



Research Article

Lexicons and Its Meanings in the Matigsalug Manobo Rituals

Nethaneel Joy G. Pabia^{1*}, Emily T. Jungao², Diana Jane Mari R. Rapisora³

1 Department of Languages and Literature, College of Arts and Sciences, Central Mindanao University, Musuan, Bukidnon, Philippines, 8710;

f.nethaneeljoy.pabia@cmu.edu.ph

2 Department of Languages and Literature, College of Arts and Sciences, Central Mindanao University, Musuan, Bukidnon, Philippines, 8710;

f.emily.jungao@cmu.edu.ph

3 Department of Languages and Literature, College of Arts and Sciences, Central Mindanao University, Musuan, Bukidnon, Philippines, 8710;

f.dianajanemari.zaman@cmu.edu.ph

ABSTRACT

Panubad is central in most if not all of the activities of the Matigsalug Manobo people. The people conduct rituals for farming, marriage ceremonies, and burials – the Matigsalug Manobo invoke prayers to their gods for every important community event. This study aims to document the Matigsalug Manobo rituals to preserve and maintain one of the central indigenous knowledge systems and practices of the community. The proponents had video and audio recorded two rituals that were conducted at Sinuda, Kitaotao, Bukidnon. Questionnaires for the focused-group discussion were also utilized in the study to further understand the elements and parts of the ritual. Lastly, two language experts who were members of the Matigsalug Manobo community were then commissioned to transcribe, transliterate, and verify the findings of the study. The study found that the rituals are primarily addressed to the gods and ancestors of the community. They appealed and prayed for their blessing, protection, and guidance throughout the conduct of the activity. Ritual offerings such as chicken and betel nut quid were offered to protect everyone from evil spirits. The *panubad* that was documented and analyzed in the study showcased an integral belief and practice of the people. The Matigsalug Manobo respected the unseen forces of the world and thus must honor them through the practice of rituals. This is to protect the people of the community and to have a harmonious living with the spirits of the world.

Keywords: Matigsalug, Indigenous Knowledge Systems, and Practices (IKSP), Terminology, Language documentation, Ritual

Citation: Pabia, N.J.G., Jungao, E.T., Rapisora, D.R., (2024) "Lexicons and Its Meaning in the Matigsalug Manobo Rituals." CMU Journal of Science. 28(1), 111

Academic Editor: Dr. Merissa Ocampo

Received: January 17, 2024

Revised: June 25, 2024

Accepted: June 27, 2024

Published: July 31, 2024



Copyright: © 2024 by the authors. Submitted for possible open access publication under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY) license (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).

INTRODUCTION

A person's language carries one's culture and identity. However, with various social, political, economic, and personal factors, many indigenous languages encounter challenges in maintaining their language. Degawan (2019) stated that because of discrimination, many parents chose to teach their children the dominant language in their community instead of their indigenous language to create better opportunities for the child in the future. She further stated that treating indigenous languages as merely a dialect can accord indigenous languages with less importance compared to the other national languages. Such problems and discrimination towards the indigenous languages of the Philippines create detrimental consequences to the existence and vitality of the language, culture, and belief systems of the indigenous people. Among the indigenous people community that faces such jeopardy is the Matigsalug Manobo Community of Sinuda, Kitaotao, Bukidnon.

The Matigsalug people handed down their indigenous knowledge systems and practices (IKSP) from their generation to the next only through word of mouth (Josue, 1999). The lack of proper documentation of their IKSP and adequate language policy for the community escalates the endangerment of the Matigsalug Manobo language. She further stated in her report that the imminent disappearance of the Matigsalug's traditional ways into the mainstream of the dominant culture is feared to lead to the language's extinction. These were even raised by the *datus* and *baes* of the community during the conduct of focused group discussions of this current research. Thus, modernization and technology were once again considered pivotal factors that negatively affect the maintenance and vitality of indigenous languages.

Krauss (as cited by Lantaya et al., 2021) has created a four-way classification of language vitality. The four classifications are Extinct Language, Moribund, Safe Language, and Endangered Language. Similar to the account stated by Degawan (2019), all languages have the potential to be moribund or the state when languages are no longer learned by the next generation as their mother tongue. Thus, if the language is not maintained it will someday become extinct.

Preserving the indigenous languages in the Philippines also means preserving the community's traditional knowledge systems (Peñaranda, 2019). However, a community must actively preserve, maintain, and revitalize its language to avoid the dangers of a language shift. Baker (as cited by Lee, 2013) defines language shift as the shift of a minority language user to the dominant language decreasing the number of people speaking the language. Such language shift may happen gradually and

the community may not be aware of the changes and effects. Thus, documenting the community's indigenous knowledge systems and practices is a vital step in language maintenance.

Specifically, this study aims to document the rituals of the Matigsalug Manobo community of Sinuda, Kitaotao, Bukidnon. The name Matigsalug derives from the tribe's place of origin. It means "resident from the Salug River" (Josue, 1999). Josue (1999) also added that the maintenance and retention of the IKSP of Matigsalug are largely reliant on the traditional network of relatives and community relations. The elders of the community also explained that a family member, typically a son, would also take up the role of being a leader. The family members of a *datu* or a *bae* have early exposure to the works and responsibilities of a community elder. Thus, in time, they are also expected to step up to the role when needed. Nevertheless, the next generation learns their traditions, beliefs, and practices in their homes and through observation. It is in this light that the study aimed to document one of the practices of the Matigsalug, their rituals, towards the maintenance of the Matigsalug Manobo Language.

The elders of the Matigsalug Manobo community conduct their ritual (*panubad*) in almost all essential activities and events of the tribe. According to the elders, they conduct *panubad* before tilling the land, they also have *panubad* for weddings and burial ceremonies. They also invoke rituals when they ask for the healing of the sick, and when resolving disputes. The *panubad* is vital in most of their activities as a community. This study focused on the rituals performed to ask permission for the implementation of the study. The study documented two rituals for the study – one was led by a community *datu*, and the other by the *baylan*.

Specifically, the study aimed to (1) identify the important lexicons and terminologies found in the documented rituals; (2) determine the operational meaning of the nouns; and (3) determine the purpose of the identified nouns and terminologies to the ritual (*panubad*). This paper presents the names of their gods and deities that were evoked during the rituals as well as the materials and offerings they used during the rite. However, this paper does not include the etymology of the identified terms. Moreover, the analyses and meanings that this paper was able to construct were verified by language consultants who were members of the Matigsalug Manobo community.

METHODOLOGY

The study is qualitative-descriptive research that focused on the analysis of common nouns and lexicons found in the documented rituals (*panubad*). The research aimed to document and describe the important nouns and lexicons found in the rituals. The rituals are limited to the

documentation of the two rituals performed for the implementation of this study – one was led by a *datu* of the community, and the other by the *baylan* of the community.

The field research was conducted in a span of two months, from September to December 2022, during which time the researchers visited the Matigsalug Manobo community in Sinuda, Bukidnon to conduct the research protocols such as attending the ritual for the study, signing the Memorandum of Agreement between the leaders of Federation of Matigsalug Manobo Tribal Council (FEMMATRICS) and Central Mindanao University (CMU), conducting of needs assessment, securing of IERC permit, and documenting the rituals and the focused group discussion. The study was conducted at the Matigsalug Manobo community of Sinuda, Kitaotao, Bukidnon.

The research also utilized questionnaires for the focused-group discussion. The researchers interviewed the *datus* and *baes* of the community. The informants were from the first and second-generation members of the community. The elders spoke in the Matigsalug Manobo language to properly document the lexicons used for the ritual. The *datu* and the *baylan* who led the *panubad* also spoke in their Matigsalug Manobo language. Video cameras and audio recorders were used to document the rituals and interviews. The researchers also commissioned two language consultants, Mr. Regie Calimpit and Mr.

Jaybert Casantao, to transcribe the recorded data, transliterate the recorded data into Cebuano language, and verify the data analyzed. Both of them are residents of Sinuda, Kitaotao, Bukidnon and are members of the Matigsalug Manobo Community. Moreover, Mr. Calimpit and Mr. Casantao are relatives of the *bae* who led one of the rituals documented for this study.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section discusses the important nouns and lexicons found during the ritual. The data from the focused-group discussion (FGD) were used to give meaning to the identified lexicons. This section is organized by research objectives and is subdivided by the identified nouns and lexicons.

Identify the important lexicons and terminologies found in the documented rituals

Amey ney ne Manama

The Matigsalug Manobo believes in *Manama* who occupies the highest position in the hierarchy of the supernatural (Josue, 1999). Table 1 shows the occurrences of the different names or titles used to refer to *Manama*.

Table 1.

The different titles referring to Manama

Matigsalug Manobo Term	English Translation
<i>Amey ney ne Manama</i>	Our Father Manama (<i>Amahan namong Manama</i>)
<i>Tahikbal te Pangumew-mew</i>	Guardian of Invocation (<i>Abyan sa Pagpanampit</i>)
<i>Tahikbal teg Panbad</i>	Guardian of Prayer (<i>Abyan sa Pag-ampo</i>)

In many occurrences during the rituals, *Manama* is also addressed as *Amey ney ne Manama* or "Manama the Father" in the English translation equivalent to the Matigsalug title. It is also observed that the guardian (*tahikbal*) for prayer is almost always seen in conjunction with *Manama*. The following lines are excerpts from the recorded ritual:

Excerpt: *igbuhengan te malayen lantawan te MANAMA su duen kema ka tahabikal teg pangumew-umew ne maresen*

English Trans.: Doorway to heaven where Manama is seated because you have the powerful guardian for prayers.

Cebuano Transliteration: *gangha-an sa langit bangko sa Manama kay naa man ka ang abyan sa pagpanampit nga gamhanan*

Excerpt: (*hi*) *pamineg kak tahabikal teg pangumew-umew, tahabikal teg panubad, seeye ka nig-ubpe te butelakan*

English Trans.: (*hi*) Listen the guardian of invocations, guardian of prayer, you who lives in heaven (*butelakan*)

Cebuano Transliteration: (*hi*) *paminaw ang abyan sa pagpanampit, abyan sa pag Ampo, dadtu ka nagpuyo sa (butelakan)*

Heavenly beings have guardians (*tahikbal*) with them. Thus, the Matigsalug Manobo people are also referring to Manama when they call for the guardians of invocation and prayer. This was verified by the language consultant of the study saying that the words **tahabikal teg pangumew-umew** and **tahabikal teg panubad** are titles referring to **Manama**. The excerpts further show that *butelakan*, the place where their god *Manama* resides, is also the same place where the guardians reside.

Magbebaya

In many literatures, the Supreme Being is also referred to as *Magbabaya* or *Magbebaya*. In the study of Demetrio (1994), he accounted for three major deities in the Bukidnon concept of god. One is good and the other, evil. While the third one is suspended over the two, keeping the balance among the three major deities. The good deity is called *Wagas ha Magbabaya* (Pure Almighty) – the god of good. In many of the recorded folk narratives of Unabia, the supreme being and the pure almighty are simply addressed as *Magbabaya* (Demetrio, 1994). However, this is not the case for the Matigsalug Manobo indigenous community. For them, *Magbebaya* is a different entity from *Manama*. Nevertheless, *Magbebaya* is one of the gods that they worship, and deemed important that they address their rituals to *Magbebaya*. Unique to the Matigsalug Manobo people, their gods have genders. The following excerpts from the recorded rituals show evidence of this:

Excerpt: egmalayaten seinis tubtubaren ku AMEY ney ne MANAMA iney ney ne MAGBEBAYE iyanpad ngaran kayi neg panebiye a

English Trans.: (I) lift this prayer to Manama and Magbebaya

Cebuano Transliteration: taason kining pag-Ampo nako Amahan namo nga Manama Inahan namo nga Magbebaya king ako a nga magrespeto ko

Excerpt: tubtubaren ku AMEY ney ne MANAMA INEY wey iney ne MAGBEBAYE, TUMANUREN, duma te me gimukud te KAAP-APUAN

English Trans.: (I) pray to Manama)our Father and Magbebaya our Mother, Baylan, together with the spirits of our forefathers.

Cebuano Transliteration: pag-Ampo nako Amahan namo nga Manama og Inahan namo nga Magbebaya, Baylan, uban sa mga kalag sa katigulangan

Tahikbal

Tahikbal are the guardian spirits of the people protecting the community and the environment. Other Bukidnon Indigenous communities might refer to them as *abyan*, but the Matigsalug Manobo would refer to them

as *Tahikbal*. The use of the word *tahikbal* is found consistent throughout the rituals gathered for this study.

Except: Iyan ngaran neg pehim-himenew key wey egpeyidu-hidu key, sikaniyu se tahabikal te me datu, tahabikal te me bei ne migtangkili et te Inged.

English Trans.: we plead and beseech, you who are the guardians of the datu, guardians of the baes of this world

Cebuano Transliteration: kining amoa nga magpakilooy kami og magpakilooy kami, kamo nga abyan sa mga datu, abyan sa mga bae nga nagtaliwan na sa kalibutan.

The excerpt shows that the Matigsalug Manobo believes that there are several guardians (*tahikbal*) who protect the *datu* and the *baes* of the community. Even *Manama* has his own *tahilbal*. For one, the *baylan* (shaman) who led one of the rituals is believed to be blessed with a *tahikbal* allowing her to lead many rituals for the community and heal some of the illnesses of her people. Thus, the *tahikbal* are powerful guardians.

Apu

Apu is the title given to honor the forefathers and *datu* of the tribe. One prominent *datu* to whom the Matigsalug Manobo people also address their *panubad* is *Apu Gawilan* as he is considered a hero in the Manobo Matigsalug community. In many occurrences in the ritual, he is simply addressed as "*Apu*."

Excerpt: AMEY NEY NE MANAMA seeye te hintubagel te tane pakaremeldemel ka, pakabantey ka Apu bangun te inged eyew.

English Trans.: God our Father there beneath the earth, guard over Apu Gawilan

Cebuano Transliteration: Amahan namo nga Ginoo didto sa ilalom sa yuta pagpakalig-on, magbantay ka Apu Gawilan

But aside from *Datu Gawilan*, the *baylan* who led the ritual also called on the forefathers of the Matigsalug Manobo. The *baylan* called on the other *datu* and *baes* to also request their guidance and to continue safeguarding the people and in their endeavors.

Excerpt: beybayan, Apu Mungan, Apu Lene, Apu Mahuralu, Apu Samentan, Apu Ikwangan, Apu Inwahinwin, Apu Pamulew, Apu Timbalungen, Apu Panayangan, Apu Iyakan, Apu

Banbanen, Apu Puhak, Apu Puyayu
igkeupii ku ne kene kew eginiyug

Batu te lawa

Batu te lawa is the Matigsalug Manobo term referring to ritual offerings. There are several

elements of the ritual offerings. Table 2 shows the list of the different elements present during the conduct of the *panubad*. Based on the listed elements found in Table 2, the ritual offerings primarily include the offerings for *Manama*.

Table 2.

List of ritual offerings.

Matigsalug Manobo Term	Translation
<i>uhis ne manuk</i>	White-colored chicken
<i>maetem ne manuk</i>	Black-colored chicken
<i>malalab ne manuk</i>	Red-colored Chicken
<i>Inapuhan</i>	Betel quid
<i>Manika</i>	Betel Nut leaf
<i>Apug</i>	<i>Apug</i>
<i>Mameen</i>	Betel Nut
<i>Tabaku</i>	Tobacco
<i>Piso</i>	One peso coin

The identified important nouns and lexicons are all essential to the ritual (*panubad*). They are categorized as the names of their gods, the spirits and their ancestors, and the elements necessary for the ritual. Ritual is a central practice for the Matigsalug Manobo people. They believe that the gods, spirits, and all other unseen forces must be respected. Josue (1999) stated that rituals, for the Matigsalug people, are necessary to maintain a harmonious relationship

between the people and the unseen forces that control the physical world. The prayers (*tubtubaren*) and rituals (*panubad*) addressed to them are practices of the Matigsalug to show respect for the supernatural.

Determine the operational meaning of the identified lexicons and nouns

Table 3.

The operational meaning of the identified nouns

Nouns	Meaning
<i>Amey ney ne Manama</i>	most powerful mythical ancestor; male
<i>Magbebaye</i>	powerful mythical ancestor; female
<i>Tahabikal</i>	a spirit that guards people and their community
<i>apu</i>	a title given to a dead being regardless of sex; a mythical ancestor
<i>apu</i>	grandfather
<i>Bate te lawa</i>	Offering
<i>Uhis ne manuk</i>	white-colored chicken
<i>Maetem ne manuk</i>	black-colored chicken
<i>malalab ne manuk</i>	red-colored chicken
<i>Inapuhan</i>	offering to the gods
<i>Manika (betel nut leaf)</i>	one of the ingredients of inapuhan
<i>mamaen (betel nut)</i>	one of the ingredients of inapuhan
<i>apug (white, sticky, substance)</i>	one of the ingredients of inapuhan
<i>Tabaku</i>	used in the absence of inapuhan

Amey ney ne Manama

Manama or *Amey ney ne Manama* is considered the most powerful god in the Matigsalug Manobo. His hierarchical order is emphasized in their rituals; he is often mentioned in rituals as the father who owns the life of its people:

Excerpt: ...pendiye te Amey ney ne
MANAMA *ne miggen-gen te geynawa*
ney, egkeila key e, egpeila key uya...

English Trans.: to our Father Manama who is the owner of our lives, we come before you...

Cebuano Transliteration: ... *ngadtu sa Amahan namo nga Manama nga nagunit sa among kinabuhi, maila na kami, magpaila kami tungod...*

He is also perceived as the powerful being who oversees every work of its people (... *kew red ka maresen neg tengteng kanami*: ...*kay naa ramo ang gamhanan nga molantaw kanamo*); who helps (...*wey eg bulig...*: ...*og mo tabang...*), who protects (...*lpariyu nu ka tabangkak, lpariyu nu ka tahalisew...*: ...*ipalayo nimo ang pagsubay, ipalayo ang dimalas...*); and who decides the fate of its people (... *AMEY ney ne MANAMA sikeykew kag gengen te timbangan ne alahe neg tahuan te malebud keg kapelis wey ke kene...*: ... *Amahan namo nga Manama ikaw man ang nag-gunit sa desisyon nga paigong butangan sa makasasala kung matagak og kung dili...*).

In the study of Jocano (n.d.), *Manama* was perceived as one of the principal gods but not considered the highest among them. However, *Manama* is considered as the god and creator of all things in an article about Luman Spirituality (Dabawenyong Lumad, 2012). It is to be observed in Manobo Matigsalug that *Manama* is the highest god.

Magbebaye

According to one of the informants of the study, *Magbebaye* is considered to be a powerful god, but not the highest god in Matigsalug Manobo. Her name is usually mentioned after *Amey ney ne Manama*:

Excerpt: *egmalayaten seinis tubtubaren ku AMEY ney ne MANAMA iney ney ne MAGBEBAYE iyanpad ngaran kayi neg panebiye a*
English Trans.: *we lift our prayers to you, Manama and Magbebaye, as our respect.*

Cebuano Transliteration: *taason kining pag-Ampo nako Amahan namo nga GINOO Inahan namo nga Magbebaye king ako a nga magrespeto ko*

Excerpt: *Hi pamineg ka se Amey ney Manama iney ney Magbebaye,*

English Trans.: *Please listen [to us] Manama and Magbebaye.*

Cebuano Transliteration: *(Hi) paminaw ka nga Amahan namo Manama Inahan namo Magbebaye*

Her hierarchical order in the Matigsalug Manobo is contrary to how she is defined and perceived by other groups. First, *Magbabaya* is perceived as the supreme creator, the highest, most powerful ranking deity among the Bukidnon (Jocano, n.d.; Rodaje, 2014; Sumulong, 2022). Second, *Magbabaya* is perceived to be a male mythical god or ancestor; the pronoun used to refer to *Magbabaya* is 'he' or 'him.' (Jocano, n.d.). Nevertheless, *Magbabaya* is considered a powerful, if not the most powerful, supreme being.

Tahabikal

Tahabikal refers to a guardian or the spirit that guards the Matigsalug Manobo people and the community. These *tahabikal* are mentioned in the rituals for the prayer to reach heaven and *Manama*:

Excerpt: *(hi) pamineg kak tahabikal teg pangumew-umew, tahabikal teg panubad, seeye ka nig-ubpe te butelakan te aldew seeye te ...*

English Trans.: *hear our prayers, our guardian, who lives in butelakan.*

Cebuano Transliteration: *(hi) paminaw ang abyan sa pagpanampit, abyan sa pag Ampo, dadtu ka nagpuyo sa (butelakan) sa adlaw didtu sa ...*

Excerpt: *igbuhengan te malayen lantawan te MANAMA su duen kema ka tahabikal teg pangumew-umew ne maresen, igkeupii ku su seini*

English Trans.: *our most powerful God who is seated on the throne with our guardian...*

Cebuano Transliteration: *gangha-an sa langit bangko sa GINOO kay naa man ka ang abyan sa pagpanampit nga gamhanan, gusto nako kay dinhi*

They are also seen as guardians of the *datus* and the *baes* in the community to oversee their activities:

Excerpt : *iyang ngaran neg pehim-himenew key wey egpeyidu-hidu key, sikaniyu se tahabikal te me datu , tahabikal te me bei ne migtangkili et te lnged...*

English Trans.: *this is our plea, to the guardians of our *datus*, to the guardians of the *baes* who oversee the world...*

Cebuano Transliteration: *kinig amoa nga magpakilooy kami og*

*magpakilooy kami, kamo nga abyan
sa mga datu, abyan sa mga
bae nga nagtaliwan na sa kalibutan...*

In one cultural community, *Tahabikal* does not refer to a guardian or a companion. *Tahabikal*, along with *Manama* and *Mandalangan*, is referred to be among the three bright things that sprung out of a mist in a creation story (Ata Manobo, 2023).

Apu

The word *apu* can be used both as a noun and as a verb. As a noun, there are two uses of the term '*apu*' in the Matigsalug Manobo rituals. One is to address the living and the other to the dead. The living is exclusively used to address a male elderly person or a grandfather. On the other hand, an *apu*, who is mentioned in the ritual, is a supreme being lower than *Manama* and/or *Magbebaye*. Moreover, these *apu* are known to be siblings who are mentioned by humans for different purposes, like asking for knowledge, patience, protection, and guidance. These *apus* are the ancestors who already ascended to heaven using a '*salimbal*' and who always oversee the welfare of their generation. They are not perceived as dead:

*Excerpt: kaapapuan ney ne
miggimeley seeye te buhengan te
malayen ware kew migpatey hin-
paayadayad kew ne miguntud te
(salimbal)*

English Trans.: to our ancestors who have already departed us and are in heaven and who ride on the *salimbal*.
Cebuano Transliteration: katigulangan namo nga nagpahuway didto sa gangha-an sa langit wala kamo namatay maayo kamo nga nagsakay sa (salimbal)

*Excerpt: neg gemew seeye te
igbuhengan te malayen su igkeupii
niyu sikanami se me pagne niyu ne
mateles kag kaulaula...*

English Trans.: for guiding us to have a better path...

Cebuano Transliteration: nga mosangko didto sa gangha-an sa langit kay gusto ninyo kami ang mga myembro ninyo nga maayo ang kahimtang...

In the study of Luquin (2006), an *apu* has a variety of meanings which ranges from 'master,' 'spirit possessor,' 'doer of a ritual,' 'leader,' 'far away relatives of a generation,' to 'ancestor of the cosmos.' Luquin's (2006)

study further revealed that the term *apu* cannot be used in itself; it needs another word for it to be used which is to connote that the two terms do not have the same position.

In the Matigsalug Manobo rituals, the *apu* who are considered to be ancestors of the cosmos, the '*kaapapuan*,' who are:

*...Apu tulalang, Apu banlak, Apu
beybayan, Apu mungan, Apu lene,
Apu mahuralu, Apu samentan, Apu
ikwangan, Apu inwahnwin, Apu
pamulew, Apu timbalungen, Apu
panayangan, Apu iyanan, Apu
banbanen, Apu puhak, Apu puyayu.*

The aforementioned *apu* is mentioned in rituals depending on what is needed in the ritual, namely: *apu Beybayan* is mentioned when knowledge is needed; *apu Mungan* for patience; *apu Lene* for strength; and *apu Mahuralu* for protection and for guidance in choosing which plants or herbs can cure ailments.

Manuk

Uhis ne manuk refers to the white-colored chicken that is believed to give guidance and to give clear and good understanding to the ones involved in the ritual:

*Excerpt: maawang ka pegilingiling
niyu te maresen , migkemm ah te
uhis ne manuk, manuk niyu seini's
uhis, seinis meitem ne*

English Trans.: [you] make our path clear, I'm holding a white chicken, this is yours...

Cebuano Transliteration: hawan ang paglantaw ninyo sa gamhanan, nagunit ako sa puti nga manok, manok ninyo kining puti...

Maetem ne manuk refers to the black-colored chicken that is believed to protect the ones involved in the ritual, project, and/or activity from any evil and misfortune:

*Excerpt: seinis meitem ne nakasewg
peyilem ney seini ne kene key egkakita
te tabangkak, tahalisew, seinis uhis
dalan ney te nangaran ne malebud,
igkeupii ku*

English Trans.: this black chicken represents our *tagolilong*, this will protect us from any challenges, and curses...this white chicken will cleanse us of our sins...

Cebuano Transliteration: kining itom nga nakasagol tagolilong namo kini nga dili kami makita sa pagsulay,

dimalas, kining puti agi-anan namo sa
isip nga makasasala, gusto nako

Inapuhan and Tabaku

Inapuhan is the term that is used to refer to an offering. It is consisting of *manika*, *mamaen*, and *apug*. The *inapuhan* is the offering to Manama and Magbebaye to protect the people from any danger or unforeseen events:

*Excerpt: kaniyu te maresen basta nakita
niyu ne hinpalalong ku sikaniyu te
inapuhan wey tabaku, sikas lugbak,
baliwas te lawa ney*

English Trans.:...we offer this mamaon
and tobacco for our protection

Cebuano Transliteration: kaninyo sa
gamhanan basta Nakita ninyu nga
nagdalit ako kaninyo sa mamaon og
tabako, kining offering, depenssa sa
lawas namo

As mentioned, the *inapuhan* consists of a betel nut leaf known as *manika*; a betel nut known as *mamaen*; and a white, sticky substance known as *apug*. In the absence of *inapuhan*, a *tabaku* can be used as a substitute according to a Manobo Matigsalug source.

Determine the purpose of the identified nouns and terminologies in the ritual.

Table 4.

The purpose of the identified nouns in the Pamuhat

Nouns	Purpose in the Pamuhat
<i>Amey ney ne Manama</i>	invoked as reverence, thanksgiving, supplication, and various forms of petition and requests to Manama and Magbebaye
<i>Manama Magbebaye</i>	as spirit guarding the people, to keep everyone safe and the implementation of the research successful.
<i>Tahikbal</i>	for protection, guidance, and advice
<i>Apu</i>	To obtain benefits, offer thanksgiving, pray for forgiveness, and appease, and please certain deities or spirits.
<i>Bate te lawa</i>	Maintain a good relationship with spirits; Offering to appease bad spirits; can help ward off bad spirits
<i>Uhis ne manuk</i>	Maintain a good relationship with spirits; Offering to appease bad spirits; offering protection from harm; conceals because of its color
<i>Maetem ne manuk</i>	Maintain a good relationship with spirits; Offering to appease bad spirits; to use for strength and protection; blood color as an important offering to the spirits
<i>Malalab ne manuk</i>	defense against danger, curse, and evil; supplicating the souls of the elders, favorite food of the spirits
<i>Inapuhan</i>	
<i>Apog (lime for betel nut)</i>	
<i>Manika (betel nut leaf)</i>	
<i>Mameen (betel nut)</i>	
<i>Tabaku</i>	offering to the spirits; defense against danger, curse, and evil; supplicating the souls of the elders, a representation of the visitors' offering to God; the offering of coin wards off evil, curses, and bad spirits
<i>Piso</i>	

Table 4 shows the purpose of each noun and terminology in the ritual of the Matigsalug Manobo.

Amey ney ne Manama

Manama is considered by the Matigsalug Manobo as the supreme being. Based on the *Panubad*, a sacred tribal prayer, *Manama* is specifically invoked for guidance, the safety of all participants, the success of the research implementation, and other related intentions. This specific ritual is primarily and ultimately an act of recognition of the supremacy and guidance of the Creator in this relationship-building between the two parties. He is always mentioned first in the prayer or ritual, revered respectfully to maintain a harmonious relationship with him, and asked for his protection from evil. He is *Amey ney ne Manama* (Our Father Manama) and is considered the Supreme One.

*Excerpt: Manobo Matigsalug: Mareet uya
sug tamengan kit te amey ta ne **Manama**
dumat te gimukud*

English Trans.: no harm will come before
us as we gather in your presence

Cebuano Transliteration: Natigom ta kini
walay motan-aw nga daotan tongod kay
bantayan ta sa **Amahan natu nga
Manama**

For the specific ritual *Panubad*, *Manama* is always present for reverence, thanksgiving, supplication, and various forms of petition from the community. This is supported by Abejuela (2017) who said that Bukidnons believe that rituals are the highest forms of communication through which supplications are conveyed. Specifically, they invite the spirits of these deities, invoke their guidance for all plans and undertakings, and make requests for successful marriage, child-bearing, bountiful harvests, healing of illnesses, settling conflicts; cleansing and asking for forgiveness, and warding off misfortune and animal pestilence.

Praying to *Manama* and invoking him in the ritual is an adherence to the Matigsalug Manobo's belief in the existence of the spirit world and the goodness of the Almighty Being. It shows itself in the daily reality of experiencing different life transitions such as childbirth, marriages, funerals, and seasonal changes in planting, harvesting, and hunting. Their residences serve as both physical and spiritual homes for them (Gaspar, 2015).

Magbebaye

Other deities can do *Manama*'s bidding. The highest and most powerful deity of the Bukidnon is *Magbebaye*, however, in the Matigsalug Manobo tribe, she is considered a female god but equally respected and revered by them. She is said to be the second in command after *Manama*. The spiritual guardians, custodians, and the supreme being, *Magbebaye* along with *Manama* were invoked to bless and guide the *Baylan*, *Datu*, and the

participants during the rituals. The Matigsalug Manobo believe that in every event, in every celebration, *Magbabaya* and the other deities should always be invoked, invited, or consulted.

Mentioning the various names of *Manama* and *Magbebaye* (*Amey ney ne Manama* and *Manama Magbebaye*) is a powerful way to pray as this infuses the very essence of God into the prayers and proclaiming his power and strength in their lives and the event. There are a lot of names for their supreme being in the tribe because these names define and describe their concept of a supreme being and what their supreme being is capable of doing as perceived by the Matigsalug Manobo community. They give insight to the nature, persona, and character of their supreme being.

Tahikbal

According to Abejuela (2017), rituals involve monologic communication or a one-way communication not just to a Supreme Being but also to lesser gods and goddesses or spirits. *Tahikbal* is the spirit guarding the people of the community and the environment. These spirits' habitats are in the very same elements of the environment (Gaspar, 2015). There are many spirits assigned and invoked in the different areas of the environment and the different aspects of the life of the Matigsalug Manobo community. Decano (2011) mentions that in Bukidnon, there are spirits of the *salsalan* (blacksmith shop) where working tools are made; *Pamulahon hu Kagbasukan* (plants in the farm); *Talabugta* (spirit of the land); *Taghipanaw* (spirits who happen to pass by during the ritual); and *Tumanod, Alambitun, Tagulambong daw mga abyan ha tagsandigan* (helper spirits). The consent of all spirits who have significance to the event would be asked for a successful implementation. In the conducted *Panubad*, there was a need to communicate and invoke *Tahikbal* in prayer or ritual because he is the spirit guarding the people and the environment. In this way, *Tahikbal* would keep all participants and the community safe and the implementation of the research successful.

Apu

In the Matigsalug Manobo community, an *Apu* has many names. People refer to an *apu* as a mythical ancestor, ancestor spirit, guide, and cultural hero. Scott (1994) stated that there are souls in the spirit world who still retain a degree of influence in the material world, and vice versa. Mythical ancestors also figured prominently during illness or death, as they were believed to be the ones who call the soul to the spirit world. They function as a guide of the soul, or meet the soul upon arrival (Scott, 1994).

In the same way as how *Manama* and *Magbabaya* were invoked in the prayers

and ritual, *Apu* is mentioned because he or she gives protection, intercession, or advice.

*Excerpt: Manobo Matigsalug: Suka kaap-
apuan ta an ma ka egbehey kanta te
mateles ne suman-suman ke eg-panubad
ki.*

English Trans.: our ancestors will give us wisdom and guide us in our words in prayer.

Cebuano Transliteration: Kay ang **katigulangan** natu ang mohatag natu sa maayo nga huna-huna ug pag istorya kung mag-ampo ta.

In the *Panubad*, they were believed to have knowledge, expertise, and experience to deal with conducting and implementing research about their knowledge systems. *Baylan* and community *datu* invoked a few *Apu* such as *Apu Tulalang* (ancestor guide of all datu and leader of all *Apu*), *Apu Bangun* (refers to Datu Gawilan), *Apu Banlak* (assigned for meetings of the community), *Apu Beybayan* (ancestor for knowledge) and *Apu Lene* (ancestor guide for hardwork). These *Apu* were significant in that specific ritual and thus they were sacredly invoked for protection, knowledge, guidance, and other supplication together with *Manama*, *Magbabaya*, and *Tahikbal*.

Batu te lawa

Offerings are prepared during rituals to obtain benefits, offer thanksgiving, pray for forgiveness, appease, and please certain deities or spirits. There are many different types of offerings, including food, crops, blood, drink, money, animals, clothing, flowers, fruits, plants, and other materials. Ritual offerings in Matigsalug Manobo are called *Batu te lawa*. Unabia (2000) explains that a ritual is a ceremony performed according to traditionally prescribed rules and differentiated by specific needs and offerings given.

Manuk

Chicken is a highly regarded animal by international and local indigenous people including Jewish, Greek, Chinese, and Indian — among others. Whether chicken domestication was for ritual supply or not, chicken had long played an important role in people's ritual life around the world. There are pieces of evidence to show the early use of chicken in rituals in England. Ethnographic evidence shows that among the Azande in Africa, chickens are only killed for food when hosting important guests (Brothwell, 1997). Indigenous communities not only consume chicken and eggs but also use them extensively in rituals performed to appease gods, the spirits of ancestors,

and nature; ward off demons and evil spirits; and get rid of bad luck. Chickens are sacrificed to mark the start of agriculture activities or a new business; at weddings; as part of birth and death ceremonies, festivals, games, and sporting events; and in traditional medicine, witchcraft, and black magic.

In the *Panubad*, the three *datus* who presided over the ritual each held one native chicken with feathers colored white, black, and red. As stated by the *baylan*, the chickens were used to maintain a good relationship with the spirits. The ritualists were not praying to those bad spirits but they were making an offering to appease them, and for the other spirits.

*Excerpt: Wareg teng-teng ne
mareet su sika's manuk
igpalangesa eyew kahusey, peg-uliey
te meupiyan relasyon.*

English Trans.: no harm will come upon us as this chicken's blood assures of our good relationship...

Cebuano Transliteration: Walay makakita nga dautan kay kanang manok ipadugo arun mahusay, manag uli sa maayong relasyon.

In the Matigsalug Manobo community, *Uhis ne manuk*, or white-colored chicken, is present in the ritual to help ward off evil spirits or bad luck. White chicken may also represent new beginnings or a fresh start since the ritual pertains to the conduct of research between the community and the visitors.

Maetem ne manuk, a black-colored chicken, is associated with the spirit world and is thought to be able to ward off evil spirits. It offers protection from harm and conceals everyone because of its black color which the bad spirits cannot see.

Malalab ne manuk, or red-colored chicken, is used in the ritual because, as most Manobos believe, the color red symbolizes strength and protection (Pontemayor, 2022). The color red is associated with blood which is the most important offering to the spirits. This makes animal sacrifice the central point of most rituals.

Datu Saway of the Talaandig Manobo tribe explained that every part of the chicken carries a blessing depending on what the person chooses to eat. The chicken's heart symbolizes compassion, the head means he will be a good leader and will keep his leadership. The wings will bring happiness through safe journeys. Eating the chicken legs meant that one would not tire in his voyages. To pick on the eyes would mean the person would not be deceived. The tail of the chicken would entice followers to adhere to their leader. The neck would make the person who ate it see everything even from afar. The chest would bring love and brotherhood (Cojuangco, 2002).

Inapuhan

Inapuhan is a ritual offering of *manika* (betel nut leaf), *mameen* (betel nut), and *apug* (lime for betel nut chew). This is meant to be chewed while invoking the mythical ancestor/elders. A portion should be given to the ancestors and another to *Magbabaye*. As mentioned, the *inapuhan* is the offering for the proponents' defense from any danger, curse, evil or unforeseen events. The *inapuhan* is also used to supplicate the souls of the elders so the ritualists and visitors will not offend them.

Excerpt: inapuhan, eyew kene key
egsaheinuwen wey ka mahaliyug ney
(pakulaban) ku ka mahaliyug ney
eyew kene egkakita te mareet
English Trans.: this inapuhan will protect
us and our visitors from any danger...
Cebuano Transliteration: naay inapuhan,
arun dili mi mabuyagan og
ang bisita namo (pakulaban) nako ang
bisita namo aron dili makita sa daotan

A ritual usually begins with an offering of betel chew. The offering of the betel chew initiates an expression of a relationship, whether social or religious. This offering is also considered the spirits' favorite food.

A Western Bukidnon myth explains the sacredness of the betel chew. And it is associated with how people attain immortality, in recompense for their difficult and painful life on earth. In the myth, Nengazen (Supreme Being) made Mungan, Agyu's sister-in-law and the first baylan, by sending her a maya bird that carried betel chew. The areca nut or betel nut was very small and striped with gold. The betel chew in this story signified that Mungan had completed her shamanship and had no need for ordinary food. The spirits and gods eat only betel chew, their favorite food.

Tabaku

Tabaku or tobacco in English is used in rituals in the absence of *Inapuhan* (the offering previously mentioned). The ceremonial use of tobacco has long been recognized by different cultures in the world. Tobacco is sacred for many indigenous people as it is believed to connect the people to the spirit world. Its smoke is said to open the soul allowing the spirits to bring their healing powers and remove negative energy. In the Matigsalug ritual, tobacco was used as an offering and had the same purpose as *inapuhan*.

Piso

In the *Panubad*, the *Piso* or one-peso coin is offered by each visitor and participant present in the ritual. This coin is a representation of the participant offering to

God, the Creator, and the sustainer of the whole cosmos. The coins symbolize the material possessions that are offered to the Great Provider and other spirits. This offering of coin wards off evil, curses, and bad spirits. When a visitor offers

Coins in a semi-circle are indeed gifts to the spirits for peace. These coins, as the Talaandigs prayed, were so "our bodies would not be blown by the wind but held firm on the earth with the coins' weight" (Cojuangco, 2002).

CONCLUSION

The study analyzed the important lexicons and nouns found in the documented Matigsalug Manobo rituals (*panubad*). The rituals started by invoking the important heavenly beings and guardians of the people. The names of *amey ne Manama* and *iney ney ne Magbabaye* were consistently mentioned at the beginning of the two rituals. The names of the guardians as the people's forefathers were then called upon. They were addressed to as *apu*. Finally, there were also the offerings (*batu te lawa*) mentioned such as the *uhis ne manuk*, *maetem ne manuk*, *malalab ne manuk*, *inapuhan*, *manika*, *apog*, *mameen*, *tabaku*, and the *piso*.

The *panubad* or rituals of the Matigsalug Manobo people are firstly addressed to their supreme gods – *Manama* and *Magbabaye* – they are the ones who shall oversee and grant blessing to the activity of the community. After appealing to *Manama* and *Magbabaye*, they will request protection and guidance from the revered *apu* of the community. They would call forth the guardians (*tahikbal*) of the forefathers of the community (*Apu Tulalang*, *Apu Bangun*, *Apu Banlak*, *Apu Beybayan*, and *Apu Lene*) as the Manobo Matigsalug people believe they can guide the people through the knowledge, expertise, and experience that these *apus* possess.

Ritual offerings were also placed on a table and were offered to *Manama* and *Magbabaye*. The three chickens were sacrificed to ward off demons and evil spirits; the *inapuhan* was offered to *Manama*; and the one-peso coin was offered as a representation of everyone who participated in the *panubad*.

The study aimed to document one of the important indigenous knowledge systems and practices of the Matigsalug Manobo people. *Panubad* is vital to the culture and identity of the Matigsalug Manobo. It is a practice that records and upholds the people's central belief that in a way explains their worldview when interacting with their surroundings – that they must maintain a harmonious relationship between the people and the unseen forces that control the physical world. Rituals are their means to communicate to the supreme beings and deities and to ask for their protection and guidance. Rituals are also their means to honor, show respect, and appease the unseen

spirits that surrounds them. Thus, a ritual is performed in every important event of the community.

RECOMMENDATION

The study was limited to two rituals conducted for the entry and blessing of the research project and its proponents who are visitors of the community. It is recommended to document other rituals for other purposes such as for farming, marriage ceremonies, and burials to gain further insights into the people's ritual. Aside from analyzing the important terminologies found in the ritual, researchers may also analyze the structure and patterns of the rituals.

Author Contributions: Prof. Pabia conceptualized the problem of the study and wrote the Introduction. The specific research problems were postulated by all researchers. All three researchers gathered the necessary language data and each researcher analyzed one research problem. Prof. Pabia identified the important lexicons and terminologies found in the documented rituals. Prof. Rapisora determined the operational meaning of the identified lexicons and nouns. Prof. Jungao determined the purpose of the identified nouns and terminologies in the documented rituals.

Funding: This research was funded by Central Mindanao University and received no external funding.

Data Availability Statement: The collective data that supports the findings of this research is not yet available in any publication sites.

Due to the ethical considerations of Central Mindanao University, all the respondents' information were treated with utmost confidentiality and were not projected in this research study.

Acknowledgments: The researchers would like to express their deep gratitude to Central Mindanao University for their support. This study is part of a CMU-funded project entitled Matigsalug Manobo Indigenous Knowledge Systems and Practices Preservation: Documentation of Ethnolanguage, Ethnobotany, Ethnochemistry, and Ethnonursing in Sinuda, Kitaotao, Bukidnon, Philippines (R-0334). The researchers would also like to thank the leaders of FEMMATICS and to the language experts - Regie Calimpit and Jaybert Casantao, for their help and cooperation.

Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare no conflicts of interest. Funders have no input in how the study was designed; data was gathered, analyzed, interpreted; the article was written; or whether the findings was published.

REFERENCES

- Abejuela, H. J. (2017). A pragmatic study on speech acts in Bukidnon rituals. *Asia Pacific*
- Journal of Social and Behavioral Sciences. 14. <https://doi.org/10.57200/apjsbs.v14i0.132>
- Ata Manobo tribe of Davao del Norte: history, culture and arts, customs and traditions [indigenous people | Philippines ethnic group]. (2023). Retrieved from <https://www.yodisphere.com/2023/09/Ata-Manobo-Tribe-Culture-Traditions.html>
- Brothwell, D. (1997). The problem of nature: Environment, culture, and European expansion. *Social History of Medicine*, 10(3), 471-472.
- Buenconsejo, J. S. (1999). *Songs and gifts at the colonial frontier: The aesthetics of Agusanon Manobo spirit-possession ritual*. [Unpublished doctoral dissertation]. University of Pennsylvania.
- Cojuangco, T. (2002) *The Talaandigs: Chanting, dancing and waking the earth*. Philippine Star.<http://www.philstar.com/sunday-life/156377/>
- Dabawenyong Lumad. (2012). Lumad spirituality. Retrieved from <https://dabawenyonglumad.wordpress.com/2012/11/09/lumad-spirituality/>
- Decano, D.D. (2011, July 9). Lagti: A Bukidnon thanksgiving ritual. *Mindanews*. <https://www.mindanews.com/top-stories/2011/07/lagti-a-bukidnon-thanksgiving-ritual/>
- Demetrio, R. (1994a). The Bukidnon Myths of Sickness, Death and Afterlife. *Philippine Studies*, 42(4), 415-430. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/42633464>
- Gaspar, K. (2015, December 15). *Culture as an integral part of social, ecological, and divine relations*. ESSC. <https://essc.org.ph/content/archives/9975/>
- Jocano, F.L. (n.d.). Notes on Philippine divinities. Retrieved from <https://www.asj.upd.edu.ph/mediabox/archive/ASJ-06-02-1968/jocano-notes-philippine-divinities.pdf>
- Josue, L. (1999, July 30). *Our heritage as Matigsalog of Bukidnon: A participatory documentation of indigenous knowledge systems and practices* (A. Tawas, B. Tumindog, & A. Man-Umpong, Trans.).www.ilo.org. https://www.ilo.org/manila/publications/WCMS_766697/lang--en/index.htm
- Lantaya, L., Bonifacio, M., Jabagat, G., Ilongo, L. J., Lucday, E. C. G., & Maluenda, R. (2021). Beyond Extinction: Preservation and Maintenance of Endangered Indigenous Languages in The

- Philippines. *International Journal of Scientific & Technology Research*, 10(12), 54–61.
- Lee, S. (2013). Spanish language maintenance and shift among the Chilean community in Auckland. <https://api.semanticscholar.org/CorpusID:12958664>
- Luquin, E. (2006). To be in relation: Ancestors or the polysemy of the Minangyan (Hanunoo) term 'apu.' Retrieved from <https://sil-philippines-languages.org/ical/papers/luquin-The%20Polysemy%20oft%20the%20Minangyan.pdf>
- Madigan, C., & Rebolos, N. (1963). *Folk-Rituals of the Misamis-Bukidnon Area: A preliminary report on JSTOR*. Retrieved September 26, 2023, from <https://www.jstor.org/stable/43596657?seq=1>
- Peñaranda, R. (2019, April 23). "Language as the Lifeline of Indigenous Identity and Transmission of Culture – AN Open Discourse" (A side event organized by the International Presentation Association). The Permanent Mission of the Philippines. Retrieved September 26, 2023, from https://www.un.int/philippines/statements_speeches/%E2%80%9Clanguage-lifeline-indigenous-identity-and-transmission-culture-%E2%80%93open-discourse
- Pontemayor, F. (2022, October). *Pegsawwit te Kalandihan: Isang personal na salaysay sa sayyew ng mga Matigsalug sa Sinuda, Kitaotao, Bukidnon* Paper presentation]. 12th DLSU Arts Congress, De La Salle University Manila.<https://www.dlsu.edu.ph/wpcontent/uploads/pdf/conferences/arts-congress-proceedings/2019/FAC-07.pdf>
- Rodaje, L.M. (2014). 'Magbabaya' a green god for tribe. Retrieved from <https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/565787/magbabaya-a-green-god-for-tribe>
- Scott, W.H. (1994). Barangay sixteenth-century Philippine culture and society. *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, 29(2), 454-455. doi:10.1017/S0022463400007852
- Sumulong, L. (2022). The spirit of magbabaya was there during the Talaandig day festivities. Retrieved from <https://peacebuilderscommunity.org/2022/10/the-spirit-of-magbabaya-was-there-during-the-talaandig-day-festivities/>
- Unabia, C. (2000). *Bukidnon myths and rituals*. Ateneo de Manila University Press.
- UNESCO, & Degawan, M. (2019, August 9). *Indigenous languages: Knowledge and hope*. UNESCO. Retrieved September 26, 2023, from <https://en.unesco.org/courier/2019-1/indigenous-languages-knowledge-and-hope>

Disclaimer/Publisher's Note: The statements, opinions and data contained in all publications are solely those of the individual author(s) and contributor(s) and not of CMUJS and/or the editor(s). CMUJS and/or the editor(s) disclaim responsibility for any injury to people or property resulting from any ideas, methods, instructions or products referred to in the content.