A Sociolinguistic Analysis of the Surigaonon Language: Demographics, Usage, and Linguistic Patterns for Preservation Strategies in Surigao del Norte

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
	The study aims to explore the status of the Surigawnon language in the province of Surigao del Norte as a basis for any initiatives to be implemented for the preservation of the local first language. A descriptive design was used, as qualitative method with the help of sociolinguistic analysis, interviews, observations (FGD), and wordlists/questionnaires. This examines language attitudes, dominant indigenous language and causes of influence. Purposive sampling was used for interviews / FGD which inssvolved 210 Surigaonon informants aged 20-50 and above from each municipality; while quota sampling was employed to select respondents who answered the questionnaires representing each municipality in Surigao province, targeting approximately 1,050 residents. The data were analyzed using frequency and percentage. It was found that 63.9% use Surigawnon as their first language, while 36.1% speak other languages due to influence. The primary cause of this is labor migration in farming and fishing, mostly by migrants from Bohol, Cebu, Leyte, and others. Mining and business have also become current threats, weakening the stability of the first language. The language attitude of Surigaonon speakers showed that 55% always speak Surigawnon; 15% use it only occasionally; and 30% understand but do not speak it. The influence of other languages has intensified due to continued job seeking, marriage, and higher education. Although still spoken, Surigawnon is critically endangered. It is recommended to continue language programs and initiatives to create ordinances that will be implemented in all sectors to speak and write in the Surigawnon first language. **Keywords:** First language; Status; Predicted situation; Surigawnon.

INTRODUCTION

Language is the soul of culture in every society. According to the Sapir-Whorf Sociolinguistic Theory, determining the relationship between culture and the language spoken by people involves analyzing discourse, both spoken and written, to understand the knowledge of indigenous languages in specific areas and their current state. According to Bernales et al. (2009), language is a tool for communication, and like any other tool, it must be continuously used because a tool that is no longer used loses its significance, and so does the language. The loss of language is also the loss of culture.

It is also worth noting that one of the characteristics of language is its dynamism (Tumangan Sr. et al., 1997). Studies from previous years may no longer be relevant today. The most important interest in studying language is to understand the language itself and its use. How does language introduce people or vice versa, their social environment, perception, and situation in the society they live in (A.D. Edwards, 1979).

In the province of Surigao del Norte, some Surigaonons may wonder if their language still holds significance today. According to Chairperson Virgilio S. Almario, "Your language is your identity." This statement clearly emphasizes the relationship between language and society. Scenarios may arise where language is forgotten or neglected due to people's language behavior (Trudgill, 2000).

No one can deeply understand and analyze a language except those who own or use it. It is also an opportunity to take the recognition of the Surigaonon language seriously following the recognition of the Mother Tongue for the identity of the group. From the perspective of the Komisyon sa Wikang Filipino (KWF), their aim is to protect and

preserve indigenous languages, document their true movement or changes, especially for endangered languages in the country (Republic Act No. 7104). Along with this language analysis is the initiative to create language interventions, particularly in the formation of provincial ordinances.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Language, whether spoken or written, is used as a vehicle to express thoughts, feelings, emotions, and needs. Each language has its own semantic and syntactic rules that speakers or writers must follow to be understood by their listeners or readers (Badayos et al., 2010).

A society or community cannot survive without language, but the development of culture or civilization is due to the use of language (Hoebel in Hufana's book, 2010). There will come a time when indigenous languages will not be fully learned by children, as this process paves the way for language shift leading to language death or what is called moribund languages.

Language death usually occurs gradually in a certain place. A language may disappear entirely from one place and may reappear in another. Occasionally, language dies because the speech community itself is dying.

This kind of language loss is called Linguicide (Du, 2011).

In observing communication within a community, according to Philipsen and Wood as mentioned by Santos et al. (2009), this approach attempts to discover the meanings people or groups attach to things through observing human activities. The meaning that others attach to communication may be very different from the meaning understood by the observer. This study examines the structure of social interactions, especially in the manner of engaging in conversation, whether between speaker/listener or writer/reader.

Research Questions

1.   How is the Surigaonon language analyzed in relation to the demographic profile of native Surigaonon speakers, considering the following factors:
1.1.   Age;
1.2.   Gender;
1.3.   Position;
1.4.   Length of residency;
1.5.   Educational attainment;
1.6.   Occupation;
1.7.   First language;
1.8.   Community of origin;
1.9.   Other languages known?

2.   What is the extent of Surigaonon language usage across Surigao del Norte, as analyzed according to the following categories?
2.1.   Understood but not used;
2.2.   Used only on specific occasions;
2.3.   Habitually used?

3.   How does the use of native languages compare among Surigaonon speakers across the following common linguistic categories?

3.1.   Words (e.g., naming);

3.2.   Phrases;

3.3.   Expressions;

3.4.   Sentences?

4.   What are the implications of the study's findings for the current status of the Surigaonon language, and what strategies can be proposed to address the language-related issues in Surigao del Norte?

Theoretical and Conceptual Basis

The study is based on the sociology of language as proposed by Fishman (1997), where people continuously use language—spoken, written, and printed—and maintain connections with others through shared norms of behavior in language use (Social Organization of Language Behavior). The social approach, or sociolinguistics model, by Labov (1972) explores how language varies according to social factors such as age, gender, education, and social status.

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                    │   SURIGAONON SPEAKERS    │
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│ IDENTIFYIN   │       │ SOCIOLINGUISTICS MODEL│       │ MANNER OF    │
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│ LANGUAGE     │───────│                       │───────│ INDIGENOU    │
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│         STATUS OF THE SURIGAWNON LANGUAGE"                         │
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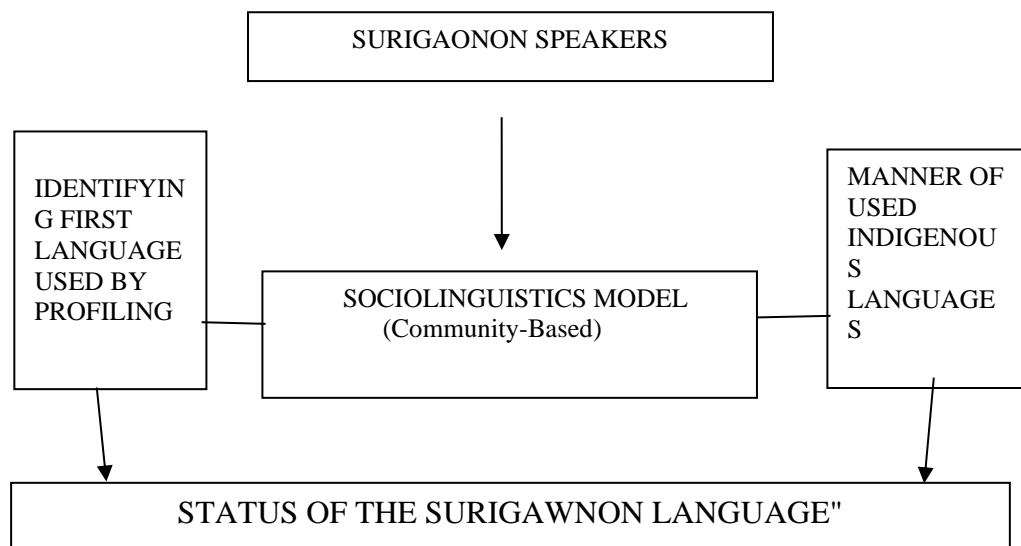
Figure 1. Schematic Diagram

Figure 1 shows the study's schema encompassing the entire province of Surigao del Norte, illustrating that a sociolinguistic approach is used, where all collected data is based on the target community, referred to as speech community based. This will compare the major indigenous languages heard in the province to ascertain their usage in different domains. From this, the status and description of the said languages will be meticulously examined.

The specified variables are considered to closely examine the characteristics of the Surigaonon language within its societal context. This aims to understand the nuances of each Surigaonon word, focusing initially on native words. The variables outlined in the paradigm are expected to aid in addressing the research problems of the study.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study employed a combined qualitative-quantitative descriptive design with the help of sociolinguistic methods of analysis using multiple tests such as interviews (clustering responses and observation-FGD), questionnaires/wordlists surveys. It also examined language attitudes in a community-based setting. Several methods were used to understand and analyze the Surigaonon language according to profiles through interviews, FGD-observation of communication, and questionnaire responses (Philipsen and Wood as cited by Santos et al., 2009). The study is a community-based approach, considering the impact of culture and language interaction according to Wardhaugh (2006), who believes that language is influenced by the society it belongs to. This aligns with the investigation of the relationships between language and society by William Labov (1966), an American linguist, who studied how language operates within a community's speech. The data sources were primarily native Surigaonon residents and the current generation of Surigao del Norte and analyzed using Multiple Correspondence Analysis and percentage.

Participants

The respondents and informants of this study are native Surigaonons and ordinary citizens, including students, office workers, and others. The researcher initially considered purposive sampling, carefully selecting individuals based on age and native proficiency in the Surigaonon language for interviews and observations /(FGD). The age groups considered were 50 and above, 30-49, and 20-29, with three informants from each municipality in Surigao del Norte (Table 1). Additionally, these individuals were observed in a focus group discussion (FGD) setting, involving (10) ten

informants, and through individual interviews using structured or unstructured formats depending on the preference of the interviewee. Some informants preferred group interviews over individual ones, so the group format was used.

Quota sampling was employed to select respondents representing each municipality in Surigao province, targeting approximately 1,050 residents. The native Surigaonon words were the basis for creating wordlist questionnaires, which were used as another test set. Besides interviews and FGDs, the researchers ensured that questionnaires were distributed to other potential respondents in the area to gather comprehensive data.

Table 1. Distribution of Informants during Fieldwork *(2015 Census Population=***485,088***)*

DISTRICT 1	POPULATION (N)	INFORMANTS 3-interview (indiv.) 7- FGD	Quota Target of Respondents (Questionnaire)
Sta. Monica	8,808	3 -10	50
Burgos	4,034	3 -10	50
San Benito	5,404	3 -10	50
San Isidro	7,325	3-10	50
Del Carmen	18,392	3 -10	50
Pilar	9,752	3 -10	50
Dapa	23,787	3 -10	50
Gen.Luna	16,771	3 -10	50
Socorro	22,314	3 -10	50
Total (sub)	**116,587**		
DISTRICT 2			
Surigao City	154,137	3-10	50
SanFrancisco	14,552	3 -10	50
Sison	13,155	3 -10	50
Placer	27,094	3 -10	50
Malimono	18,054	3 -10	50
Bacuag	14,486	3-10	50
Mainit	26,741	3-10	50
Claver	32,773	3-10	50
Gigaquit	20,864	3-10	50
Alegria	16,011	3-10	50
Taganaan	16,428	3-10	50
Tubod	14,206	3-10	50
TOTAL (sub)	**371,919**		
Gen. total	**485,088**	**33-210**	**1,050**

Instruments

The researcher utilized three sets of questionnaires to accommodate all aspects needed for the study. The first set of questionnaires was used for interviews, incorporating profiles drawn from the KWF manual (Steps in Linguistic Ethnography, 2015). The second set consisted of wordlists for language usage methods. The third set comprised questionnaires about language usage attitudes in various domains in checklist format (Appendices A-C).

Data Preparation

While gathering data through interviews, observation, and other methods, the researchers carefully prepared the following:

- **Review**

By replaying recordings on their cell phone recorders, the researchers decoded and reviewed the process of data collection from observations, storytelling, and interviews. They also compiled responses using questionnaires.

- **Analysis**

Sorting out the native languages used in the community and assessing their status according to the compiled wordlist.

- **Categorization**

Distinguishing between the two languages, Surigawnon and Bisaya-Cebuano, and categorizing words, phrases, or expressions gathered, as classified by the researchers. Categorization also includes the type of pronunciation of words.

- **Transcription**

There may be a corresponding translation of words collected leading to the Tagalog and English languages for the preparation of validators.

- **Validation**

Seek five members to serve as validators: language users/speakers and experts in four languages (Surigawnon, Bisaya, Filipino/Tagalog, and English). Send them a letter requesting permission, and if they agree, immediately send the first draft to the first two validators.

- **Editing**

This involves making changes by the researchers based on suggestions from the first batch of validators. After improvements have been made, print the second draft and validate it with the second batch of validators. Also, the second draft should be reviewed by the first batch of validators to ensure that their suggestions have been addressed. In the second attempt at validation, potential changes from the suggestions of the second group of assessors are expected until it is accepted.

Analysis of Data

- **Multiple Correspondence Analysis**

This was used to compare variables from the profile against the first language used by respondents or informants.

- **Frequency Percentage**

Used to compare the frequency or how often selected options appear among respondents.

Results

In this section, the responses to specific issues are discussed to address the status and description of the Surigawnon language. Data from Tables 2, 3, 4, and Symmetrical Plots 1 & 2 are presented for the analysis of respondent/informant profiles.

Table 2. Profile of Informants According to Gender, Age, Position, Community Affiliation, and Length of Residency.

Variable	Categories	Frequencies 1000	%
Sex	female	675	67.5
	male	325	32.5
Age	18 to 30	349	34.9
	31 to 40	157	15.7
	41 to 50	181	18.1
	51 to 60	181	18.1
	above 60	133	13.3
Position	BHW	12	1.2
	Brgy Secretary	36	3.6
	Brgy treasurer	12	1.2
	Kagawad	96	9.6
	Kapitan	72	7.2
	Karaniwan	446	44.6

	Mag-aaral	301	30.1
	SB member	12	1.2
	wala	12	1.2
Community Origin	Alegria	24	2.4
	Claver	12	1.2
	Bacuag	12	1.2
	Dapa	36	3.6
	Dinagat	12	1.2
	Gen Luna	96	9.6
	Gigaquit	24	2.4
	Leyte	24	2.4
	Mainit	12	1.2
	Pilar	36	3.6
	Placer	12	1.2
	San Francisco	12	1.2
	Socorro	12	1.2
	Sta Monica	48	4.8
	Surigao City	516	51.8
	Burgos	12	1.2
		12	1.2
		12	1.2
	Malimono Sison San Isidro	12	1.2
	San Benito	12	1.2
	Taganaan	12	1.2
	Tubod	36	3.6
Length of Residency	10 years and below	168	16.9
	11 to 20 years	348	34.9
	21 to 50 years	240	24.1
	above 50 years	240	24.1

Table 2 shows the profile of respondents according to gender, age, position, community affiliation, and length of residency. Most of them are female, comprising 67.5%; aged 18-30 years old, making up 34.9%; ordinary citizens without any official position in society, accounting for 44.6%; mostly indicating affiliation with Surigao City, at 51.8%; and with a length of residency between 11-20 years, constituting 34.9%.

Table 3. Profile of Respondents (Part 2) based on Educational Attainment and Occupation

Variable	Categories	Frequencies (1000)	%
Edukasyong natapos	College graduate	193	19.3
	College level	205	20.5
	Elementarya	84	8.4
	High school graduate	241	24.1
	Senior high school	253	25.3
	Vocational course	24	2.4
Ocupation	BHW	12	1.2
	Brgy Treasurer	12	1.2
	Brgy. Secretary	24	2.4
	Driver	12	1.2
	teacher	36	3.6
	Manicurist	12	1.2

	OFW	12	1.2
	Phil Coast Guard	12	1.2
	SB member	12	1.2
	Self-employed	24	2.4
	gov't employee	12	1.2
	councilor	12	1.2
	Brgy.captain	24	2.4
	Carpenter	24	2.4
	students	337	33.7
	farmers	36	3.6
	fishing	84	8.4
	housekeeper	120	12.0
	private employee	24	2.4
	public servants	12	1.2
	vendor	12	1.2
	No work	133	13.3

In Table 3, you can also see the profile of respondents based on their educational attainment and occupation. Most respondents are senior high school students at 25.3%, followed by high school graduates at 24.1%, college graduates at 19.3%, college undergraduates at 20.5%, and elementary graduates at 8.4%. Senior high school students are the most numerous because they are easily accessible during the survey period. To some extent, the respondents obtained some level of education aside from those who are currently studying. Regarding occupation, the respondents have various jobs. Some are teachers, barangay officials, drivers, overseas Filipino workers (OFWs), manicurists, government employees, students, farmers, fishermen, housewives, vendors, and others, while some are unemployed. In summary, most respondents are senior high school students who provided most of the information, followed by housewives. Housewives and students are easily accessible compared to other occupations that are very busy in their daily lives.

Table 4. Languages Used Based on Profile

Variable	Categories	Frequencies	%
Mother tongue	Aklanon	12	1.2
	Boholano	241	24.1
	Cebuano	24	2.4
	Gigaquitnon	24	2.4
	Leyteno	12	1.2
	Surigawnon	639	63.9
	Tagalog	24	2.4
	Waray	22	2.4
Other languages known	Cebuano, Boholano, Tagalog, English	24	2.4
	Cebuano, Boholano, Tagalog	24	2.4
	Boholano, Leyteno	12	1.2
	Cebuano, Tagalog, English	48	4.8
	English	12	1.2
	Tagalog, English	120	12.0
	Aklanon, Tagalog, English	12	1.2
	Tagalog/Filipino	36	3.6
	English, Tagalog, Sinurigao	24	2.4
	Ilonggo, Tagalog, English	24	2.4
	Kinamayo, Sinurigao	12	1.2

Sinurigao, Tagalog	48	4.8
Sinurigao	12	1.2
Sinurigao, Tagalog, English	12	1.2
sinurigao, Tagalog, Kapampangan	12	1.2
Tagalog, Waray	12	1.2
Waray, Tagalog, Cebuano	12	1.2
Wala	542	54.2

Table 4 shows the distribution of profiles of respondents according to the languages they use as their first language and other languages spoken. Surigawnon obtained the largest percentage at 63.9%, followed by Boholano at 24.1%. Cebuano only garnered 2.4%. There is a 54.2% percentage who said they do not speak any other language, meaning that most respondents speak Surigawnon.

Therefore, most Surigaonon residents still use Surigawnon as their first language or language at home, although according to the earlier table, these speakers are mostly elderly, aged 50-60 and above. This shows that to some extent, Surigawnon is still alive in their respective homes. This is followed by Boholano, which became the first language in the municipalities of Malimono and Socorro based on interviews, and a small percentage was also observed in the municipalities of San Francisco, Taganaan, and Del Pilar. They may be Boholano migrants who mostly settled in those areas, and Boholano is also mixed in the municipalities of Claver, Bacuag, Gigaquit, and Placer.

According to the legend of Boholano migrants, the word Surigao is a combination of the Spanish word "Sur" (current) and the Boholano word "gao" (fellow Boholano). It has been proven that the majority of native Surigaonon are Boholano migrants. Cebuano ranks third as the first language because in the urban areas of Surigao City, it is known to be used as an occasional language and first language, as well as in the municipality of Alegria, which is why it attracted 24.1% recorded as the first language, (Table 4).

The chart demonstrates that the Surigawnon dialect is primarily used by students, government and private institution employees, self-employed individuals, SB (Sangguniang Bayan) members, barangay captains, councilors, farmers, carpenters, drivers, housewives, Barangay Health Workers (BHWs), barangay secretaries, and manicurists from Surigao City, Tubod, Dapa, Gen. Luna, Sta. Monica, Alegria, and Placer, with residency lengths ranging from 21 to over 50 years. Boholano, Cebuano, and Tagalog dialects are also used as first languages by Philippine Coast Guard personnel, politicians, Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs), and unemployed individuals residing for 20 years or less in the areas of San Francisco, Taganaan, Socorro, and Pilar.

The Waray and Letenyo dialects are used by respondents/ informants from Dinagat and Leyte, especially fishermen and barangay caretakers. The Gigaquitnon dialect is exclusively the first language of the Gigaquitnons. Suriganon-Higakitnon is a variety of the Surigawnon language distinguished by its distinct pronunciation compared to other Surigaonon dialects, described as having a firm or rigid (gut-gut) pronunciation style.

Based on interview data, identified migrants from Bohol, Cebu, and Leyte are predominantly found in San Francisco, Taganaan, Socorro, Malimono, and Pilar, venturing into these areas due to business, employment, marriage, and to escape Spanish oppression, particularly among Boholanos. In summary, the majority of pure Surigawnon speakers are found among the elderly and long-term residents, particularly those aged 51 to 60 as of 2020, with residency lengths ranging from 21 to over 50 years. And based on the parametric scaling of language endangerment used by KWF (Komisyon sa Wikang Filipino), Surigawnon is described as critically endangered.

The status of the Surigawnon

The status of the Surigawnon language can be assessed also using Table 5 and Pie Graph 1; as well as Table 6 showing continuous percentages based on population count. Table 5 and Pie Graph 1 display words tested as common phrases among Surigaonons categorized into three types: "Understood but not used, used on occasions, and habitually used." These are detailed in the following explanation:

Table 5. Usage Patterns of Each Word in Surigawnon Language

Surigaonon words	Usage (n=1000)		
	Understood but not used	Used Ocassionally	Habitually used
Gajud "really or indeed"	320	283	387
Karadjaw "very"	209	295	496
Nautas "unconscious"	458	218	324
Huyat "wait"	75	136	789
Limpyuhan "to clean"	33	55	912
Kayaju "fire"	194	177	629
Ayad "cage"	276	156	568
Tag-ija "owner"	89	62	847
Baju "to smash"	610	151	239
Kawajan "bamboo"	125	158	717
Luspad "pale"	46	58	896
Jamug "fog"	900	70	30
Lapjahan "shore"	85	917	518
Pyangga "beloved / dear"	427	247	326
Guyang "bailer"	227	153	620
Prabir "brave"	614	86	840
Kagid "itch / scabies"	79	79	842
Mayaas"old person"	438	226	336
Dimudo "as a matter of fact"	657	158	185
Imbes "instead"	99	131	772
Jaanay "for/in a while, wait, in a moment"	614	198	188
Burahu "selfish"	184	184	632
Bunajan "give a blow to"	230	150	620
Naunu "What happened?"	100	80	890

Pie graph 1
MANNER OF USED INDIGENOUS LANGUAGES
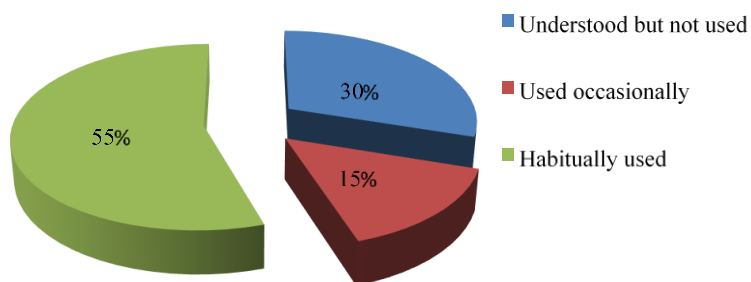
Graph 1. Summary Description on the Pie

Understood but not used. This refers to Surigawnon words that they understand but no longer use in their daily conversations. The highest percentage of Surigawnon words classified under this category include *nautas, baju, pyangga, mayaas, dimudo,* and *jaanay*. According to the pie graph 1, only 30% indicated that they understand these words but do not use them. Based on observations and interviews during fieldwork, in areas like Alegria, Tubod, and Mainit, Surigawnon is their first language, but they do not speak it because many residents and acquaintances are Boholano and Leytenyo, making it easier to communicate with them using their language. This situation fits into Howard Giles' communication accommodation theory (n.d.) which describes a person who adjusts to the speaker and changes to get along with fellow linguists. In such instances, a language that is not widely used by the majority in a community has been sacrificed.

Use only for just an occasion. This refers to a speaker who knows the language or words but does not casually use them with inappropriate conversation partners. Some respondents who say they use it only on occasion, based on Pie Graph 1, account for only 15%, such as words like *"nautas," "pyangga," "gajud," and "karadjaw"* being the highest noted in the occasional category. Considering these words are still heard today but not as frequently, it means speakers only occasionally use them depending on who they are talking to. Meanwhile, in social settings, especially among millennials, they no longer use them, opting instead for Taglish and Cebuano, considered as their social languages.

Customarily used. This is the situation where one is accustomed to using their language, where the words they know are consistently employed. In this context ("customarily used"), among 1,000 respondents, Surigaonon words

such as *gajud, karadjaw, huyat, limpyuhan, kayaju, ayad, tag-ija, kawajan, luspad, guyang, ki-at, kagid, Imbes, burahu, bunajan,* and *naunu* are habitually used, with "limpyuhan" being the most frequently used word.

In total, understanding can be grasped through pie graph number 1 concerning the movement or method of using Surigaonon due to the many languages they know. According to response data, 55% said they habitually use Surigaonon words, 30% said they understand but do not use, and 15% said they use it only occasionally. It's noteworthy that only about half appeal to using the language as customary. This means the Surigaonon language is positioned in the middle because of its influence on Cebuano and Boholano dialects that have entered the Surigao community.

It's a sign that some words have been forgotten and replaced by other words influenced, especially by the rapid spread of media etc. *(mentioned earlier)* and the creativity of speakers in adapting to modern tastes.

Table 6. Commonly used every day conversational words.

Naming		Frequency (n=1000)	Percent
Ina "Mother"	*Nanay*	286	28.6
	Mama	694	69.4
	Mommy	10	1
Ama "Father"	*Tatay*	286	28.6
	Papa	694	69.4
	Daddy	10	1
Tiyuhin "Uncle"	*Tiyo*	173	17.3
	Uncle	796	79.6
	Uju	10	1
Kapatid na lalaki "Brother"	*Manoy*	276	27.6
	Kuya	694	69.4
	Mano	20	2

Naming. In the family calling terms of respect, 28.6% show Surigaonon words in the naming language. Most Surigaonon call their mothers "mama" and fathers "papa"; "uncle" is used for uncles; "antie" for aunts; they also use it for unknown women if they talk to them at the age of 40 to 50; "kuya" for older brothers and even unknowns as long as they are men; "ate" for older sisters. The influence of Filipino (Tagalog) can be heard in calling terms like "Kuya/Ate," and English in "uncle" and "antie." Meanwhile, the calling terms "mama" and "papa" are influenced by Spanish. Surigaonon calling words like "insi," "ditsi," "mana" for females, and "ingko," "manoy" for male siblings are

gradually disappearing. Calling words in the family as a sign of respect are in danger and slowly dying in the culture of Surigaonon people.

Table 7. Common phrases used in daily life

Expressions (Tagalog)	Native languages (Native languages)	Frequency	Percent
Wala naman "There's nothing"	Waya ra ba	704	**70.4**
	Wala ra ba Wara ba	184	18.4
Mamaya nalang "What are you? / Who are you? (depends on context)"	Nads-an rakan	367	36.7
	Unja nalang	449	44.9
	Unya nalang	173	17.3
Ano ka "What are you? / Who are you? (depends on context)"	Uno kaw	541	**54.1**
	Unsa kaw	449	44.9
Alis dyan "Get out of there"	Iwat did-on	214	21.4
	Hawa diha	653	**65.3**
	Hawa dira	122	12.2
Nasaan na "Where is it?"	Ha-e ra	378	37.8
	Asa ra	327	32.7
	Haman ra	286	28.6
Nandito na "It's here now"	Jari na	714	**71.4**
	Dia na	255	25.5
	Nia na	20	2
Kaya pala "So that's why"	Amo baja	704	70.4
	Amo baya	61	6.1
	Mao diay	224	22.4
Maaga pa "It's still early"	Sadju ra	194	19.4
	Sajo ra	633	**63.3**
	Sayo ra	163	16.3
	Sayohay ra	0	0
Iwan ko "I don't know"	Inday uno	592	**59.2**
	Ambot unsa	398	39.8
	Ay bawo	0	0
Talagang ganyan "That's just how it is"	Amo gayud	327	32.7
	Mao jud	571	**57.1**
	Mao gayud	92	9.2

Phrases. In the realm of expressions, it has garnered a substantial 70% usage among the people of Surigao in their daily speech. Examples of common Surigaonon expressions include "waya ra ba," "uno kaw," "ha-era," "jari na," "amo baja," "sadju ra," "inday uno," "haman," "hain ra man," "amo gajud," and others. Thirty percent of expressions are borrowed from Cebuano or Boholano languages, such as "wala ra ba," "unya nalang," "unsa kaw," "Hawa diha sa," "asa ra," "dia na," "mao diay," "sayo ra," "ambot unsa," and "mao gyud" in Cebuano, and "wa ra ba," "unja nalang," "bawu," "mao jud" in Boholano.

Less frequently used Surigaonon words include "nadz-an ra" (later), "iwat did-on" (excuse me), which are replaced with "unja nalang" (Boholano) at 44.5%, and "hawa diha" (Boholano/Cebuano) at 65.3%. Most expressions of the Surigaonon people are still recognized and used as listed below.

Table 8. Common Sentences Used in Daily Life

Sentences		Frequency	Percent		Sentences	Frequency	Percent
SS15	*Ijo ton bayay* **"Is that your house?"**	500	**50**	**SS23**	*Kabayo kaw* **"Do you know?"**	571	**57.1**
	Injo na ba-y	143	14.3		*Kabalo ka*	306	30.6
	inyo na balay	316	31.6		*Hibayo kaw*	28	8.2
SS16	*Naghuyam cja* **"he borrowed"**	112	11.2	**SS24**	*Maradjaw jaon* **"that's very good"**	173	17.3
	Naghulam siya	245	24.5		*Gana na*	612	**61.2**
	Namuyos sija	602	**60.2**		*Nindot na*	137	17.3
SS17	*Dali anay* **"don't do it"**	724	**72.4**	**SS25**	*Pamukyas na* **"take the hanged clothes"**	653	**65.3**
	Dali usa	133	13.3		*Pamuklas na*	224	22.4
	Kari anay	102	10.2	**SS26**	*Panhalay* **"to hang"**	71	7.1
SS18	*Ijo ton idu* **"Is that your dog"**	408	40.8		*Panhayhay*	990	**99**
	Injo na iro	296	29.6	**SS27**	*Laung kaw kaina* **"You said earlier"**	653	**65.3**
	Inyo na iro	255	25.5		*Ingon ka ganina*	296	29.6
SS19	*Kayaut imo wayung* **"Your face is ugly"**	643	**64.3**		*Sulti kaw kaina*	10	1
	maut imo nawong	153	15.3	**SS28**	*Kapungot ko* **"I'm annoyed"**	347	34.7
	Batig nawong	135	15.3		*Kalagot ko*	255	25.5
SS20	*Dajun kamu* **"Come in"**	571	**57.1**		*Nasuko ko*	357	35.7
	Dayon kamo	122	12.2	**SS29**	*Ajaw tamaja/ajaw na daug-daug* **"Don't insult me"**	663	**66.3**
	Sulod mo	265	26.5		*Ayaw na tamay*	265	26.5
SS21	*Baktas kaw* **"You're walking"**	837	**83.7**		*Di ka mag-api*	31	3.1
	Baklay ka	112	11.2	**SS30**	*Ayo, jaoy tawo* **"hello, is anyone there"**	860	**80.6**
	Bakyay kaw	10	1		*Buenas tawo.*	41	4.1
SS22	*Manlaag ta* **"Let's go for a walk"**	694	**69.4**		*Maayo, naa tawo.*	112	11.2
	Manlakaw ta	184	18.4	**SS31**	*Hayok sa magtrato* **"Lover's kiss"**	92	9.2
	Magsuroy ta	82	8.2		*Hayok sa mag-uyab*	582	**58.2**

					Hayok nan mag-uyab	255	25.5

Sentences. Some of the common sentences in the said survey were analyzed based on percentage according to their daily usage. Options here include Surigaonon, Cebuano, and Boholano. Considering percentages ranging from 50% to 83% and above, lively levels were regarded in the use of Surigaonon language in sentences such as: "Ijo tun bayay," "namuyos na kaw," "Dali anay," "Ijo tun idu," "Kayaut imo wayung," "Dajun kamu," "Baktas kaw," "manlaag ta," and "panhayhay." Out of fifteen sentences, thirteen reached or exceeded expected percentage levels, with only two falling below: "Ijo ton bayay" at just 40.8% and "Nasuko" at only 35.7% usage.
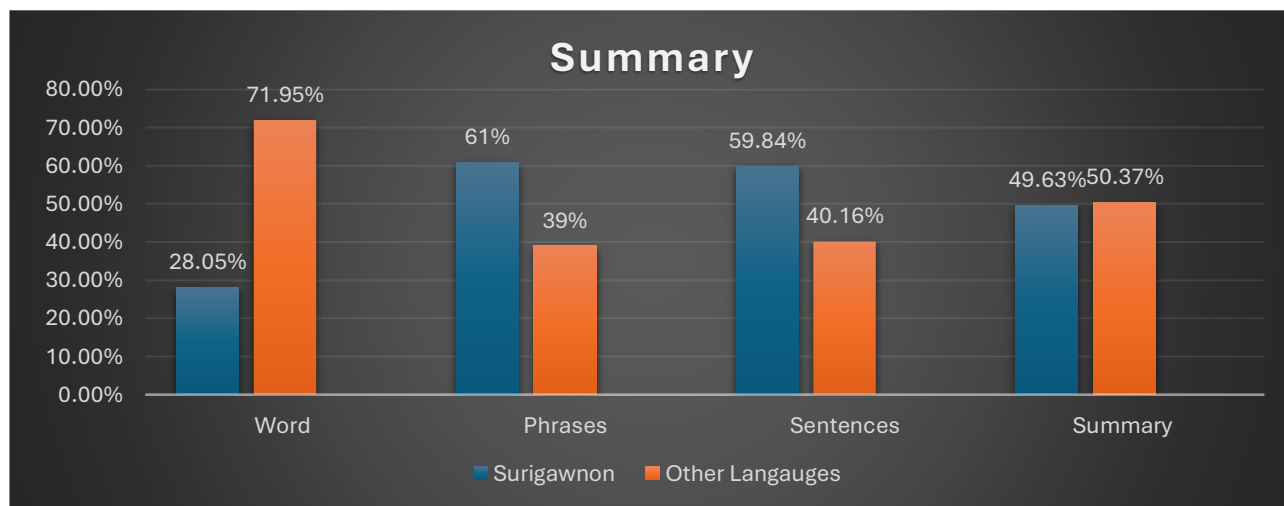
Graph 2. Summary Data from table 6, 7 & 8

Graph 2 illustrates the overall percentage depiction derived from the data in Tables 6, 7, and 8 on calling/naming words (Salita), expressions/phrases (parirala), and sentences (pangungusap) using the survey. It can be observed that the Surigaonon language is weak in calling words. The graph signals the strong influence of other languages. If not addressed, the Surigaonon language may be at risk.

Another way to strengthen the findings about the status of the Surigaonon language is by exploring the dynamics of the language within the society based on different domains (Ferguson, 1959).

DISCUSSION

The results show a sharp decrease in the number of Surigawnon speakers, from 95% of the Caraga Region's population in 2002 to only 63.9% in the current study. This decline indicates a weakening of the language's dominance in the region. And from the study of Lewis et al., 2009- the decrease from an estimated 400,000 speakers to the present figure of 309,971 suggests that Surigawnon is gradually losing speakers at a concerning rate, likely due to sociolinguistic factors such as migration, education, and language contact with dominant languages. The reduced number of speakers signals a decline in intergenerational transmission, which is a critical factor in language maintenance. If fewer children learn and use Surigawnon, its long-term survival becomes uncertain. According to Du (2011), language death often occurs gradually within a specific region. Thus, the Significant Decline in Speakers and the Ongoing Language Shift become a Risk of Language Attrition. The declining percentage of speakers suggests that Surigawnon is moving towards endangerment. If this trend continues, the language could reach a critical stage where it is no longer spoken as a mother tongue. Language is a carrier of cultural heritage, traditions, and indigenous knowledge. A decline in Surigawnon usage may lead to the loss of unique oral traditions, folklore, and historical narratives embedded in the language.

To prevent this, proactive measures should be implemented, such as promoting Surigawnon in schools, integrating it into local media, and encouraging families to use it in daily communication. Government agencies, educators, and cultural organizations must collaborate on language preservation initiatives, including linguistic documentation, curriculum integration, and awareness campaigns to revive interest in Surigawnon. It means, this increased

Vulnerability to Language Loss, Erosion of Cultural Identity, there is a Need for Language Revitalization Efforts, Policy and Community Intervention. Without immediate intervention, Surigawnon may continue to lose its speakers, leading to its possible endangerment. Addressing this linguistic shift requires urgent action to ensure its preservation for future generations.

The researchers recommend future research on the Surigawnon language should focus on intergenerational transmission and language shift by investigating how the language is passed down from older generations to younger ones. It is essential to examine factors influencing language preference among children and youth, as well as assess the role of family, education, and social environments in language retention. Additionally, sociolinguistic factors affecting Surigawnon usage should be explored, including the impact of migration, urbanization, and economic shifts on language use. This process paves the way for language shift, eventually leading to language death or what is referred to as moribund (Hoebel, as cited in Hufana, 2010).

Furthermore, language vitality and endangerment assessments should be conducted using frameworks such as UNESCO's Language Vitality and Endangerment scale to determine Surigawnon's current risk level and compare its decline with other regional languages. Nuwer (2014) further emphasizes that 50% to 90% of endangered languages will vanish within the next 100 years, along with the unique cultures, histories, and ecological knowledge embedded within them. Research on educational and policy interventions for language preservation is also necessary, focusing on evaluating existing language policies, integrating Surigawnon in formal education, media, and digital platforms, and developing strategies for curriculum enhancement.

Another crucial area is digital and media-based language revitalization, which involves exploring the role of social media, online content, and technology in preserving Surigawnon, as well as assessing the potential of digital storytelling, mobile applications, and online learning resources. Moreover, linguistic documentation and corpus development should be prioritized to create dictionaries, grammars, and recorded narratives, along with the collection and preservation of oral traditions, folklore, and historical narratives.

Lastly, community-led language revitalization initiatives should be examined by studying the effectiveness of grassroots preservation movements, investigating community-based programs that encourage daily use of Surigawnon, and analyzing the role of local festivals, storytelling events, and cultural programs in language maintenance. By pursuing these research directions, scholars, educators, and policymakers can develop informed strategies to slow the decline of Surigawnon and ensure its survival for future generations. Language speakers play a crucial role in preserving their languages, especially when signs of decline become evident. Crystal (2000) highlights the reasons why language preservation matters: languages express identity, and a nation without language is like a nation without a heart. Language serves as a repository of history and contributes to the collective knowledge of humanity.

FINDINGS

1.   It was found that 63.9% still use Surigawnon as their first language, while 36.1% speak other languages due to influences. The primary cause is the migrating livelihoods of farming and fishing, with many being migrants from Bohol, Cebu, Leyte, and others. Mining and business have also posed threats to the stability of the native language.

2.   Language usage behavior among Surigaonon speakers revealed that 55% actively speak Surigawnon, 15% only on occasions, and 30% understand but do not speak it. The influence of other languages has intensified due to continued ventures in work, marriage, media and higher education.

3.   Through Multiple Correspondence Analysis, it is projected that Surigawnon may disappear in 20-30 years as only older adults aged 50-60 and above still speak pure Surigawnon.

4.   In fact, the hypothesis states that Surigaonon speakers typically handle more than two languages, and each domain has a suitable language to use. There is a prestigious language, a language for literature, a language for stability or first language, and different attitudes towards language use, especially in terms of when and with whom to use it.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the findings from the respondents' answers, this study provides the following conclusions:

1.   Only 309,971 out of 485,088 people in Surigao del Norte speak Surigawnon.

2.   Apart from Surigawnon, more Surigaonons also speak other native languages as their first language. Cebuano is used depending on the type of conversation and for formal transactions and occasional language.

3.   With the death of native speaker brings the language closer to extinction.

4.   With the multitude of languages known and used by the people of Surigao, there is indeed a tendency for one language to die out.

5.   Although still spoken, Surigawnon is critically endangered.

And they may redound to recommend the following:

- **Local Government Units (LGUs)**: Enact an ordinance mandating the use of Surigawnon or Sinurigaw to preserve the spirit of Surigaonon culture for future generations. Encourage all sectors in the community to give space in their lives as Surigaonons to the use of the language in speaking and writing in the local Surigao newspaper.

- **Implement language programs** in conjunction with the established "adlaw nan kultura nan Surigao" activities.

- **Radio Stations**: Use Surigawnon to allow migrants to Surigao to learn the Surigawnon language. They should converge on our language to help preserve it and keep it alive in society.

- **Newspaper Writers**: Use Surigawnon in news articles as a good way to revive the language in writing and speech.

- **Surigaonon Citizens**: Continue using the Surigawnon language to preserve it as a treasure of Surigao culture.

- **Researchers**: Further studies on the Surigawnon language, particularly in Surigao del Sur, are needed to ensure important information about the place and characteristics of the language for its true identity. Additionally, studying the structure of Surigawnon is beneficial.

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Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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