

TALAANDIG OR BUKIDNON?

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Introduction

I would like to thank the Department of Linguistics and Asian Languages, College of Arts and Sciences of the University of the Philippines, for inviting me to read a paper in this Third Philippine Linguistics Congress, which occasion, I understand, is a part of a series of activities of the University to celebrate her Diamond Jubilee this year. Moreover, I am also grateful that the focus of our attention in this Congress is the minor languages of the Philippines. On the other hand, I would like to apologize to Prof. Anicia del Corro, Chairman of the Steering Committee, for my failure to furnish her a copy of my paper in time for it to be mimeographed and also to be read by the reactors.

My paper this afternoon consists of two parts: first, an indorsement and/or recommendation for the recognition/acceptance of Talaandig or Tinalaandig as one of the minor languages of the Philippines and second, a socio-linguistic discussion of the languages in the province of Bukidnon.

The Province

During these recent months, the Province of Bukidnon has been featured on the front pages of our newspaper concerning such news reports as: the longest student boycott at Central Mindanao University, Musuan, which resulted in the ouster of the president; the evacuation of 10,000 barangay residents of Valencia to the poblacion, which is quite an exaggeration; the cannibalism and savage killings allegedly perpetrated by members of the CHDF in Valencia;

and the merciless killing of Ruben Borben, our national duckpin champion, allegedly by a member of the military.

Bukidnon is the second largest province in Region X after Surigao del Sur in terms of area. It has a population of 631,812 distributed among 22 towns (National Census and Statistics 1980). More than 50% or 351,207 of the population are Cebuano speakers, followed by the Bukidnons with 83,237, the Hiligaynon with 46,940, Mandobo with 18,125, Ilocano with 14,686, Tagalogs with 4,626, Maranao with 2,923, Samar-Leyte (Waray) with 2,370 and Ivatans with 1,670 (National Census and Statistics 1975). With the on going operation of the Bukidnon Sugar Company (BUSCO), the Hiligaynon speakers have increased tremendously, which also means that the town of Quezon where BUSCO is located has already exceeded the population of Malaybalay, the capital. The municipality of Valencia has the largest population with 81,835 (NCS 1980).

Some of you might wonder why the Ivatans from the Batanes Islands are now in Bukidnon. This group was ferried there by the government sometime in the late 60's or early 70's as part of its program of "land for the landless." They live together in Barangay Malinao, Kalingang, on the southwestern portion of the province, near the border of Lanao del Sur.

The general atmosphere in Bukidnon today is one of uneasiness, insecurity and resignation. This is so because one does not really know what is happening, or when one receives a threatening letter with a bullet inside. There is the feeling of resignation because one does not have the power to change things or manipulate the condition obtaining in the province. I know of a fraternal brother who had to leave his business in Valencia to a relative because his life was in danger.

As a consequence of this situation, anyone who wishes to conduct a research among the minority ethnic groups must do so with prior clearance and proper identification from the provincial PANAMIN Office, through the recommendation of an office or a funding agency, for as the PANAMIN people say, "who knows, you might belong to the other side! Or, it is possible for you to disappear without a trace by being caught in the crossfire." For my part, I had to have more courage to go into the interior parts, especially after being warned by my colleagues not to venture into those places alone.

In my talk with Datu Ligdin Luminton, the Project Officer (PO) and tribal chieftain at the Umayamon PANAMIN Development Project (PDP) in Katablaran, Kabanglasan, he told me that anyone who enters his settlement is stopped 10 meters away by the CHDF guards with guns pointed at the person and anything he is carrying must be thrown to the guard for inspection before he is allowed to enter.

Bukidnon Languages

There are two native languages in Bukidnon--the Talaandig, which includes the Bukidnon and the Umayamon, and the Manobo, which includes the Tigwahanon and the Matigsalug. Other languages brought in by migrants are Cebuano, Hiligaynon, Waray, Ilocano, Ivatan and Maranao.

PANAMIN Development Projects

PANAMIN runs five development projects (settlement) for the minority ethnic groups in Bukidnon. The first is the Freedom PDP for Bukidnons located at Manyagahon, with satellites in barangay Mariposa and Panamokan. Another satellite will be opened soon at Agtulawan, Impasugong. This PDP at Freedom is headed by Mr. Teodoro Perino or Datu Sanglu-an, the tribal chieftain. The

second is the Matigsalug PDP located at Kalagangan, San Fernando under PO Andronico Lara with Datu Panoda Aldo as the tribal chieftain. Its satellites are barangay Dalwang, Kulaman, Santol, and the Tigwahanon PDP at Katipunan, San Fernando under Datu Basilio Lintawod. The third is the Mando PDP at Anggaan, Limulog and Pigta-oranan, Pangantucan under PO Enrique Tagawasan with Datu Pinto as tribal chieftain. The fourth is the Umayamnon PDP at Tagbakan, Kalomatay and Umagay-ay under Datu Ligdin Luminton. And the fifth is the Talaandig PDP at Songco, Lantapan, with satellites at Kibangray, Kibuda and Mirayon. It also covers the municipality of Talakag. This PDP is under PO Anastacio Saway or Datu Kinulintang, the tribal chieftain.

Talaandig?

A while back, I said I was endorsing and/or recommending the name Talaandig to replace Bukidnon as the name for one ethnic group in Bukidnon and for their language. I am quite sure that should this be accepted, no less than the provincial government and probably the PANAMIN itself will howl in protest, for I know that "Bukidnon" has already become popular and accepted. And besides it bears a strong political weight. Now why should Talaandig replace Bukidnon?

In my interview with Mr. Anastacio Saway or Datu Kinulintang, a Talaandig datu recognized by no less than the important people in the PANAMIN hierarchy and by a number of officials in the region and in Mindanao, he amazes me with his expostulation on why Talaandig should be the name used to identify the native residents of Bukidnon, excluding the Manobos, and his narration on the ethnic history/origin of the native inhabitants, despite the fact that his only civilized talent is to write his name.

As handed down to him by his parents and great grandparents, he told me that there were only four major tribes in Mindanao: the Talaandigs, the Manobos, the Maranaos and the Maguindanaos. Of course this is quite open to question. In Bukidnon, he said, the Talaandigs and Manobos live harmoniously but separately from each other in the central-northern and southern parts of the province, respectively, and that the Bukidnon as they are called today belong to the Talaandig tribe. This is also true with the Umayamnon which have developed a dialectal variation of the Talaandig language. On the otherhand, the Tigwahanon and the Matigsalug belong to the Manobo group, but have adopted the name of the river Tigwa and Salug, respectively, where they are presently residing, just like the Umayamnon, from the Umayam river.

Datu Kinulintang further said that the Talaandigs are divided into the three groups, occupying within territorial boundaries marked by a number of tulogan (a central house in a community for conferences; meetings and peace pacts). The communities which have a tulogan still bear Talaandig names.

The first group is the Talaandig Ibuntoran, who live in the central and mountainous portion of the province; the second, the Talaandig Iluntaron, who live near the seashore as in Misamis Oriental, even including the subprovince of Camiguin Island; and the third, the Talaandig Ibal-uton, who live between the first and the second. The natives living in the first still call themselves as Talaandig, but those in the third are now called Bukidnon.

The name Bukidnon has been given to them by dumagats (migrants from the Visayas and Luzon) and it is a name which has political, personal and emotional overtones.

In fact, he says that those who call themselves Bukidnons are really Talaandigs, for the name Talaandig has been handed down to them

since time immemorial. He cites the fact that the Maranaos, their neighbors to the west of the province, and the Manobos in the south refer to them as Talaandig. To be able to believe his statements, I asked several educated Bukidnons and they too admitted that they are Talaandigs but would much prefer to be called Bukidnons, for according to them, the Talaandigs have often been called paglong (ignorant, illiterate, mountain people). Commenting on the so - called educated Bukidnons with biting sarcasm, Datu Kinulintang said: "Don't they remember that their parents and grandparents used to wear-g-strings and chew betel nut? Why should they be ashamed of being called Talaandigs? They speak my language, which is Tinalaandig; they tell the same Talaandig stories as I do; although, theirs are bookish. We both appreciate an Olaging (Talaandig epic poem) and exalt its main hero, Aglo. We both recite the limbay, sing the sala (mournful song which narrates about problems, sorrows, sadness, difficulties, misfortunes, etc.), tell the nanungon (folk stories, legends, fables). play the same musical instruments as the katyapi and the dayuday, dance the same tribal dances like the dugso, practice the same rituals and ceremonies. These people who are trying to forward the cause of the Bukidnon cannot face me in a confrontation about our true origin and name. Now, what did they do? They stopped the "Kaamulan" because they said they were being robbed of their Bukidnon heritage by the Talaandig. This was due to the fact that everytime it was held, I, a Talaandig, was always at the head of the celebration, participated in by so-called Bukidnons.

I performed the rites in making President Marcos a supreme datu and Madame Marcos a supreme ba-i, besides conferring the title of datu to Brig. Gen. Emilio Luga, to 17 MAR directors and other government officials. Who is always by the government to settle tribal disputes through a tampuda,

not only among the people in Bukidnon but also among the Bilaans and a number in Davao? If there is a minority tribe called Bukidnon, why did Pres. Marcos declare Oct. 14 of every year as "Talaandig Day" and not as "Bukidnon Day"?

Please do not misunderstand me as one trying to be partial with Datu Kinulintang's cause nor should you think that I am making a mountain out of a molehill, because it is probably that most, if not all, of you do not know about this conflict on names. Be that as it may, I have more reasons to believe Datu Kulintang is right and I told him I shall be one of his believers.

In my initial fieldresearch, supposedly on the Bukidnon language, the people I approached and those who were referred to me never mentioned the name of Datu Kinulintang. I now suspect they were unwittingly trying to bring me away from him.

In the light of what you have just heard, I do believe that there is a need to replace the term "Bukidnon" to properly identify the native inhabitants of Bukidnon. I am aware that some of you will have objections yourselves based merely on "let everything be". This is objectionable especially to those who have already passed themselves off as Bukidnons. Incidentally, in yesterday's issue of the PANORAMA, Ms. Margot Bateria had an article listing the ethnic tribes of the Philippines and she mentioned Bukidnon as one of them in the Province of Bukidnon. But no Talaandig nor Manobo was ever mentioned in that article.

At this point in my paper, I beg your indulgence to allow me to digress from my topic by bringing to your attention a case nearly similar in nature as the one I have just presented. It is a case which I call an anthropological misclassification of the minority ethnic tribes in Bukidnon that could affect future researches there. In the ethnological map of the Philippines by Fox

and flory, they placed the Talaandigs, Bukidnons and Umayamons under the Manobo tribes. I asked about this and they were quite adamant in telling me that they are not Manobos and they would never countenance being called one, because they say that the Manobos are a different people with different tribal customs and traditions and language. Now, I leave this case to you for you to make your own decision.

Language Use

In terms of language use, Cebuano is the lingua franca of the province. As they say, "When in doubt as to what language to use with any person at any time and at any place, use Cebuano; or sometime, Tagalog. Non-Cebuano speakers may be able to use their own native languages when they meet their own people and in places where they outnumber other ethnic groups. For example, both Cebuano and Hiligaynon are used interchangeably in the municipality of Kalilangan, but only Hiligaynon is used in the outlying barangays. Hiligaynon is also used with the compound of BUSCO, where most of its employees are Hiligaynons.

As to the Talaandig, it was surprising to note that despite the pre-dominance of the Talaandig populace in such municipalities as Sumilao, Talakag, Lantapan, Impasugong, and in the PDIs visited, Cebuano is the one used as the lingua franca. However, it is used in their more intimate conversations at home or in public when no dumagat is present, in their rituals, ceremonies, pamihat (peace offering to their gods), tampuda, marriages, etc. Among the middle-ages and educated group, there is a tendency for them to shift to Cebuano. The youth are especially less eager to speak in

Talaandig in their conversations. It was only in the PANAMIN office where I heard them speak in their own language quite freely.

On the other hand, the Manobos use their language in a similar manner as the Talaandigs, the Ilocanos, the Tagalogs, the Warays, and the Ivatans when certain situations give them the opportunity to do so. It should be noted however, empirically speaking, that when it comes to shifting of codes, the Manobo would readily shift to Talaandig than the Talaandig to Manobo, when both are proficient in the two languages. When both cannot speak the language of the other, Cebuano again becomes handy.

Finally with the fast inroads of the Cebuano speakers into the hinterlands, despite the settlements of PDPs, the rapid acculturation of the native inhabitants, the dying of the old men and women who until now still hold onto their native customs and traditions and language, and the intermarriages with Dumagats, I fear that the Talaandigs and the Manobos will be completely assimilated by the Cebuanos in the not too distant future, just like some other minor tribes in the Philippines. But before that happens, let us exert our effort to record a facet of their lives for posterity. Let us not wait for foreigners to teach us about our ourselves. Today's Congress augurs well for the minor languages of the Philippines.