greetings and grammar points using conversation/dialogue. The final presentation was for them to create an original skit performance using all the grammar points tackled. In Weeks 3 and 4, the students did a role-play of occupations and professions. The objective was to build up on vocabulary while at the same time allowing them to explore realistic situations by interacting with each other. Prior to this activity, the students were already given a lecture on vocabulary, pronunciation, and grammar (subject focused pronouns) and were handed a copy of the handout.

The illustration used is downloadable at [Liveworksheets.com](https://www.liveworksheets.com). [Liveworksheets.com](https://www.liveworksheets.com) provides “interactive worksheets” which their home page describes as interactive online exercises with self-correction. The material on occupations and professions was shown in front of the class and the students also have a copy of the same. The material has a 4 x 6 table of which contains illustrations of individuals doing a particular occupation and profession. As the illustrations are not labelled, the students were tasked to identify and write the correct occupation or profession to the corresponding illustration first before the role-play. There are characters that are not listed in the vocabulary list. This was used as an opportunity for the students to create interrogative sentences in *Hokano* while at the same time do note taking to improve on the retention of words and other information. After identifying the occupation or profession, cut-outs of the characters were distributed to each student. They were tasked to ask each other questions and encouraged to answer using phrases instead of singular words.

#### **4.2.3. BINGO**

For the lesson on numbers, the class did a BINGO game. The game was chosen because it is a good activity for practicing skills in speaking and listening among early language learners and familiarization with cardinal numbers. The students were instructed to make their own cards in any blank sheet of paper and to choose their own numbers. They were instructed to draw a 5 x 6 table. On the first row, they should write the individual letters of BINGO inside its corresponding square. Then, they should write their number of choices inside the square. They should follow the correct numbering. For example, each space in the “B” column should contain a number from 1 to 15; each space in the “I” column should contain a number from 16 to 30; each space in the “N” column should contain a number from 31 to 45; each space in the “G” column should contain a number from 46 to 60; and each space in the “O” column should contain a number from 61 to 75. The game begins when everybody has finished marking numbers in their BINGO card.

An online BINGO number generator was used to draw the number. This application is from Appzaza.com (<https://appzaza.com/bingo-number-generator>). The number that was drawn was flashed on the screen. The students took turns in reading out the letter and number generated by the application. The winner of the game is the first student or students whose numbers all get drawn

#### **4.2.4. Describing and Counting Activity**

This activity was made for students to hone their speaking, listening and comprehension skills. The activity needs a clue giver and a guesser. A student who is tasked as a clue giver should choose a character from the illustration flashed on the projector. The student should not say out loud the name of the character in mind and should only describe it to the rest of the class. The clue giver should use existence markers to describe the presence or absence of a trait of the character chosen. The first student who guesses the character correctly is the winner. All students will be given the opportunity to be the clue giver.

This activity is best conducted after the students have been introduced new vocabulary (ex. parts of the body). Prior to this, it is important that the students should already know the basic sentence patterns, adjectives, and numbers. The material for this activity is available online through iSLCOLLECTIVE. There are 32 creatures which different characteristics, which is enough so the guessers will take extra efforts in understanding the statements given by the clue giver.

#### **4.3. Homework and Quizzes**

Homework was assigned for retention of what was learned during class. Quizzes were also given after two to three meetings.

#### **5. Evaluation, Observation and Challenges**

I wanted the フィリピン語 Va (Filipino Va) to be characterized by dynamism, personal and shared experiences, and independence. However, challenges that came up necessitated minor changes and adjustments in the conduct of the class. These were in assigning a required textbook, adjusting the syllabus to the learning pace of the learners, and in encouraging student participation.

While the class had main reference books, it was difficult to assign a required textbook. There are very few materials in Ilokano in Japan and these are written in English. The only material printed in Japanese is a phrasebook “イロカノ語会話練習帳” (Ilokano Conversation Practice Book) published by TUFs in 1983 which is not what the class needed because the students are learning Ilokano from the very beginning and do not have any prior knowledge of the language. The phrasebook did not contain explanations on how the phrases and sentences were constructed. Also, while the dialogues in the CLSC Book 1 were evaluated to be helpful in providing context to how Ilokano phrases are used in real life situations, the sentence patterns

after the dialogue were already in the advanced level. It was necessary to supplement CLSC Book 1 by creating and distributing handouts that are suitable to the specific language level of the learners. In the earlier lessons, it was important to break down the sentences into grammar units and discuss the use of markers in nouns and noun phrases and the proper use of Ilokano markers first. Because there has never been an Ilokano textbook published in Japanese, I, together with colleagues, are currently working on an Ilokano textbook written in Japanese.

The class syllabus (see Table 1) had to be adjusted to the learning pace of the students. According to the syllabus, verbs should have already been tackled in Week 7. This was an overestimation as the class only met for 90 minutes per lesson and there were still many grammar points that had to be made clear before moving to verbs. We were able to discuss verbs in Week 12. Also, there was not much opportunity for them to practice Ilokano grammar and vocabulary outside of the classroom to hone their skills. To alleviate this constraint, quizzes and homework were given to encourage the students to study on their own.

There were also challenges in initiating active learning. The students hesitated to answer questions. The students were more participative in activities other than drills, although most of them still hesitated in speaking louder and standing in front of the class for the role-playing activities. They were very dependent on their instructor and did not seem to do beyond what was instructed or told. For example, after the learners were entrusted to plan, make their own decisions, and take charge of a task, the outcome produced was mediocre. Because the students rarely ask clarificatory questions, it is important for instructors to make sure that instructions are repeated and explained so that these would be fully understood. Since フィリピン語 Va (Filipino Va) is a required elective subject, the motivation to learn Ilokano may be lower compared to the language that they major in. The undergraduate Filipino majors must enlist in the class. Even if they lack interest in the subject, they have no choice but to enroll in it.

Pairing or grouping learners of different levels may also make students whose grades are more or less than the average be motivated while at the same time learners who are ahead can develop what they already know through the explanations that they impart to their pair or groupmates. Differences in the quality of output were observed when the students of the same levels are grouped together and if they did their tasks individually, such as in quizzes and homework. In sentence construction activities where learners were assigned in mixed level groups, the sentences submitted had few grammar errors compared to the answers in their individual quizzes. Of course, the fact that group activities were conducted in a more relaxed atmosphere and materials can be freely consulted should also be considered as to why few grammar errors occurred during groupwork compared to individual work.

On the matter of learning two Philippine languages simultaneously, I have observed differences in sentence construction between this undergraduate フィリピン語 Va (Filipino

Va) class and another Ilokano class that I teach. フィリピン語特別演習 A (Special Seminar on Filipino A) is composed of four graduate students who only had some experience with Philippine Studies-related classes but did not have any Filipino language class prior to taking Ilokano. The final projects for both undergraduates and graduate students followed similar instructions which was for them to create an original skit performance using all the grammar points tackled. The results of the dialogue construction and final project drama showed that the undergraduate students who had prior experience learning Filipino were more creative in making dialogues and created original plots and sentences. The graduate students in フィリピン語特別演習 A (Special Seminar on Filipino A) simply followed the model dialogues that were written in the CLSC Book 1 and handouts.

In addition, during the Week 5 quiz few undergraduate students were already using sentence patterns that have only been tackled in passing in the Ilokano class. This suggests that the students may have been constructing sentences using Filipino grammar rules in mind. Up until Week 4, constructing simple sentences using the Subject + Demonstrative pattern have been given focus. For example, the English sentence “These are pencils” should be translated in Ilokano as “Lapis dagitoy” using the Subject + Demonstrative pattern. Few students answered “Dagitoy ket lapis,” which is also a correct word order, but in the inverted form. This means that there were students who understood the usage of “ket” as an inverted marker in Ilokano as similar to “ay” as an inverted marker in Filipino. Even if word order inversion rules have not yet been fully tackled in class at that time, the mutual similarity between Filipino and Ilokano seems to have already been observed by the students. It appears that the students have confidence in constructing sentences using various patterns because of their awareness of the similarities in linguistic features of Ilokano and Filipino. However, while there seems to be little confusion in sentence construction, many of the students were found mixing Ilokano and Filipino words. They students also had to be reminded of the differences in accents in pronouncing the we inclusive pronoun ‘tayo’ that is similarly used in both Ilokano and Filipino.

There needs to be more observations conducted to conclude about the advantages and disadvantages of simultaneous learning of Philippines languages such as Ilokano and Filipino because the examples cited are still minimal. A downside has been observed in the mixing of Filipino and Ilokano words. But what these preliminary observations suggest is that in terms of writing basic sentences, simultaneous learning of Filipino and Ilokano is beneficial.

#### NOTES

- 1) According to the Summer Institute of Linguistics (2022), there are two extinct and 184 living Philippine languages. Of the 184 living languages, 6% (11 languages) are dying and 19% (35 languages) are in trouble. Additionally, other Philippine languages’ status are: 26 are institutional, 78 are developing, and 34 are vigorous.

- 2) The other institution offering a degree in Philippine Studies in Japan is Tokyo University of Foreign Studies (TUFS). TUFS started their Philippine Studies program in 1992. In 2022, only seven universities in Japan are offering Filipino language classes. These are 1. Osaka University, 2. Tokyo University of Foreign Studies, 3. University of Shizuoka, 4. Nagoya Gakuin University, 5. Sophia University, 6. Takushoku University and, 7. Kagoshima University (R. Laranjo, personal communication, June 2022). Filipino was also taught in Miyagi Gakuin at Wayo Women's University in the past (K. Yamoto, personal communication, June 2022).
- 3) In 2009, Philippine Department of Education (DepEd) released Department Order No. 74 mandating the use of mother tongue as the medium of instruction during the first four years of primary education while students learn Filipino and English as subject areas. According to the DepEd (2016) “MTBMLE is education, formal or non - formal, in which the learner’s mother tongue and additional languages are used in the classroom.” In MTBMLE, learners start their education in the language they understand best, which is their mother tongue. DepEd says that it is important that the learners first develop a strong foundation in their mother language before adding additional languages. The department claims that children with a solid foundation in their mother tongue develop stronger literacy abilities in the school language and that MTBMLE results to knowledge and skills transfer across languages.”

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