

**Meranaw Language Vitality in Select Lanao Municipalities:
A Preliminary Assessment**

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Article Info	Abstract
<i>Article History:</i> Received 05 July 2025 Approved 13 December 2025 Published 30 April 2026 Keywords: Meranaw, Language Vitality, EGIDS, heritage, culture, language documentation	Language vitality is determined using various forms of language vitality measurements. One of these is the Expanded Graded Intergenerational Disruption Scale (EGIDS) developed by Lewis and Simons (2010). Meranaw, coded as [mrw] in Ethnologue, is a language under the Danao Language group and is reported endangered. This is seconded by a dissertation declaring it as Level 6b (threatened). Motivated by this reported language status, the researchers, who are native speakers of the said language, conducted this study to assess its vitality. Informants were selected through purposive sampling in four major divisions of the Meranaw communities. Different generations were also considered as a criterion for informant selection. The study revealed that the Meranaw language is vitally safe and is used in different domains in the province. These findings are contrary to the reported status above. The challenges perceived in language maintenance are the weakening use of language at home, influence of education and language policy, shifting language attitudes among speakers, influence of media, technology, and younger generation, migration and language attrition, and vocabulary loss. On the other hand, the initiatives reported include the home-based language initiatives, role of schools and formal education, documentation and material development, institutional and government support, and social media content creation. This entails updates on language dynamism and stability in inner and outer communities should be defined well to ensure vitality status. The study recommends another investigation using another instrument to cross-check the status of the Meranaw language.

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INTRODUCTION

The Meranaw language is an indigenous language in the Philippines that belongs to the Austronesian language family and is coded as [mrw]. It is primarily spoken by the Meranaw people in the provinces of Lanao del Sur and Lanao del Norte in Mindanao, Philippines. With an estimated ten (10) thousand to one (1) million total users, it is used as a first language by some

people in every generation of the ethnic community and is used as part of instruction in some schools. It is classified as an endangered language, which means that the intergenerational transmission of the language as its first language is gradually reduced (Ethnologue, 2025).

The vitality of Meranaw language is solely rely on the native speakers. Their usage in their own mother tongue in various domains signify the proliferation of the language. The gradual change

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of language among generations is usual process, however, the current observations on many languages are alarming on its fast-paced change among younger speakers. Hence, the Meranaw language is no exception to the observed phenomenon. Ethnologue (2024) provides two (2) dimensions to the characterization of the endangerment of a language: the number of users who identify with a particular language and the nature of the uses or functions for which the language is employed. In the first dimension, a language may be endangered because fewer people use it or pass it on to their children. In connection to the Meranaw language, even though children speak Meranaw in their daily activities, English, Filipino, and Arabic are the languages of instruction and interaction in most schools or madrasah, which potentially influences parents' decision to prioritize teaching these languages at home for their children's academic success. Ruelo's (2024) study on the assessment of Meranaw Language Vitality in Iligan City, which revealed that the EGIDS classifies the Meranaw language in Iligan City as Level 6b or 'Threatened,' which indicates that while a majority can speak the language, not all transmit it to their children.

The second dimension that characterizes the endangerment of language pertains to the lesser uses or functional areas in which the language is used. In the case of the Meranaw language, Esconde (2023) asserts that the endangerment of the Meranaw language is attributed to its underrepresentation in academic writing and research and its limited number of attempts to advance the study of the Meranaw language. Similarly, Jamora (2014), revealed that the Arabic language and writing system are significant in the learning of religion and are used in the Madrasah. Arabic script is utilized as another way of typing or writing Filipino or Meranaw in communication. Both learners and teachers share the impression that Filipino, English, and Arabic have higher prestige than Maranao and other vernacular languages. This explains the endangered vitality of the Meranaw language, as it exists under the shadow of more dominant languages.

However, due to mentioned notions and the limited investigation to the central community of Meranaw language on its vitality, an assessment gap is found. This endeavor is in line with one of the objectives of the Summer Institute of Linguistics (SIL) (2025): if a language is showing signs of endangerment, there is a need to study its vitality and determine the broader factors that are motivating the shift and the sustainability of efforts to develop it.

This study holds the Ethnolinguistic Vitality Theory (EVT) to further inquire the vitality of Meranaw. It accounts the speakers how the language use it in their communication in daily interactions (Yagmur & Ehala, 2011). Ehala (2015) pointed two key components: sustainability and strength. Moreover, ethnolinguistic vitality can be assessed using a combination of objective and subjective measures. Objective vitality focuses on factors such as demographics, status, and institutional support. In contrast, subjective vitality pertains to the attitudes and perceptions of speakers towards their own language and other languages within the community, how speakers perceive the value of their language as part of their cultural heritage, and motivations or reasons behind the choice of speakers to use or not use their language in different situations (Ehala & Giles, 2017).

This study utilized both measures through the use of the Expanded Graded Intergenerational Disruption Scale (EGIDS) of Lewis and Simons (2010), which consists of thirteen (13) levels, each with specific labels, to assess language vitality and vulnerability to endangerment. The objective of this study extends beyond merely identifying a single level of language vitality; it involves drawing from the narratives of native Meranaw speakers regarding their understanding of the language. Using the EGIDS decision tree, the interpretation is guided by the key questions presented. This approach seeks to address the limitations of categorizing a language into a single level, as it does not align with the conventional statistical quantification methods used by other instruments. Nevertheless, the EGIDS remains a widely utilized tool for assessing language vitality and can

significantly contribute to determining language preservation efforts for the Meranaw language. To assess the vitality of the studied language, the following questions are used to determine the language status where Meranaw is mainly spoken:

1. What is the status of the Meranaw Language using the Expanded Graded Intergenerational Disruption Scale (EGIDS)?
2. What are the challenges encountered by the locals in language use and maintenance?
3. What initiatives are practiced by the locals to continuously use and maintain the language?

METHODS

This study employed a qualitative method, specifically a descriptive research design. This was deemed appropriate as it allowed the researchers to capture in-depth insights and perspectives of native Meranaw speakers concerning language use. Fieldwork procedures were observed, guided by ethical protocols and culturally appropriate methods to engage with the key informants and elicit information.

The study was conducted in various municipalities across Lanao Province, including Baloi, Madamba, Ganassi, Balindong, Taraka, Bayang, Tugaya, Saguwaran, Masiu, and Marawi City. These municipalities were strategically selected to reflect the geographical and sociolinguistic distribution of native Meranaw speakers across Lanao. Through snowball sampling, a total of 46 key informants participated in the study. They were native Meranaws, living and born in the said municipalities, and had an age range of 18-70. Following Samarin's (1967) criteria for reliable informants, each key informant was chosen based on his or her communicative competence in the Meranaw language and ability to provide context-rich information. In addition, they were selected to include a diverse range of backgrounds such as out-of-school youth, morit (Islamic learners), students, teachers, government employees, Local Government Unit officials, Ustadhs/Imaams, traditional leaders, farmers,

vendors, housewives, drivers, etc. This ensured that data were gathered from individuals who represent different social functions and domains where the Meranaw language is used. The selection also considered generational categories—Baby Boomers, Generation X, Millennials, and Generation Z—to align with the Expanded Graded Intergenerational Disruption Scale (EGIDS).

This study mainly utilized a semi-structured interview guide. To identify the current status of the Meranaw language, the researchers patterned the inquiry on the five key questions provided by Lewis and Simons (2010). Hence, the Expanded Graded Intergenerational Disruption Scale (EGIDS), developed by Lewis and Simons (2010), served as the analytical framework for determining the vitality status of the Meranaw language. The EGIDS ranks languages on a scale from Level 0 (International) to Level 10 (Extinct), with the lower levels revealing stronger vitality and the higher levels indicating endangerment or loss. Moreover, the interview guide was also used to explore the challenges encountered by the key informants in language use and maintenance, and the initiatives and practices in their communities. Field notes, audio recorders, and checklists were also used in the conduct of the study. Each municipality had dedicated sessions for data gathering, depending on the availability of informants. The researchers did the following: (1) pre-fieldwork preparation, which includes community coordination and itinerary planning; (2) actual data collection through interviews; and (3) post-fieldwork reflection and transcription of data.

To thematically arrange the data, the descriptive coding was carried out to filter key statements of the respondents regarding their own language. After the codes were made, themes were created to ensure classifications of the responses as support to the result from the EGIDS. Themes show the language perceptions of the speakers which have been taken to understand the challenges and some issues in the maintenance of Meranaw Language.

Following the ethical procedures, the paper is reviewed. While there could be no harm in the

process of data presentation while keeping the privacy of the informants, the researchers frame the questions based on previous literatures to avoid the biases as they are also native speakers of the studied language. Moreover, autoethnography is not used in the study to clearly limit the influence of the researchers to the informants.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Meranaw language has been used in the provinces of Lanao del Norte and Lanao del Sur. This section provides the perception of the Meranaw people themselves in the reality of their language today. Following the discussions on language shift and death as prominent concerns in language survival, the reverse of the shift is a measurement of how much work is done in the language (Lewis & Simons, 2010).

Meranaw Language using the Expanded Graded Intergenerational Disruption Scale (EGIDS)

The Expanded Graded Intergenerational Disruption Scale (EGIDS) of Lewis and Simons

(2010) was developed from Fishman's original work. This instrument is enriched by the different factors accounted for in the discourse of language endangerment. The influence of UNESCO and Ethnologue as a comprehensive catalog for language vitality and status has become the foundation for the search and continuous investigation of languages globally that are relevant to analysts and practitioners (Lewis & Simons, 2010). Thus, the Meranaw language is no exception from an interest of investigation on its status.

Following the key questions in administering the EGIDS, this study emphasizes the importance of the individual perceptions of the informants as to how their own language has been through and if the changes are obviously detrimental to its survival, particularly affecting its strength and sustainability as an existing language. Therefore, the EGIDS reflects the individual level. The highest number of responses quantitatively from the levels is deemed the status or language level of the Meranaw language. The following tables present the language status:

Table 1. EGIDS on Meranaw Language

Level	Label	Description	UNESCO	Quantitative Response
0	International	The language is widely used between nations in trade, Safe knowledge exchange, and international policy.	Safe	0
1	National	The language is used in education, work, mass media, Safe and government at the nationwide level.	Safe	0
2	Provincial	The language is used in education, work, mass media, and government within official administrative Safe subdivisions of a nation.	Safe	5
3	Wider Communication	The language is widely used in work and mass media without official status to transcend language differences across a region.	Safe	5
4	Educational	The language is in vigorous oral use and this is reinforced by sustainable transmission of literacy in the language in formal education.	Safe	14
5	Developing	The language is vigorous and is being used in written form in parts of the community though literacy is not yet sustainable.	Safe	10
6a	Vigorous	The language is used orally by all generations and the situation is sustainable.	Safe	12
6b	Threatened	The language is still used orally within all generations but there is a significant threat to sustainability because at least one of the conditions for sustainable oral use is Vulnerable lacking.	Vulnerable	0

7	Shifting	The child-bearing generation can use the language among themselves but they do not normally transmit it to their children.	Definitely Endangered	0
8a	Moribund	The only remaining active speakers of the language are members of the grandparent generation.	Severely Endangered	0
8b	Nearly Extinct	The only remaining speakers of the language are elderly and have little opportunity to use the language.	Critically Endangered	0
9	Dormant	There are no fully proficient speakers, but some symbolic use remains as a reminder of heritage identity for an ethnic community.	Extinct	0
10	Extinct	No one retains a sense of ethnic identity associated with the language, even for symbolic purposes.	Extinct	0

Note: Dark grey- main level of the Meranaw Language vitality, Light grey- signifies the language usage in other domains which often observed.

The informants perceived the Meranaw Language vitality status based on the EGIDS as educational. The language is used as a medium of instruction in the communities in various municipalities. This is institutionally supported and widely accessible (Lewis & Simons, 2010), particularly in the Madrasah Educational System. An informant affirmed that the language is used in Islamic boarding schools because the majority are Meranaw, even those students coming from Manila. Hence, proficiency is observed among Meranaws in the community today.

On the other hand, a good number of informants think that the language they use is developing. The language is transmitted informally, and there is transient or weak support from institutions. The influence of dominant languages in society probably affects this situation, particularly as the younger generation is keen on modernity and technology (Pandapatan et al., 2024). One of the informants positively expressed that the language is used in different settings, particularly in government announcements, settling clan clashes, in school, etc. It is also used in local radio, such as the walkie-talkie device, which is a handheld portable radio usually used by the locals. He further expressed that Meranaws living in their municipality are proud to use the language because they do not know any other language. This positive attitudes towards their own language manifests the threshold of vitality.

Some perceive their language as vigorous because of the ongoing and sustainable transmission of orality in communication.

Intergenerational transmission remains evident. A youth informant stated that as a vlogger, he speaks Meranaw so that the viewers can understand it. Aside from this, youngsters use the language and use it in schools as well. Parents speak to their children in the same language as in the informant's home. Thus, Meranaw is functional in their daily conversation and is the preferred language for conversation at home and even outside.

Few informants placed their language status higher than the mentioned levels, such as provincial and wider communication. This pertains to the dominance of Meranaw in the province as the main language for most individuals in their daily transactions, and is especially recognized by the local government, media, and education. According to the two informants who asserted these levels, the language is used in education, work, mass media, and government at the national level. It is evident that Meranaw people do not only believed their language is set on higher educational levels. This suggests the possibility of higher level usage of the Meranaw Language being vitally strong in larger domains.

Consequently, in contrast to the report by Ethnologue that Meranaw Language Vitality is endangered (Eberhard et al., 2025), the finding shows a relevant consideration of how the Meranaw people look into their own language, particularly where it is used as a dominant language and must be labeled as stable. While the fundamental basis of the said organization is from individuals who have participated in their survey, there might be a misrepresentation from the

community. For instance, the survey might be participated in only by those who can access the study of Meranaw who use other languages in their communication. This study is also a counterargument or perhaps an additional input in the vitality report of the said language found in Ruelo's (2024) study, which classified the language as level 6b (threatened). Unlike Ruelo's study, which focused solely on Meranaw speakers in Iligan City, the present study includes informants from municipalities where Meranaw is sufficient and actively used. These informants also offered a broader and more representative view of the vitality of the Meranaw language as they are selected across different generations.

The Meranaw Language, in this respect, is safe based on the UNESCO given the context where Meranaw is a majority language of the communities and there are few language contact to other regional languages. However, although labeled as safe, the language is still subject to threats and changes because the landscape of languages follows the direction of the course of time. Bromham et al. (2022) found that the processes of change and threats are predictors of endangerment. In this, informants have their own observations and consider the Meranaw language as a stable language.

Challenges in Language Use and Maintenance *Weakening use of language at home*

Language usage in different domains, particularly at home as a basic social institution, is a factor in language use and maintenance. Although language maintenance encompasses multiple domains and requires multiple factors, home is essential for establishing language use and transmission. Informants emphasized that the primary challenge in language use and maintenance is the weakening use of the language at home. Parenting is also seen as an important key in language transfer, which is a challenge for families in teaching their children. The informant shared that "The challenges start in parenting because the introduction of language depends on the parents how they teach it." They also believed that the elders share the accountability as the informant expressed that "The language is not sustained because the elders do not use it

frequently." This points to the diminishing role of elders in transmitting the language consistently.

Hence, the home is the primary school for learning, where children learn the important functions and appreciate the language of their ethnicity. Without regular exposure at home, the young generation grows up perceiving that Meranaw language is less relevant. When this language is no longer part of their everyday communication, it becomes increasingly vulnerable to attrition.

Influence of Education and Language Policy

The school as a second home for most of the language learners has a share of the influence, as an informant relayed that "...Their schools also introduce to them other languages, like English and Tagalog..." promotion of other languages at school is significantly changing the learning of language because other languages are formally reinforced and taught systematically. Another informant observed that some Meranaw speakers no longer practice the language in informal talks, even though they know how to do so. Schools as an avenue for maximizing the Meranaw language are substantially lacking in the need to teach it to the learners. The informant specified that "In today's generation of young people, they prefer to use Filipino or English even in informal settings even if they know how to speak Meranaw. There are not enough books or classes that teach Meranaw, especially to develop reading and writing using Meranaw."

Aside from the statements provided, the school language policy appears to be a significant factor in using the introduced language and prohibits the practice of the language. For instance, the informant noticed the strict implementation of Arabic only policy in a Madrasah at a higher level. The informant asserted that "There can be a conflict on the Arabic only policy to us Meranaw speakers when we attend the advanced class."

Shifting language attitudes among speakers

For the Meranaw people, the language resembles their ethnic name. Their identity is deeply rooted in their language and rich culture, which is substantially important in shaping their aspirations, dignity, and principles as people of the lake. Despite this, shifting attitudes—especially

among the youth—pose a significant threat to language maintenance. As noted by Pelila et al. (2023), a negative attitude toward one's own language has serious implications for its survival. As disclosed by an informant, he uses English and Tagalog in vlogging because he wants to be dubbed as educated and professional among his viewers. Hence, when language is not used in any domains, this is probably due to language attitudes towards their own language, which is a shift, and its usage in discourses such as educational, trade, media, etc., and the perceived benefits or advantages in the communication.

One informant lamented, “Elders are not able to pass mastery of the language to the younger generation.” This points to the breakdown in cultural continuity. The erosion of Meranaw among the youth is viewed as linguistic and cultural issues—where knowledge, values, and identity risk being lost with the language. With this, it can be said that language changes because it is dynamic and living, and thus, it is inevitable among languages. It is not an assumption, but a process that a language undergoes as it evolves with its speakers. Hence, language depends on the speakers. The reality of the Meranaw language in terms of the challenges it faces in various domains of society is indeed essential in determining its language status. At the same time, the perseverance of these people to sustain their language in their daily lives matters most. The limitation of Meranaw in some domains is observed by informants who require a shift to using other languages in communication, such as Filipino or Cebuano. Some speakers speak only when they know that the person they are speaking with is a fellow heritage speaker (Nolledo-Montaña, 2021).

Influence of Media, Technology, and Younger Generation

In terms of influences, particularly on the new generation, social media has become an environment for children, which consequently affects the use of the Meranaw language. The dominant use of English and Filipino online affects language preferences particularly among the youth. An informant remarked, “The advent of technology that uses English and Filipino causes the deterioration of Meranaw. Elders are not able

to pass mastery of the language to the younger generation.” This shift is also linked to the how speakers perceive the dominant languages which offer more social and economic advantages. Li et al. (2024) mentioned the favorable benefits gained in using the dominant language which turns into a positive attitude to it. A negative attitude towards one's own language has serious implications for maintaining the language (Pelila et al., 2023).

Migration and Language Attrition

People's migration was identified as another challenge to language use and maintenance. When Meranaw speakers move to places where their language is not spoken, they tend to adopt the dominant local languages. One informant highlighted that “There are many Muslim Meranaws today who go to other places where Meranaw language is not spoken. When they go back or visit their province, they often lose their true accent and become 'balig' (less proficient) in using their native language.” The loss of distinct pitch is an attrition to language vitality (Acharyya & Mahanta, 2019). Although few studies have disregarded this minute observation on the change of sound, it is evident in this study that the Meranaw identity is also embedded in the produced tone in the language. The diminishing eloquence of migrants underscores how the language exposure and interaction outside the community can tremendously affect fluency.

Vocabulary Loss

Another pressing challenge is the declining use of traditional vocabulary and its comprehension among the younger generation. Informants shared that many young Meranaws do not know native Meranaw words used by the elders. One admitted, “Like me, I do not understand most of the Meranaw words spoken by our elders.” Another stated, “They do not understand Meranaw that is no longer used daily in their lives unless it is translated to another language, that is Tagalog.” This can be attributed to their limited vocabulary in their heritage language. In these responses, it highlights a serious gap in intergenerational language transfer specially in terms of lexical depth.

With the poor transmission, it contributes to the functional loss and disconnection from cultural

identity, which is embedded in the language. Zubiri and Deen (2024) suggested a longitudinal study on the attitudes of the young generation toward their own language because the hypothetical claim of a significant shift among the young generation as the main reason for the threat is biased toward them. The longitudinal study informs the input and output, which can support the claim of language change or preference.

Initiatives in Language Use and Maintenance

Home-based language initiatives

As home is the first ladder for learning and as previously mentioned, it solidifies the language understanding and acquisition. The implementation of Meranaw language practice at home contributes to maintenance and is counted as an initiative. An informant encouraged the use of Meranaw at home. Children are allowed to practice the language because the elders at home motivate them to use it. It is an example of establishing a good foundation for linguistic and communicative competence, which found the linguistic ability of the children and heightens their proficiency, which has been seen as a challenge.

One informant thinks that prioritizing the mother tongue before learning other languages must be done from birth until children deeply know their own heritage language: The informant expressed that “Meranaw language should be the one to be taught among children from birth so that they will know and speak Meranaw first other than English or Tagalog.” This denotes the importance of a first language as a foundation that fits the culture they are living in. This is supported by another informant stating that “Parents should teach their children the Meranaw language as early as possible, so that we will have proficient speakers.” The role of parents has a significant effect on the formation of a mother tongue to attain the expected proficiency. Nonetheless, proficient speakers exhibit the kind of language deemed native. This is similar to Riaz and Ghani’s (2021) study on language attachment. Language as identity is seen through the emotional attachment of speakers to their own language.

Role of schools and formal education

The school, as a formal setting, can reinforce language maintenance. The school plays

an important role in language learning. Some activities can enrich learning and exposure that should not be limited to the home. The Meranaw language is promoted in schools to increase children’s appreciation of their language and maintain a positive attitude toward it. This is what the informant pitched: Then, cultural programs in school are held annually on foundation day celebration. Islamic Programs are also integrated in the school activities, particularly in the 1st quarter. Activities like *katharo sa lalag* (speech delivery) are conducted.” While it seems limited, however, the goal of language promotion and providing avenues to practice skills like public speaking in the form of ‘Katharo sa Lalag’ is a step towards language skill development among young speakers. These initiatives promote creative expression in the mother tongue and documentation.

Documentation and Material Development

Another informant realised the need to create materials that teach Meranaw or even start writing literary pieces for them to be proficient in writing and comfortable using the language in a deep and critical manner. This is what an informant provided that “Teach Meranaw in school, even just one subject or activity, create books and comics in Meranaw, and encourage us to use it in creative ways like poems, videos, or drama contests.” This can also be part of language documentation through these different activities while enhancing the creativity of the speakers. Bantilan et al. (2025) and Abiog and David (2020) highlighted documentation as a means of creating literacy materials that can be used in language learning. Bonifacio et al. (2022) and Abad and Abad (2022) mentioned the missing sources in language maintenance, which needs to be done in order to retain the language and transmit it to the next generation. The documentation of language through materials as resources can be helpful.

Institutional and Government Support

Participants highlighted that institutions and the government have crucial role in language policy and its implementation. Informants proposed that there should be integration of Meranaw language into publication communication and governance. A profound

perspective was shared by an informant as she expressed,

“To preserve and strengthen the use of the Meranaw language, there should be more support from educational institutions. This can include creating more Meranaw reading and writing materials for students. Schools can also introduce subjects where students learn about Meranaw history, literature, and traditions using the mother tongue. There should also be training programs where teachers can learn strategies for integrating Meranaw in everyday instruction. There should also be policies to encourage the use of Meranaw and tell students that use of their mother tongue cannot affect their fluency in other languages. Also, the government can play a huge role. For example, local governments can create policies encouraging the use of Meranaw in official announcements, health campaigns, and public signage. They can produce TV, radio, or social media content in Meranaw. There should also be community workshops, events, and campaigns in Meranaw that can help the younger generation become interested in the language. The preservation of the Meranaw language should involve the government, institutions, schools and parents as everyone should be aware of the decline of Meranaw because if this continues there might just come a day that Meranaw is no longer used and might disappear.”

The idea of multifactorial involvement in preservation is that maintaining the language and becoming sustainable in the coming generations takes a village. Preservation cannot be done alone by only a few people who are concerned about the language. Moreover, the community is also assessed on how deeply they understand their own language (Ferrer & Brangan, 2023). Everyone is clearly responsible for pursuing the goal by understanding the serious consequences of the language shift and indifference to the changes occurring in the community. A key informant wished to have a Meranaw Course to maintain the language because formal introduction of the language is done at school. According to the instructions, fluency in Islamic schools is desired. Another key informant recognized the efforts of the religious scholars because they were able to write books purely in Meranaw.

Content Creation in Social Media

Content creation using the Meranaw language can help maintain the language. The practice of language is what another informant suggested to maintain the language and avoid the abrupt shift into another language as a means of communication. The informant stressed that “We always have to use Meranaw language as much as we can because if we use other languages, then it might result in us speaking different languages like Tagalog.” The mantra of language perfection depends on the regular usage and practice among heritage speakers. It ensures vitality through daily conversation and transmissions happen time to time as well (Villaruz, 2024). The vitality of a language does not depend only on its usage. It is also assessed through its sustainability and strength, as emphasized by Ehala (2015). However, the EVT has raised disagreements among scholars because of its potential danger to the language (Jamallulail & Nordin, 2023), and language maintenance must be balanced. In this case, Meranaw, which is perceived as safe and used in formal settings such as education, media, trade, and even in the government, is also prone to linguistic changes that can be interpreted as a shift that turns into a threat or danger to the language status.

CONCLUSION

Based on the EGIDS and the interview conducted, the Meranaw language is considered vitally safe. Contesting the report in the Ethnologue that the Meranaw language is endangered, Ruelo (2024) considers Meranaw as threatened, which is thereby misrepresented and/or situational following the date presented. Communities where Meranaw is used can be dominant or minor in a particular domain and place. As an example from this study, the informants perceived their language as sufficiently stable in communities where there are still young generations using the language. This brings two notions: when Meranaw is dominant in the community, it is vitally strong; when Meranaw is not the dominant language in the community, it is weak.

Certain ambiguities are observed in studies on Meranaw vitality, particularly in

documentation. There can be many resources of the language such as books, videos, studies, songs, etc. However, the informants do not fail to mention the scarcity of the resources. Perhaps the dissemination of such materials and outputs does not extend to the community. On the language being reported as safe, most of the informants believed in the weak transmission of language to the younger generations. To what extent is the transmission weak in this sense? Physical and virtual environments are interestingly manifested in the study due to the involvement of technology, particularly the relevance of social media to human activities.

The study does not close the investigation on language vitality, as more factors can be drawn in the process by adding more informants. This study is limited by the use of the EGIDS as the sole instrument for data gathering.

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