

IOWAK: A CASE OF RESILIENCY

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Iowak, one of the minor ethnolinguistic groups of the Philippines is found in different provinces in the highlands of the Northern Philippines. According to *Ethnologue* (2017), Iowak language is used by 3,260 speakers. Today, there are more or less than 150 Iowak speakers residing at Domolpos, subsumed by two other ethnolinguistic groups, who reside between the two provinces. Situated at the foothill of a tourist attraction 40 kilometers away from the main road, the Iowak also speak conversational English and Filipino since most work as tour guides.

This paper presents the Iowak language and their culture resiliency, how the Iowak people have sustained, are sustaining, and will sustain their language and culture amidst the changing times. This used both a qualitative and quantitative methods. Fifty respondents voluntarily joined the individual interviews and answered the survey questionnaires. Cultural sensitivity and respect of Philippine indigenous rights were strictly followed.

Based on the data, 50% of the respondents do fear the decline of their language and culture if their language is not successfully passed to the next generation. They said that they have nothing against electricity finally reaching their community, technology becoming accessible, and their increasing number of tourists/hikers visiting their place. But they are aware that their children are exposed to “outside influence.” To counter this, 60% said they always use their language at home and in almost all conversations within their community. They also suggested that their language must be used in their school following the MTB-MLE (Mother Tongue Based Multi-Lingual Education). Others welcomed the idea of Iowak learning materials and a dictionary.