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Descriptive Analysis of Tandaganon Dialect

¹ Mylis R Bat-ao, ² Jerlyn G Balones

^{1,2} University of Mindanao-Davao City, Philippines

Corresponding Author: Mylis R Bat-ao

Abstract

Language is the most complex invention of mankind. Through it, one can mend or end relationships. This qualitative descriptive paper crafted a descriptive analysis of the Tandaganon language utilized by the people of Tandag City and the municipalities of Tago, San Miguel, Bayabas, and Cagwait. Each locality has ten participants chosen randomly using a convenience sampling technique. It was found that the Tandaganon language has 19 alphabets: three – vowels, 15 – consonants, and three diphthongs: aw [əʊ], ay [aɪ], uy [ɔɪ]. This language follows the syllable patterns: CVVC, CVCV, VCV, CVV, CVC, VCVC, and CVCVC.

Moreover, it was found that cluster reduction and alternation appear in the Tandaganon language. In the morphology aspect, inflection, reduplication, and the use of free and bound morphemes is also evident. In addition, there are terms whereby the localities are all similar; these are the terms for greetings. However, in the terms for body parts, common terms/ physical environment, and activities, there are differences in some of the terms, while there are also similarities out of the identified word list. Synchronic variation is evident in the Tandaganon-speaking localities of Surigao del Sur.

Keywords: Applied Linguistics, Descriptive Analysis, Dialect, Tandaganon, Synchronic Variation, Philippines

Introduction

All over the world, there are more than 6,900 languages (Summer Institute of Linguistics 1). With this significant number, the necessity to conduct language documentation, revitalization, preservation, and identification of language varieties has been pushed to linguists. However, these efforts have been a considerable challenge amongst linguists. Though these endeavors push cultural preservation, linguistic diversity, community cohesion, mental well-being, and traditional knowledge, there are a few people who strive to implement research that goes along with this vision.

As technology and the world changes, so does language. David Crystal posits that language change is uncertain and man's linguistic history can be known, but his linguistic future cannot be foretold (Parab 94) ^[26]. Based on the claim of Biber, language change can be learned in language variation. The awareness of the fundamental differences between the variability within the community makes people appreciate man's intellectual ability ^[33]. Founded in this claim, the researcher aims to inform the readers of the Tandaganon as minority language which contains variations.

However, in present-day linguistics, there are contentions in the problems of variation analysis, representation of a speaker's language capabilities, and the function of systemic variability in a grammar of language (Gawne 95) ^[12]. In addition, research methods and analysis in language variation and change research pose another problem for contemporary science, urging the scientific body to utilize other methods of elicitation, analysis, and evaluation of data for the study. Researchers need extensive natural data to obtain reliable, statistically relevant conclusions. The more factors the linguist must investigate, the more data they need to undertake the study (Meyerhoff 204) ^[22]. The necessity to conduct language variation studies has been encouraged by linguists. However, given the abovementioned problems, careful planning must be considered.

This study, a descriptive analysis of the Tandaganon dialect, is deemed necessary to society and the body of knowledge. The understanding of language variation has been the focus of some sociolinguists. Additionally, the need to have a more precise grasp of the different language varieties in the world is relevant to humanity. The comprehension of language varieties and their importance to an individual makes one more knowledgeable and tolerant of individuality. Penny stated that it is a universal characteristic of man's language; the same language in different parts of a specific geographical area does not speak in the same manner. Thus, a meticulous examination unveils that variations occur gradually, making the speech of each locality different in some of its features from its neighboring localities. However, continuous differences collected as one crosses an area and in a sizeable territory this collection of differences can result in mutual incomprehensibility (1 par. 2). In contrary,

Tandaganon speakers understand each other well.

Furthermore, there are many languages of the world that show the same sentence pattern; on the other hand, a variety of languages come out from a single language (Anderson 1). For this reason, William Labov focuses on pronunciation and not on the grammatical features, for according to him, out of the pronunciation of the speaker you can clearly dissect the distinctness of one language to another. Hence, the necessity to conduct language variation studies and other related endeavors has been encouraged to linguists.

Additionally, language change has been the focus of countless studies which is often applied to the study of systematic variability. Variation paves the way for differentiations amongst individuals, social or regional groups, and nations. Variability is noticeable everywhere in language, in different registers, and different dialects (Parab 92) ^[26]. Languages that were spread over a period depict a less rapid change. In its traditional perspective of linguistic change, variations flourished in other communities to exhibit a chain of events where it can replace its successor, for example, Latin >Hispano – Romance> medieval Spanish> modern Spanish. In conclusion to this event, this feature that is ongoing change constitutes two or more competing variants (Penny 3) ^[28].

In Hazen's compilation of language variation, he postulated that morphology has had an important function in language variation research since the foundation of contemporary variation studies. However, its function is seldom represented as a unified system analyzed. For some fields of language variation, morphology functions as a secondary yet equally important function in shaping the recurrence and quality of language variation. Most scholars revealed that whether a consonant or a vowel follows the stop stringently restricts the deletion range so that the /t/ of the last field will be deleted more than the /t/ of the last owner. The study of Tagliamonte and Temple exposed that morphology affects the rate of variation. For instance, the forms *past* and *passed* can be pronounced as [pæst] for the majority. Moreover, the /t/ of the past will be deleted more often than the /t/ of passed. Such divergences concerning morphophonemic forms and bimorphemic forms are established in English-speaking communities. Additionally, few variationist studies as well focus singularly on the morphological system, such as the study of Sanchez (43) which examined the verbal morphology in the context of borrowing. He revealed that structural linguistic factors govern how borrowing functions in a quantitative valuation of a creole variety, in the case of Papiamentu, which is in contact with Spanish, English, and Dutch.

In addition to morphology, many studies have been conducted on phonological variation. Wolfram's study utilized phonological linguistic variables to measure social relations over forty years; most of his work demonstrates the categories of phonological variables conventionally studied. In 1969, he posits that phonological variables were utilized to display social classifications by race and gender, which includes the final-stop deletion, /θ/→/f/, devoicing of syllable-final voiced stops, and r-lessness. The phonological process /θ/→/f/ is found in varieties of English worldwide, claims Schneider (1123). Into the bargain, Guy evaluates typical phonological limitations on variation, including stress and the characteristics of the following segments. Word stress and varying degrees of phrasal stress were found to be influential in the phonological variation of each

language. For instance, in various languages, unstressed vowels are considerably centralized to schwa, in coordination with the influence of syllable structure, the nature of the following segment, or lack thereof, these determine phonological variation (530). Lastly, the deeply rooted finding in contemporary linguistics is that language variation is typical. Distinctness occurs in every human language, making it unique and different from others.

Guided upon the different pieces of literature, the researcher wanted to answer the following research questions: 1. What are the features of the Tandaganon dialect as to phonology and morphology? 2. What are the similarities and differences of Tandaganon dialect, as to municipality? And 3. What insights can be drawn from the data gathered?

This study focuses on William Labov's theory of variation (1996) which he posits that the speaker's pronunciation is a clear indication of the distinctness of one language from another. This further demonstrates the philosophy utilized in the unveiling of Tandaganon linguistic features such as phonology and morphology and the identification of the similarities and differences as to municipality.

Language is constantly evolving to meet the needs of its users (Rosa 36) ^[31]. As the speakers change, so do the style of communication and language change. The understanding of linguistic varieties and language change should be clearly understood, for out of a better grasp comes a deeper appreciation of one's culture and individual differences. On top of that, the documentation, preservation, and identification of language varieties have been strongly encouraged by linguists. Thus, continuous work in this field needs more hands to achieve the greater purpose of preserving culture through language preservation and documentation.

Subsequently, this academic endeavor will significantly contribute to the body of knowledge as it has been a challenge to linguists and other enthusiasts to participate in the documentation, preservation, and identification of threatened languages. The findings of this study can help future researchers conduct studies related to this project. Tandaganon, a language spoken only by five municipalities of Surigao del Sur in the Caraga region, can be considered a minority language. Understanding the reasons for the synchronic variation of this language is of dire need. Additionally, this can advance the knowledge of the research enthusiasts by addressing the unanswered questions.

In addition, the Provincial Government of Surigao del Sur can make this study a reference for language revitalization endeavors. The provincial government of Surigao del Sur, along with the Department of Education, can significantly benefit from this study since this can be evidence for a language preservation effort. Further, this can also be used to craft instructional materials under the MTB-MLE curriculum.

The speakers of Tandaganon can also directly benefit from this research. Since language is intertwined with culture, Tandaganon speakers can take pride in themselves as an individual. Hence, this also ensures that younger generations continue to speak the Tandaganon language for its long-term survival.

This study was conducted during the academic year 2022-2023. The targeted participants were the native speakers of the Tandaganon dialect located in the municipalities of Tago, Bayabas, San Miguel, Cagwait, and Tandag. In each

municipality, ten participants were chosen randomly to participate in the study. However, there was one perceived weakness of the study, in the city of Tandag most of the people living in the población use code-mixing and code-switching. The use of code-mixing and code-switching in the city is due to the linguistic migrants since Tandag City is the provincial capital of Surigao del Sur, and economic migration is due to fewer job opportunities for job seekers. Suppose the researcher cannot find participants that fit the inclusion criteria of the study, she will travel to the far-flung barangays of the city such as Maticdum, Maitom, Mabuhay, Pandanon, Pangi, Quezon, San Antonio, San Isidro, and San Jose.

Method

Study Participants

Surigao del Sur, Philippines is a linguistically diverse province. With 19 municipalities, it has four dialects. It is in this idea that the researcher was able to come up with the foregoing study. The participants came from the localities of Tandag, Tago, Bayabas, Cagwait, and San Miguel. In each municipality, there were ten participants. However, to achieve factual data, the researcher established an inclusion and exclusion criteria, to wit: the participant must be 50-70 years old, he/she must be a resident of the locality under study for more than 20 years, he/she must have no travel history outside the municipality he/she resides, and lastly he/she must be a native speaker of Tandaganon dialect for him/her to be considered as participant of the study. On the contrary, if one has lived in the municipality under study but is not a native speaker, if he/she is multilingual, and if he/she has a travel history outside the municipality he/she resides, then he/she is excluded from the study.

Additionally, the participation of every participant in this study is entirely voluntary. The participant's refusal did not involve any damage or loss of benefits. He/she may ask the researcher on the possible outcomes of the study and other questions about this academic endeavor. Furthermore, whenever the participant feels discomfort during the interview because of the nature of the topic being studied, the participant may opt not to answer questions that make him/her feel any psychological or emotional distress, or he/she can withdraw as a participant of the study if he/she feels that he/she cannot discuss the information that is asked of him/her. The researcher valued the participation and placed the welfare of the participants as the highest priority during the study. As a further matter, the participants in the study were selected through a convenience sampling technique. She purposely used this sampling technique to ensure that all the participants fit the inclusion criteria set in the study.

Materials and Instrument

The researcher crafted a word list based on the Jadavpur Journal of Linguistics 2018 Supplementary Issue. This issue was used in Conducting Fieldwork on Endangered and Indigenous Languages in India. The word list was divided into four domains; specifically, these were the following: domain 1 – greetings, domain 2 – body parts, domain 3 – common term/ physical environment, and domain 4 – activities. The word list and questions underwent rigorous validation from the four experts of the University of Mindanao and one external validator from the North Eastern Mindanao State University–Main Campus. Suggestions and

further recommendations to polish the instrument were incorporated by the researcher.

In addition, the researcher used a T60 Recording Digital 8GB Voice Audio Recorder Dictaphone, which she bought online through Shoppee Fengru Audio Store. The purpose of this device is to gather accurate record of the answers given by the participants. She also took a photo during the interview through her Samsung A52s cellular phone for further documentation. All the data that were gathered during the interview were extracted from the memory into the HP laptop using Windows 11 x64bit-based Systems and to assure that all the data gathered was safely kept a Samsonite 1tb external drive was used to save a back-up copy of all the data.

Design and Procedure

This study employed a qualitative-descriptive methodology. Qualitative research directs to answer queries concerning the development and discernment of the definition and real-life experience of mankind and its relationship to the social world; it intends to obtain a systematic description and accurate data for a very deep understanding of a social phenomenon (Fossey *et al.* 717). Moreover, Kumar posits that descriptive research is an investigation that solely focuses on examining relationships or associations. It further describes a situation, problem, phenomenon, etc. (334, *par 1*). In addition, descriptive analysis is a research product when it has identified a socially important phenomenon (McFarland *et al.*, *par 1*). It is in this note, that the researcher unraveled the linguistic features of the Tandaganon dialect and delved into its similarities and differences among the localities mentioned in this study through the conduct of an interview.

After the instrument validation and the approval of the Dean of the Professional Schools, the researcher submitted her documents to the University of Mindanao Ethics and Review Committee. Later, the certificate of approval from the said office was issued with a protocol number UMERC-2023-150. Then, the researcher contacted her middleman from the five Tandaganon-speaking localities to identify the study participants following the inclusion criteria set for this scientific investigation.

Moreover, prior to the conduct of the interview, the researcher oriented and discussed with the participants the contents of the informed consent, which they signed when they agreed on the terms and conditions of the study. Furthermore, the researcher was very happy that all of her participants willfully supported this endeavor by answering all the questions that were asked by the researcher herself. None of her participants withdrew during the duration of the research, so the use of a withdrawal form was not necessary. All of them happily participated in this undertaking; they even told the researcher that they were glad that somebody took the initiative to take a closer look at the dialect under scrutiny.

After the interview, the researcher transferred all the data from the memory of the audio recorder to her laptop and external drive for backup purposes. She then transcribed the recorded material, after which a thorough analysis was made. Transcriptions were saved to the computer, and each saved file was based upon the municipality such as: Folder A-Tandag, Folder B- Tago, Folder C-San Miguel, Folder D-Bayabas, folder E- Cagwait.

For the data analysis of this study, the researcher followed the pattern of Creswell (2013), where he identified six steps in data analysis; these were the following: first is the collection of data – this referred to the process of collecting data from the source. The researcher interviewed the participants of this study in the five Tandaganon-speaking localities. Each of them answered all the questions asked by the researcher; second is the engagement with the data – in this study, the researcher managed the data through a thorough transcription and organization, so problem statements one and two were answered; third is code the extracts from the data; fourth is the generation of code categories from the code itself; fifth is the conceptualization of themes from the categorized, coded extracts; and sixth is contextualization and representation of the findings.

During this academic endeavor, the researcher made sure that the participants were aware that their participation was completely voluntary and that if they felt discomfort during the interview, they could withdraw their participation. However, the researcher was so lucky to have gathered participants who actively answered all the queries thrown at them. Additionally, all the data gathered were safely kept in her HP laptop using Windows 11 x64 bit-based systems, and a backup copy of all the data was saved in her Samsonite 1 TB external drive. Moreover, R.A. no. 10173 was carefully adhered to in this study. The participants also filled in informed consent, and they were informed of their rights as participants of this research.

Moreover, the researcher assured the prospective participants of this study that they would not be involved in any dangerous situation, especially, in their physical, psychological, or socio-economic welfare. Further, the questions raised focused on the four domains: domain one – greetings, domain two – body parts, domain three – common terms/ physical environment, and domain four – activities. Most importantly, the participant's name was labeled P1, P2, and so on for privacy and confidentiality.

In addition, the participants did not directly benefit from this study. However, the researcher gave two hundred pesos as a gesture of gratitude for extending their help and time spent on this project. The researcher valued the integrity of this research; thus, constant checking in Turnitin software and Grammarly was done to avoid plagiarism. Also, she ensured that all the authors mentioned in this paper were rightfully given due recognition. Furthermore, she adhered to the rules of the University of Mindanao Ethics Committee by submitting all the necessary documents to gain the Certificate of Approval. Eventually, she was given the said certificate. Likewise, approval from the Local Government Unit through the municipal mayor of each locality under study was carefully observed, and a copy of the letter was given to each of the barangay captains where the target participants of this study were located. In this note, the researcher carried the responsibility and decision in relation to the publication, presentation, and reproduction of this humble research to the body of knowledge.

Results and Discussion

The Linguistic Features of the Tandaganon Language

A linguistic feature is the grammatical or phonological distinctness of a language (Cambridge Dictionary). Different languages exhibit unique linguistic features, and studying these features is essential for understanding and analyzing complex system of communication. These features

collectively define the language and differentiate it from other languages. Like any other language, the Tandaganon language contains features of the language that are unique from other languages. In this study, the researcher focuses only on the phonological and morphological characteristics of the identified language.

The phonological features of the Tandaganon language include three vowels, 15 consonants, and phonemic stress. Under phonotactic constraints, there are five common syllable patterns, consonant clusters, and diphthongs. In addition, for the phonological processes, there are cluster reduction and alternation. Moreover, in the morphological features, morphemes, inflection, and reduplication are inherent in the Tandaganon language.

The Tandaganon Phonological Features

A phonological feature is a distinct feature of the sound of a particular language. The data reveals that the phonological features of the Tandaganon language include three vowels; [a], [i], [u]; 15 consonants; [b], [d], [g] [h], [k], [l], [m], [n],[ŋ], [p], [r], [s], [t], [w], and [y]; phonemic stress – changes in the placement of stress produce another meaning to particular words. Under phonotactics, there are five common syllable patterns – VCVC, CVCVC, VCV, CVV, CVC; consonant clusters – in the Tandaganon language, the words that contain consonant clusters are borrowed words in the Spanish lexicon and in some cases in English and diphthongs. For the phonological processes, there are cluster reduction and alternation.

Tandaganon is a unique language with a phonemic inventory consisting of fifteen consonants and three vowels. Further, it has one suprasegmental phoneme: the stress /'. The vowels are speech sounds formed by human beings, specifically when the breath gushes through the mouth without obstruction from the teeth, tongue, or lips (Cambridge Dictionary). The Tandaganon language has only three vowels, namely; [a], [i], and [u].

The articulation of the vowel sounds is of descriptive categories, identified by the position of the tongue and the lips. The [a] sound in Tandaganon is characterized as low, center unrounded with variations such as: [ā], and [â]; [i] sound is high, front unrounded with lowering of the jaw and slight opening of the lips. The [u] sound is voiced, high back, rounded, moderately depressing the jaw with bit rounded lips and has one variation, [ū]. Moreover, as postulated by Urdas *et al.*, Ilokano, Tagalog, and Cebuano language groups have no significant difference between the vowel [u] and [o]^[37].

Furthermore, the study of Dumanig reveals that the Surigaonon language in Surigao del Norte, which is a neighboring province of Surigao del Sur, consists of seventeen consonants, namely: [b, d, g, h, j, k, l, m, n, ŋ, p, r, s, t, w, y, ?] and three vowels: [a, i, u]^[4]. Unlike the Tandaganon, the data shows that this language has no consonant [j], which makes it different from Surigaonon language, where a common notion of Filipinos says that if somebody is coming from Surigao whether it is from Surigao del Norte or Surigao del Sur, they tend to say that they all speak jaon-jaon.

Conversely, consonants are speech sounds created by initially or fully blocking the airway to the vocal tract (Proctor 3). The Tandaganon language consists of 15 consonants, which are the following: [b], [d], [g]. [h], [k], [l], [m], [n], [p], [r], [s], [t], [w], [y], and [ŋ]. Tandaganon

consonants are classified based on the manner and place of articulation. The manner of articulation demonstrates how the different speech organs play significant roles in creating a consonant sound; primarily, it is how the airflow is obstructed (Ello.uos).

Additionally, Tandaganon consonants' manner of articulation is grouped into subcategories: plosives/stops – in this manner, the speech organs are shut and the nasal cavity is completely shut and obstructing the airstream; nasals – in this manner, the soft palate is lowered, blocking the oral cavity. Air can only pass through the nose; fricatives – in this manner, fricatives are produced when the air propels its way through a narrow gap between two articulators at a balanced pace; laterals – in this manner, the tip of the tongue is pushed down onto the alveolar ridge. The rims of the tongue are lowered so that the air passes through the lowered tongue rims; flaps – in this manner, it is voiced the flaps involved approach each other without touching one another; and glides – or the so-called semi-vowel. It is the twilight zone between the consonants and the vowels.

Likewise, the place of articulation is the location where the sounds come from: it also has subcategories: bilabial which include the letters [p, b], alveolar (lingua-alveolar) [t, d, r], velar (lingua-velar) [k, g], labio-velar [w], labio-velar w, and glottal [h]. Yet, the manner of articulation of the Tandaganon are stops which include [p, b, t, d, k, g]; nasal [m, n, ŋ], fricatives [s, h]; lateral [l]; flap [r]; glide [w] (University of Manitoba).

Furthermore, the syllable stress in Tandaganon is phonemic, marked with a /'. Stress is the emphasis on a syllable of a word or words in a phrase or a sentence (Dash 121). Thus, stress is an inherent part of the phonological representation of words in the mental lexicon; this is not governed by rule. Though it can be displayed that speakers have their own knowledge of the stress patterns of their own language (Culter 78). To boot, some examples stipulate that the placement of stress in the Tandaganon language in other locations will produce a different meaning to particular words. Some changes include from adjective to verb, like the word pu.'yo (stay) is an adjective, and the other one 'puyo (silent) is a verb.

Another phonological feature of the Tandaganon language is the phonotactics, this pertains to the portion of phonology that discusses restrictions on sound orders and syllable patterns of a language. Furthermore, phonotactic constraints are the system whereby syllables must be created in a language. Famous linguist Elizabeth Zsiga posits that languages do not allow random sequences of sounds; instead, the sound sequences that are allowed are systematic and predictable parts of their structure. Thus, phonotactics is how every sequence of sounds is made by the parts of a syllable, influenced by many factors surrounding a

particular language and where it is being used (Oxford Dictionary).

Also, Anderson asserts that these phonotactic constraints vary from one language to another and are essential in the understanding of the phonological structure of a language (J). For example, English contains phonotactic restrictions that prohibit [tɫ] and [dɫ] in onsets. However, this is not a universal restriction. Moreover, some languages allow onsets of [tɫ] and [dɫ] like Ngizim, which has words like [tɫà] 'cow' (Schuh par 3), and in Hebrew which has words like [dli] 'bucket' (Klein 4).

The critical aspects of phonotactics in the Tandaganon language are the following: *syllable pattern or syllable structure* – these are phonotactic rules that determine the structure of syllables in a language. It specifies which combinations of consonants and vowels are allowed in the beginning, middle, and end of a syllable; *consonant clusters* – these are phonotactic rules that address the permissible combinations of consonants within syllables. Thus, phonotactics define which consonants can appear in these positions and in what combination; *diphthongs* – phonotactic rules may specify whether certain combinations of vowels are allowed within a word or a syllable.

These phonotactic constraints characterize possible phoneme sequences in a language. For example, in the English language, /ŋ/ may occur in a syllable, which is in the location of the coda, but such is not a prevocalic or in the onset. However, this is not true for the Tandaganon language since it could be placed in a prevocalic or onset location. Below is the syllabic structure of ngay-an meaning later and ngasa meaning why.

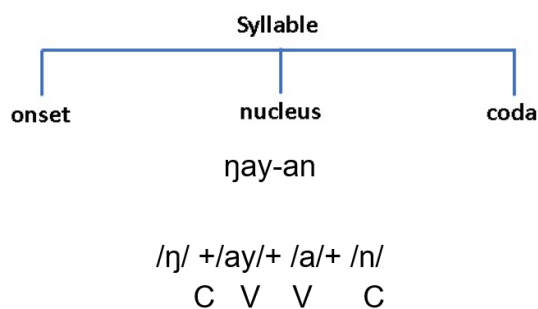


Fig 1: Syllable Structure

The word ngay-an meaning later has a nucleus vowel which is a diphthong /ay/. It could be deduced that in this word, the syllabic pattern is CVVC. Concerning the sonority sequencing principle, the word ngay-an follows this principle. As observed, it is characterized by the following order: the onset is a stop, the nucleus is a vowel, and the coda is an approximant. Additionally, some syllables adhere to the sonority sequencing principle, and many languages adhere to it (Carlisle 3 par 2)^[4].

Table 1: The Tandaganon Syllable Pattern

Syllable Pattern	Tandaganon Word	Sample Statement
VCV	unu /u/ + /n/ + /u/ V C V	<u>unu</u> dayun? What then?
CVV	lau /l/ + /a/ + /u/ C V V hai /h/ + /a/ + /i/	May <u>lau</u> ngadto sa unahan. There is a pond over there. <u>Hai</u> mo pagabutang an yabi? Where did you put the key?

	C V V	
CVC	dūm /d/ + /ū/ + /m/ C V C	<i>Dūm</i> na kay. <i>It's already nighttime.</i>
VCVC	abay /a/ + /b/ + /ay/ V C VC	<i>Abay</i> pagkadto ngadto sa bāy nan imo amigo. <i>Don't go into your friend's house.</i>
CVCVC	dabas /d/ + /a/ + /b/ + /a/ + /s/ C V C V C panaw /p/ + /a/ + /n/ + /aw/ C V C VC	Paghinay pagkaat kay basin kaw <i>madabas</i> . <i>Be careful in climbing you might fall.</i> Abay na pag pa naw kay dūm na. <i>Don't go out anymore because its already nighttime.</i>

It can be noticed in Table 1 that the Tandaganon syllable patterns are the following: VCV, CVV, CVC, VCVC, and CVCVC. These syllable patterns are the most common in the Tandaganon language.

Table 2: The Tandaganon Consonant Clusters

Clusters	Sample Words	English Gloss
B r	<u>b</u> rawn	Brown
D r	<u>d</u> rowing, <u>dr</u> uga	drawing, drug
G r, w	<u>g</u> ri <u>po</u> , <u>gw</u> antis	faucet, gloves
K r, w	<u>k</u> wenta, <u>kw</u> atro	count, four
M y	<u>m</u> yer <u>kules</u>	Wednesday
P l, r	<u>pl</u> ato, <u>pl</u> anggana, <u>pr</u> ito	plate, basin, fry
T r	<u>tr</u> ese, <u>tr</u> angka, <u>tr</u> apo, <u>tr</u> aydor	thirteen, lock, rug, traitor

Table 2 unveils that the flap [r] frequently appears in the majority of clusters, namely: [br], [dr], [gr], [kr], [pr], and [tr]. Aside from the consonant clusters, diphthongs also appear in this language under study. Diphthongs refer to the gliding vowel in the articulation where there is a continual shift from one location to another. This is usually signified in the phonetic transcription of speech by means of a pair of characters signifying the initial and final arrangement of the vocal tract (Britannica.com).

Table 3: The Tandaganon Diphthongs

Diphthongs	Sample Words	English Gloss
aw [əʊ]	day <u>aw</u> , say <u>aw</u> , pan <u>aw</u>	good, dance, walk
ay [aɪ]	ab <u>ay</u> , hin <u>ay</u> , hum <u>ay</u> , ng <u>ay</u> -an,	don't, water slow, rice husk, later,
uy [ɔɪ]	kam <u>oy</u> ,	toes

Researcher Roach, as cited by Dosia and Rido, states that diphthongs are sounds that consist of movement or glide from one vowel to another since diphthongs are a blending of two vowels [21]. It can be noted that in the Tandaganon language, there are only three diphthongs: [aw], [ay], and [uy].

In like manner, the Tandaganon language contains phonological processes. These phonological processes are patterns of sound mistakes usually developed in children's usage to cut down speech as they learn to communicate. Among these processes are cluster reduction and alternation. Cluster reduction is the omission of one or more consonants in the consonant cluster. It can occur in a syllable-initial or syllable-final position. Furthermore, it also happens when a

consonant of a cluster is deleted. Table 4 displays the cluster reduction in the identified language under study.

Table 4: The Tandaganon Cluster Reduction

Cebuano	Tandaganon	English Gloss
dalan	dān	Way
palad	pād	Palm
sulod	sūd	Enter
Dala	dā	Bring
halang	hāṅ	Spicy
Tuló	tū	Drip
balay	bāy	House
tuklod	tūd	push

Table 4 shows the cluster reduction in the Tandaganon language. Cluster reduction occurs when one or more consonant cluster is omitted. The basis for claiming a cluster reduction is the Cebuano language since it is considered one of the major languages in the Philippines and it is also widely used in Southern Mindanao (Demeterio 322) [7]. It can be remarked in Table 4 that the following Cebuano terms accompany a CVCV or CVCVC syllable structure. Whereas, in the Tandaganon language, it can be perceived that the examples cited follow a CVC syllable structure. Moreover, it could also be deduced that one syllable is omitted or a CV cluster, but a long vowel is used in its stead. For example, the word "dalan" syllable structure is CVCVC; in the Tandaganon language, it is dān, which follows the CVC syllable structure. Another example is the word "tuklod" in Cebuano, which follows a CVCCVC syllable structure, but in Tandaganon, it is tūd, which follows a CVC syllable structure. It could be understood that cluster reduction is occurring in the Tandaganon language since, in the following example, only a cluster is reduced. These findings agree with the claim of Williamson, which postulates that cluster reduction could be incomplete or with at least one member of the cluster is still produced, or it could be total [2]. Besides cluster reduction, alternation is also evident in the Tandaganon language. It is the difference in the form and/ or sound of a word or word part (Nordquist 1) [23]. Tandaganon language undergoes the process of alternation, where a certain consonant is changed when placed between vowels and the beginning of the word. The alternations are based on Cebuano, one of the major languages of the Philippines. Table 5 shows the alternation process of [l-r], [l-w], [l-t], [l-p], and [m-r].

Table 5: The Tandaganon Alternations

[l-r]		
Cebuano	Tandaganon	English Gloss
wala	wara	none
bula	bura	bubble
tulog	turog	sleep
[l-w]		
Cebuano	Tandaganon	English Gloss
sulat	suwat	write
ulan	uwan	rain
balud	bawud	wave
bulak	buwak	flower
bulag	buwag	separate

[m-r]

Cebuano	Tandaganon	English Gloss
maot	raut	Ugly
[l-p]		
Cebuano	Tandaganon	English Gloss
lakaw	panaw	Walk
[l-t]		
Cebuano	Tandaganon	English Gloss
lantaw	tan-aw	Watch

In this alternation process of [l-p] and [l-t], it could be observed that the alternation occurred at the beginning of the word starts with a consonant letter. The alternation of [l-r] and [l-w] occurred between vowels. Based on Cebuano, it could be deduced that Tandaganon has a unique way of expressing ideas. In the study of Parrucho and Tarusan, it was affirmed that alternation is a phonological process whereby a particular letter is replaced by another (189).

The Tandaganon Morphological Features

Morphology in linguistics is the study and description of the formation of words such as their inflection, derivation, and compounding of a language (Merriam-Webster Dictionary). The Tandaganon language contains morphemes and is the smallest unit of language that carries meaning. It can be individual words or parts of words. It is classified into two main categories: the free and bound morpheme. Inflection is modifying a word to indicate various grammatical features such as tense, case, number, mood, gender, and person. In the case of the Tandaganon language, inflection changes the tense and number of the word. Reduplication is a linguistic phenomenon where a portion of a word, usually a morpheme is repeated to convey a specific meaning. It is a common feature in many languages, and it serves various purposes. In the Tandaganon language, one purpose of reduplication is plurality and the creation of related words to indicate tense, aspect, or mood.

Morphemes as the smallest unit of meaning in a language is categorized into two: free and bound morphemes. Free morphemes - refer to a morpheme that can stand alone. Free morphemes do not need bound morphemes to form another word since it has a meaning of its own (Marfa 32). On the contrary, the bound morphemes cannot stand alone. These morphemes need free morphemes to create another word. Morphemes are classified as prefixes, infixes, and suffixes. The prefix is a bound morpheme attached before the root, while the infix is attached in between the root word, and the suffix is attached after the root word. Table 6 shows the morphemes of the Tandaganon language.

Table 6: Tandaganon Morphemes

Prefix	Infix	Suffix
ga, gi, in, min, mi, pag, paga, tin, ting, yaka, ya, yag, yanga	ni, si	an, ay, han, hay, hi, ir,

As shown in Table 6, the following are the prefixes, infixes, and suffixes in the Tandaganon language

Examples		
Prefix		
Root	Morpheme	Sample Statement
uwan (rain)	mi	Miuwan na. (<i>It rained.</i>)
	ga	Gauwan na. (<i>It's raining.</i>)
Infix		
Root	Morpheme	Sample Statement
tiil (foot)	ni	Unuy abay mo tiniil? (<i>Why do you keep on walking barefoot?</i>)
		Pirmi ko sa ini sila tiniyab nan ila mga sayup. (<i>I always scold them of their wrongdoings.</i>)
tiyab (scold)		
Suffix		
Root	Morpheme	Sample Statement
gwapa	hi	Gwapahi an imo badu. (<i>Your dress is very beautiful.</i>)
	hay	Mas gwapahay da yaun kaysa nan ini. (<i>That is more beautiful than this.</i>)

It could be perceived that the changes made by the bound morphemes change the tense of the word and word class. Moreover, the suffixes *hi* and *i* signify the superlative degree of an adjective in the Tandaganon language. For example, the word *gwapa* in the illustration above *gwapahi* means very beautiful. Whereas, if the suffix *ay* is used in the word *gwapa* it becomes a comparative degree. In addition, in the municipality of Tago as what Table 6 displays, Tago makes use of the suffix *ir* to signify superlative degree of an adjective thus, for the example *gwapa*, its superlative degree in other localities is *gwapahi* in Tago it is *gwapahir*. Another morphological feature of the Tandaganon language is inflection. Inflection is defined as a change that marks the grammatical role of the parts of speech, such as nouns, pronouns, verbs, adverbs, etc. Inflectional morphemes are utilized to create another variant form of a word. Inflection in a language is important because it sends information regarding its tense, agreement, person, and number (Ismail 142).

Table 7: Tandaganon Inflection

Root	Morpheme	Tense	Number
kanta	yang (<i>yanganta</i>)	past	plural
kaon	ga (<i>gakaon</i>)	present	singular

It is found that many of the morphemes of the Tandaganon language are inflectional morphemes. Moreover, using inflection in the Tandaganon language changes the tense and number of the word. For example, in Tandaganon, the word *dabas* (*fall*), when added by a prefix *ya* it becomes *yadabas* which is singular in number. However, when the prefix *yang* is added it becomes *yangadabas* where it also becomes plural in number. As observed in the Tandaganon language, inflectional morpheme is prevalent. Based on the study of Öz, inflectional morphemes do not change the grammatical category of a term (93). Moreover, it only brings out another version of an adjective as can be seen in

the examples cited.

Another morphological feature of the Tandaganon language is reduplication. In a language, it is a morphological occurrence where duplication of a word, element, root, or its stem gives emphasis, amplifies, enlarges, and changes the verb tense to give significant changes or another meaning (Kauffman *par 3*; Jin and Fang *par 2*) [18, 17]. In the Tandaganon language, reduplication is evident. Its use is to signal the number of persons involved in a sentence and emphasize an action being done. However, when a bound morpheme is added, it is also used to signal the verb tense.

Table 8: Tandaganon Reduplication

Example	
Root	sayaw (dance)
Affix	<i>Gasayaw-sayaw (dancing, present tense)</i> Si Maria kay <i>gasayaw-sayaw</i> . (<i>Maria is dancing.</i>)
Affix	<i>Yagsayaw-sayaw (were dancing, past progressive tense).</i> <i>Yagsayaw-sayaw sa yadto sila ni Maria iban an iya mga barkada kahapon ngadi sa gym. (Maria and her friends were dancing yesterday here in the gym.)</i>

Based on the Comparative Study on Reduplication in English and Chinese by Junshu Jin and Zhiyi Fang, they posit that reduplication is a prevalent occurrence across the different languages of mankind. In the morphological area of English and Chinese, both languages observe full and partial reduplication, but for their subcategories, English and Chinese differ. Whereas, in English, reduplicates can be categorized into three common categories, which include

rhymes, ablauts, and echoes, but in Chinese, it is subdivided based on its syllables (423).

Similarities and Differences of Tandaganon Terms

Language is a complex product ever invented by mankind. In English-speaking countries variation exists, which is why the job of linguists is challenged in identifying variation. The researcher identified four domains in this study to identify the similarities and differences in the Tandaganon-speaking localities of the province of Surigao del Sur in the Caraga region namely: Tandag, Tago, San Miguel, Bayabas, and Cagwait. In the domain 1 - greetings, domain 2 – body parts, domain 3 – common terms/ physical environment, and Domain 4 – activities respectively.

It could be noted Table 9 that in the first domain – greetings, there are 12 identified terms. As reflected, it could be noticed that there are five different terms in this particular domain. For the greeting, *how are you?* In Tandag, San Miguel, and Bayabas it is *kumusta na kaw* but for Tago and Cagwait it is *kumusta*. Also, in the greeting *good morning* for Tandag, Tago, San Miguel, and Bayabas it is *madayaw na hapon* but in Cagwait it is *maayong buntag*. For the greeting long time no see, in Tandag, San Miguel, and Cagwait it is *dugayi na kita wa magkita* but for the speakers in Tago they will say *kadugay na nato wa magkita* but in Bayabas it is *dugayi na kita wa yagkita*. Further, for the greeting what’s up? Speaker of Tandag, San Miguel, and Bayabas will say *unu na kaw anhi?* While speakers in Tago and San Miguel will utter *unu na sa kaw anhi?*

Table 9: Similarities and Differences of Tandaganon Terms in Domain 1

Greetings	Tandag	Tago	San Miguel	Bayabas	Cagwait
Hi	hanu?	hanú?	hanu?	hanu?	hanu?
Hello	hanu?	hanu?	hanu?	hanu?	hanu?
How are you?	kumusta na kaw?	kumusta?	kumusta na kaw?	kumusta na kaw?	kumusta?
Goodbye	adi naay ako	ngadi na ako	ngadi na ako	ngadi na ako	ngadi na ako
Good afternoon	madayaw na hapon	madayaw na hapon	madayaw na hapon	madayaw na hapon	madayaw na hapon
Good morning	madayaw na buntag	madayaw na buntag	madayaw na buntag	madayaw na buntag	maayong buntag
It’s a pleasure meeting you	dayaw kay gakita pa kita	madayaw kay yagkita kita	madayaw kay gakita pa kita	madayaw kay gakita pa kita	madayaw kay gakita pa kita
Long-time no see	dugayi na kita wa gakita	kadugay na nato wa magkita	dugay na kita wa magkita	dugayi na kay kita wa yagkita	dugay na kita wa magkita
What’s up?	unu na kaw anhi?	unu na sa kaw anhi?	na unu na sa kaw anhi?	unu na kaw anhi?	unu na kaw anhi?
How are you feeling?	unuy pagabati mo	unu sa anhin pamarahi mo?	unuy baya pagabati mo?	unuy baya pagabati mo?	unuy baya pagabati mo?
Take care	ayu ayu kaw	pag-amping	amping	pagbantay	amping
Good evening	madayaw na gabie	madayaw na gabie	madayaw na gabie	maayong gabie	maayong gabie

Concerning this, Barzan and Heydari claim that a dialect is a variation in grammar and vocabulary, including sound variation. Though identifying the precise boundaries of dialect is a complex concept, linguists argue that a dialect is

a collection of features that forge one group of speakers as different. However, they are speakers of the same language (par 3, 4).

Table 10: Similarities and Differences of Tandaganon Terms in Domain 2

Body Parts	Tandag	Tago	San Miguel	Bayabas	Cagwait
arm	bokton	alima	alima	bokton	alima
face	bayhu	bayhu	ginawungan	bayhu	ginawungan
beard	balbas/bungot	bangas/ bangason	bungot	bungot	bangas
hip	pigi	pigi	bat-ang	bat-ang	bakagwang
forearm	bokton	bokton	bokton	alima	kamot
ankle	kiting	buku-buku	luatan	kiting-kiting	kiting-kiting
wrist	pulso	pulso	pulso	pulso	pulso
hands	pād	alima	alima	kamot	alima
chin	kuku	kuku	suwang	kuku	kuku

hair	buhok	buhok	buhok	buhok	buhok
eye	mata	mata	mata	mata	mata
neck	liog	liog	liog	liog	liog
mouth	baba	baba	baba	baba	baba
forehead	tuktuk	tuktuk	tuktuk	buna	tuktuk
toes	kuyamoy sa siki	kuyamoy sa siki	kuyamoy	kamoy	kuyamoy
toenail	kuku sa siki	kukuhon	kuku	kuku	kukuhon
feet	lapa-lapa	lapa-lapa	yapating	siki	lapa-lapa
knee	tuhod	tuhod	tuhod	tuhod	tuhod
thigh	paa	paa	paa	paa	hita
buttocks	bat-ang	bakagwang	bakagwang	bat-ang	labut
legs	siki	bitiis	siki	bitiis	siki
navel/ belly button	pusod	pusod	pusod	pusod	pusod

As displayed in the table above, it could be observed that 13 terms are different in this domain out of the 22 identified terms for the body parts. These are the examples of the different terms: arm – in Tandag and Bayabas it is called *bokton* while in Tago, San Miguel, and Cagwait it is called *alima*. Another is the word chin, it is called *kuku* in Tandag, Tago, Bayabas, and Cagwait but in San Miguel it is *suwang*. Further, the word ankle is called *kiting-kiting* in Bayabas

and Cagwait but in Tandag it is *kiting*, and in Tago it is *buku-buku* while it is called *luatan* in San Miguel. It could be also be noted that there are terms where all the municipalities are the same while there are also words that are different per municipality. This event shows that variability is noticeable everywhere in language, in different registers, and in different dialects (Parab 92) ^[26].

Table 11: Similarities and Differences of Tandaganon Terms in Domain 3

Common Terms	Tandag	Tago	San Miguel	Bayabas	Cagwait
Back	likod	likod	likod	likod	likod
Tall	taas	taas	taas	taas	taas
Handsome	gwapo	gwapo	gwapo	gwapo	gwapo
Poor	pobre	pobre	timawa	pobre	pobre
Love	gugma	gugma	gugma	gugma	gugma
Nail	lansang	lansang	lansang	lansang	lansang
Work	trabaho	trabaho	trabaho	trabaho	trabaho
what?	unu?	unu sa?	unu?	unu?	unu?
how?	unhun/ giunu/pagaunu?	unhun/ giunu/pagaunu?	unhun/ giunu/pagaunu?	unhun/ giunu/pagaunu?	unhun/ giunu/pagaunu?
When	kagan-o	kinun-o	kinun-o	kinun-o?	kinon-o?
Believe	mitoo	mitoo	too	sumitido	motoo
Charcoal	uling	uling	uling	uling	uling
Intelligent	mahibawo	mautok	malantip	brayt	brayt
Waterfall	togonan	dapanas	busay	tugonan	busay
Moon	buwan	buwan	buwan	buwan	buwan
Rain	uwan	uwan	uwan	uwan	uwan
Wave	bawud	bawud	bawud	bawud	bawud
Lightning	kilat	kilat	kilat	kilat	kilat
Thorn	dugi	dugi	dugi	dugi	dugi
Rock	bato/ kabatohan	bato	bato	bato	bato
Enough	sakto na	hunong	sakto na	sakto na	husto na
Last	katapusan	iwit	timon	katapusan	katapusan
Branch	sanga	sanga	sanga	sanga	sanga
zero	sero	baong	wara/ ningar	sero	baong
second	ikaduha	ikaduha	ikaduha	ikaduha	ikaduha
first	first	una/pirmiro	first	pirmiro	pirmiro
fast	paspas	ikyat	tulin	paspas	paspas
thin	nipis	nipis	nipis	nipis	nipis
many	damu/damui	damu/ damuir	damui/damu	hamuk	damu/ damui
crowd	kadamuan	arangi	pundok/panon	damu	damu
darkness	madugom	madugume	tugidloman	dugom/ kadugom	dugom
empty	bakanti	way loon	bakanti	basiyo	basiyo
rice husk	upa	upa	upa	upa	upa
livelihood	panginabuhian	panapi	panginabuhian	kabuhian	panginabuhian
slow	mahinay	mahinay	hinay	hinay	hinay
pair	paris	paris	paris	paris	paris
beautiful	gwapa	gwapa	gwapa	gwapa	gwapa
where?	hain?	hain	hain	hain?	hain?
weather	panahon	panahon	tempo	panahon	panahon
storm	bantulinaw	bagyo	bagyo	kulyada	bagyo
leaf/ leaves	dahon	dahon	dahon	dahon	dahon
fog	gabon	gabon	gabon	gabon	gabon

ocean	dagat	dagat	lawud	lawud	lawud
forest	lasang	guwangan	guwangan	guwangan	guwangan
clouds	panganod	panganod	panganod	panganod	panganod
servant	masugo	masugo	masugo	masugo	masugo
rice seedling	similya	similya	similya nan humay	similya	similya
carpenter	panday	panday	panday	panday	panday
teacher	maestra	maestra	maestra	maestra	magtutudlo
politician	politiko	politico	politico	pulitiko	pulitiko
blacksmith	pandayan	pandayan	pandayan	pandayan	pandayan
flower	buwak	buwak	buwak	buwak	buwak
sun	suga	suga	suga	suga	adlaw
pond	lau	linaw	banhaan	limot	lau
air	hangin	hangin	hangin	hangin	hangin
shadow	lambong	lambong	lambong	lagbong	lambong
fisherman	mananagat	mangisdaay/ mangmingwitay	maningisda	mananagat	mangingisda
river	suba	sapa/ suba	suba	suba	suba
sky	panganod	panganod	kawanangan	kawanangan	panganod

In the third domain – common terms, it can be noted that there are 20 different terms out of the 59 identified words in this domain. These are the following: for the word poor it can be observed that all the Tandaganon-speaking municipalities say *pobre* except for San Miguel which is

timawa. For the word what, all others will say *unu* but only Tago will utter *unu sa*. For the word when, others say *kinunu* but Tandag will say *kagan-o*. For the word waterfall, in Tandag and Bayabas it is *tugunan*, but for San Miguel and Cagwait it is *busay* while in Tago it is *dapanas*.

Table 12: Similarities and Differences of Tandaganon Terms in Domain 4

Action Words	Tandag	Tago	San Miguel	Bayabas	Cagwait
sing	kanta	kanta	kanta	kanta	kanta
draw	drowing	drowing	drowing	drowing	drowing
exchange	baylo	baylo	baylo	baylo	baylo
wash dishes	gahugas	gahugas	gahugas	gahugas	gahugas
fall	yadabas	yadabas	yadabas	yadabas	yahüg
count	ihap	ihap	ihap	kwenta	ihap
talk	gatabi	gatabi	gatabi	gaistoryahay	gatabi
cook	tugna	galuto	galuto	galuto	galuto
walk	gapanaw	gapanaw	gapanaw	gabaktas	gapanaw
scold	gatiyab	inkasakitan	inkasagan	gatiyab	inkasakitan
break	yabuak	yabuung	yabuak	yabuak	yabuak
ride	gasakay	gasakay	gasakay	gasakay	gasakay
shout	gasinggit	gasinggit	gasyagit	gasinggit	gasinggit
swim	langoy	langoy	langoy	langoy	langoy
dream	damgo	damgo	damgo	damgo	damgo
kick	sipa	sipa	sipa	sipa	sipa
pull	guyod	guyod	bira	bira	guyod
push	tüd	tüd	duso	tüd	tüd
bring	gabitbit	gabitbit	gadā	gadā	gadā
give	hatag	hatag	hatag	hatag	hatag
hit	yaigo	yaigo/ inkigdan	yaigo	yaigo	yaigo
buy	gapalit	gapalit	gapalit	gapalit	yangumpra
sleep	turog	turog	turog	turog	turog
dig	gakabot/ galungag	galungag/ gakabot	gakabot/ galungag	gakabot/ galungag	gakabot/ galungag
plant	tanom	tanom	tanom	tanom	tanom
clean	limpyo	limpyo	hinlo	hinlo	limpyo
stand	indog	indog	indog	indog	indog
stay	gahuya	gahunong/gapuyo	gahuya/paghuya	gahuya	gapahuya
fight	gaaway	gasinumbagay	gasinumbagay	gaaway	gaaway
fry	pirito	pirito	pirito	pirito	pirito
argue	irgo	gadiskote	lalis	lalis	lalis
write	suwat	suwat	suwat	suwat	suwat
dance	sayaw	sayaw	sayaw	sayaw	sayaw
harvest	gaani	gagalab	gaani	gaani	gagalab
run	dagan	dagan	dagan	dagan	dagan
play	duwa	duwa	duwa	duwa	duwa
wash clothes	laba	laba	laba	laba	laba
pray	gaampo	gaampo	gaampo	gaampo	gaampo
read	gabasa	gabasa	gabasa	gabasa	gabasa
boil	gasubo	gasubo	bukal	gapasubo	gasubo

In this domain, the action words. There are 40 identified terms but only 14 terms are different, these are the following: for the word walk, others say it *gapanaw* but in Bayabas it is *gabaktas*. The word fall is *yadabas* in Tandag, Tago, San Miguel, and Bayabas but in Cagwait it is *yahüg*. The word break in Tago is *yabuung* but others will say it *yabuak*. Amazingly, there are terms where Tandaganon speak differently but all these Tandaganon-speaking municipalities understand each other very well.

Justin Jon Rudelson, in his book *Central Asia Phrasebook Languages of the Silk Road*, as cited by Hudson, asserts that as a person traverses throughout the heart and boundary of Central Asia, it could be concluded that the Turkic languages are dialects of one another and are not unique languages which further implies that if one can learn even one, then he can comprehend the majority of the Turkic languages. These Turkic languages constitute a continuum of closely related dialects [8]. However, Rudelson refers to the z-Turkic (common Turkic) language; the Turkmen, Uzbek, Kazakh, Kirgiz, and Uighur, since the Turkic language has two main branches; the r-Turkic and z-Turkic. On the contrary, in the Tandaganon language, though the speakers are from the neighboring municipalities, there is some vocabulary in domain four that is different from one municipality to the other but this case does not make the

speakers unintelligible from each other. Nevertheless, Barzan and Heydari postulated that all the aspects of language, which include morphemes, syntactic structures, meanings, and phonemes, are subject to variation. Thus, variation in language use among its speakers or group of speakers is a remarkable point of reference that can happen in accent (pronunciation), lexicon (word choice), or even the preferences for a grammar pattern. Moreover, a dialect is a variation in grammar and vocabulary in addition to phonology. Thus, the extent of dialectal differences is a continuum; while other dialects are less different, some are extremely different [2]. In the study of Ojanola, where the participants are the four Blaan communities in the SOCCSKSARGEN Region he clearly postulated that the Blaan language varies from one context to another within the region (405). This event clearly indicates that language variation is present everywhere.

The Researcher’s Insights from The Data Gathered

The researcher interviewed 50 different people from the Tandaganon-speaking municipalities of Surigao del Sur; thus, she gained a significant understanding from carefully analyzing the data. Below are the themes that come up upon the validation of data.

Table 13: Themes on the Insights Drawn

<p>Variation in phonological and morphological features are noticeable as people study, move or marry in other places</p>	<p><i>San Miguel, P7:</i> When our youth decides to move and get married elsewhere, as they get back they bring other terms in Tandaganun</p>
	<p><i>Tago, P5:</i> When children get married, they also marry the languages they got from other cities or places.</p>
	<p><i>Bayabas, P4:</i> Also, when parents send their children to college and enroll in big universities, they learn new terms there, too.</p>
	<p><i>Tandag, P3:</i> Native intonations, become mixed up with other natives as they get exposure in the cities.</p>
	<p><i>Cagwait, P3:</i> We learn new terms because we hear it from other speakers in town.</p>
<p>Migration brought variation</p>	<p><i>Bayabas, P2:</i> In the municipality of San Miguel there are members of cultural minority there. They have different language there and in Tago I can say that they are also different it is not the same.</p>
	<p><i>San Miguel, P5:</i> There are Bol-anons with a mixture of races like pure Bisaya, Cebuano, and Ilokano, then exposed with other natives of Tandag.</p>
	<p><i>Tandag, P6:</i> Because of the population, we have now a mixture of races then there are also migrants who choose to work here.</p>
	<p><i>San Miguel, P4:</i> San Miguel is a confusing place because it is a mixture of races; we have here cultural minorities, Bisaya, and Ilokano. We, the old folks here are from Tago.</p>
	<p><i>San Miguel, P2:</i> Here in San Miguel, different people are living in this place.</p>
	<p><i>Tago, P6:</i> Because the people here are actually different. When you go to Tandag few kilometers from there the people there are using another language. In Cagwait as well, the people there are different.</p>
<p>Language migration is evident due to transfer of residence or livelihood reasons</p>	<p><i>Tandag, P9:</i> Maybe it is because of the different people who came here then they stay here for work.</p>
	<p><i>Tandag, P7:</i> It is maybe because of the different people who came here and choose to work here</p>
	<p><i>San Miguel, P1:</i> It is because of the different people who come to work here</p>
	<p><i>Tandag, P1:</i> This is maybe because of the migrants that is why folks here tend to imitate their language</p>
	<p><i>San Miguel, P10:</i> Also, our place seems to be inviting migrants since there are many migrants here.</p>

When the participants were interviewed, they all knew how to speak Tandaganon. Others know more than one variety of Tandaganon. Some are educated and are living with grandchildren and their children. The first theme unveiled in this study is *Variation in phonological and morphological features, which are noticeable as people study, move, or marry in other places*. The participants are aware that there are phonological and morphological variations in Tandaganon. They all point out that Tago uses *ir* in their use of adjective. Moreover, the tone of the people of Tago contains more stress than other localities. However, in the

study of Penera about the Surigaonon language, she firmly postulated that intermarriages steered Surigaonons to meet people who speak other languages, and then they speak some of these languages in formal circumstances, resulting in the adoption and use of non-Surigao terms and nativizing them (122). This is what the participants of this study believe. Whenever their children look for greener pastures, frequently when they come back, they bring along with them a new language, a language that they learned due to their internal migration activity. Thus, this participant’s belief confirms the paper of Sibiri *et al.*, which posits that

the spatial mobility of people from one area to another significantly impacts the first language of the immigrants (18).

The second theme uncovered is that *migration brought racial differences*. From what the participants observe, some migrants who have stayed in their place for a long time have not changed their language; instead, they have become an agent bringing a new language. These migrants become lifetime migrants since they have established their own families in this province and thus adopt a new culture that helps them thrive in their new environment, making the locality a culturally diverse municipality. However, one of the participants in Tandag shares her feelings toward her neighbor, a Boholano. She clearly stated that it is like they have in their place an invisible barrier where both locales interact, but they are using their different language. Boholanos resist using Tandaganon, and the native speakers do not speak their language. However, both parties understand each other very well. Language attrition is not an issue in this place, making the place culturally diverse. The municipality of San Miguel is also the same; they have in their place Ilocanos, Bisaya, Surigaonons, and indigenous groups, but all these people interact and come to an understanding with each other in the same place and time. Language contact is evident in this locality (Thomason 1) [36].

The third theme found in this study is that *language migration is evident due to transfer of residence or livelihood reasons*. The municipality of San Miguel has more Ilocano migrants. Native speakers say that it is because of the vast land area of their place since Ilocanos are land-loving people. In the study of Eberhard, he strongly discusses that the determinants of internal migration in the Philippines are education, wealth, and status. With these three, he further claims that migration due to employment and intermarriages threaten the native language's use (1). For the Tandaganons who have experienced internal migration and have contact with non-Tandaganon speakers, the chances of adopting a new language are great. Some evidence clearly shows that internal migration reduces poverty reduction and economic development (Deshingkar and Grimm 4), and people usually migrate for greener pastures, safety, and the belief that by doing so, they can achieve their dreams in life (Gallego *et al.* 1) [11]. This is similarly true from the experience of one of the participants. She was born in one of the municipalities of Surigao del Sur, but she stayed in Tandag for more than 50 years. She said that the reason for leaving her hometown was too much poverty in her place, but in Tandag, she said that as long as you strive hard, you can eat three times a day and send your children to school. Moreover, since she grew up in this city, she and her family speak the language fluently. Her children, born and raised in Tandag, are native speakers of Tandaganon.

Implications and Concluding Remarks

Implication for Linguistic Practice

The Philippines is a multilingual country; it has language policies that prioritize language diversity and preservation to conserve the country's cultural legacy and achieve social fairness. The 1987 Constitution emphasizes the propagation of Filipino as a literacy language, the development of Filipino as a symbol of national unity, and the maintenance of English as an international language for the Philippines

(National Commission for Culture and the Arts). However, the prioritization of English and Filipino as dominant languages has led to the marginalization of some indigenous languages, reflecting a linguistic ideology that favors specific languages over others (Zeng and Li 2) [37]. With 183 living languages, preserving regional and indigenous languages requires structural fixes and institutional support. Preserving the country's languages is crucial for decolonizing history and understanding culture and heritage. The power of language can be used to decolonize histories and promote sovereignty, as it provides access to culture and a deeper understanding of roots and colonial histories. Thus, while the language policies in the Philippines prioritize specific languages, there is a growing recognition of the importance of preserving and promoting the country's diverse linguistic heritage.

In addition, the R.A. 7104 is the act that created the Commission on the Filipino Language, or now the so-called Komisyon sa Wikang Filipino, tasked to undertake, coordinate, and promote research for the expansion, generation, and conservation of Filipino and other Philippine languages. Along with this purpose is the creation of the MTB-MLE curriculum by the Department of Education, which is to advance the cognitive and reasoning skills of the learning children to engage in different languages – commencing in their first language with the transition to Filipino and then English to equally preserve Philippine cultural treasure. The said curriculum is expected to have a significant impact on the preservation of the major and minor languages of the Philippines by providing a framework that supports language development, cognitive growth, academic success, and socio-cultural awareness. Moreover, in the province of Surigao del Sur setting, specifically in the Tandaganon-speaking localities, the first language is not utilized. Instead, Sinugbahanong-Binisaya is used in instructional materials. Even if the regional language is utilized, Surigaonon is also a different language. This makes it difficult for learners to understand; thus, accomplishing the objective of MTB-MLE is a challenging task.

Tandaganon language can be applied in crafting instructional materials so that the learners will not have difficulty understanding the vocabulary used. Furthermore, since the province is a linguistically diverse area, it may also be considered that the usage of other languages is incorporated into the MTB-MLE classrooms. On top of this, language revitalization and preservation can be given enough action. As the researcher claims, though its vitality is stable, it continues to be threatened by intermarriages and internal migration. As culture and language are intertwined, significant endeavors can be made. Thus, the loss of cultural heritage, disruption of intergenerational transmission, non-preservation of oral traditions, and, in the worst-case scenario, language death may be avoided.

Implication for Future Research

It is the call of the linguists to study languages that are still unknown to mankind's knowledge. Documentation and revitalization are already part and parcel of this language preservation efforts. Hence, preserving the minor languages in the Philippines is pivotal for maintaining the country's rich linguistic diversity and cultural heritage. Some approaches can be taken into consideration to attain the goal of preserving minor languages; the first is community

involvement. Permission from the communities themselves is significant for this project. Initiatives should involve and respect the communities whose languages are being preserved. The second is documenting rituals and traditions. Projects documenting rituals and traditions, like the kapagipat ritual of Maguindanao, require gaining permission and involvement from the community, highlighting the importance of respecting the cultural significance of the language. Third is awareness and education.

In addition, raising awareness about linguistic diversity in the Philippines is essential. Efforts can be made to educate people, especially in the urban areas, about the importance of preserving and respecting minor languages. Fourth is the promotion of non-verbal literature. Recognizing the necessity of non-verbal literature as an important part of any language is necessary which may include preservation of oral traditions, songs, and other forms of non-written language expression. Lastly, the incorporation of language preservation in education. Integrating language preservation efforts into the education system, such as through the Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education (MTB-MLE) curriculum, can play a significant role in preserving minor languages. Therefore, with the community's involvement, raising awareness, and integration of preservation efforts into education, the Philippines, a multilingual country, can work towards conserving its rich linguistic heritage.

Furthermore, as a language educator, language preservation is also the author's concern. Incorporating language preservation in teaching can be achieved through different strategies that focus on respecting and valuing the cultural and linguistic diversity of students. The first is to embrace student's native languages. Teachers can encourage students to use their native languages in the classroom. This approach helps to create a space where students' assets and cultures are recognized, fostering a sense of belongingness and pride. The second is to teach students native languages. Teachers can create an activity that collaborates with students who speak the same native language to learn content in their languages. This approach can allow students to engage in the activity while supporting their linguistic development. The third is to use the native languages as a bridge. Teachers can use students' native languages as a bridge to connect them with their culture, history, and society. This approach helps students to develop a deeper understanding of their roots and cultural background. The fourth is to integrate language and culture. Teachers can teach language through cultural context by exploring traditional stories, songs, and customs. This approach helps students understand the cultural significance of the language, thus, fostering a sense of connection to their heritage. By incorporating these strategies into teaching, educators can play a crucial role in preserving endangered languages and fostering cultural diversity in classroom (Christie 8, Smrekar *et al.* 1, Silverthorne 106) ^[5, 35, 34].

Concluding Remarks

Biringhinas, pamarahi, lau, linaw, limot; these are just a few words I learned during my dissertation writing. In solitude, I reminisce about everything I experienced as a child growing up in a rural area. Back then, we did not speak English in our homes, only in classes. Unlike nowadays, kids learn quickly their second language, which is English. At the age of three, I can see children conversing with their parents using this language. Sometimes, I am in awe of these kids,

but as a language educator, it also bothers me so much that these kids, little by little, do not know how to speak their tongue. How did it happen? It is undoubtedly because of the frequent screen time that our children spend in a day watching their favorite videos or movies. We, as parents, became so proud that they learned it in just a little time. But are we not sad? On the other hand, our language is slowly threatened due to our negligence.

Our children are significantly influenced by the language they often hear on their phones and television. Then we often wonder, how in the world did they learn all these? The human brain is truly one of the most fantastic creations ever made by God, and even neuro-scientists sometimes cannot explain certain circumstances. We thought that we were already free from American colonization years ago, but the reality speaks that we are slowly turning our backs on our own identity and culture as Filipinos. Embedded in our blood are our language and culture, different from our colonizers. Thus, this paper challenges linguists and linguists alike to document and help preserve our languages, as it is our primary concern to advance the frontier of language.

Thus, Wade David, a National Geographic Explorer, once said that language is not only a vocabulary or a set of grammatical rules. A language shows the human spirit. It is a vehicle whereby the soul of every culture comes into the material world. There are many contentions in the efforts to identify dialect, variety, and many others to resolve the understanding of the variation phenomena. Still, one thing is for sure: human beings use language to connect. In as much as the knowledge of the scholars in dealing with many trivial matters in language may each man make use of this instrument to communicate better, emphatic to one another and achieve harmonious relationships even if there are differences in race and culture.

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