Phonological Features of Contemporary Spoken Binukid

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Abstract

This paper attempts to describe the phonological features of Binukid language, which is one of the indigenous languages spoken by the lumads, particularly the Umajamnen tribe, in Bukidnon, Southern Philippines. The study anchored its framework of analysis from the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) in Ladefoged (2012) for the phonetic notations and standardized representations. Proper research protocols were observed such as the seeking of consent from the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP) in the Province, the tribal informed consent, and the conduct of the traditional pamuhat ritual. Informants were properly identified and qualified based on language use in the home domain. Results revealed that Binukid has 16 consonants: the /b/, /k/, /d/, /g/, /h/, /j/, /l/, /m/, /n/, /ŋ/, /p/, /r/, /s/, /t/, /w/, and /y/. It has five vowels: the /a/, the pepet /e/, /i/, /o/, and /u/; and finally, it has five diphthongs: the high-front /ei/, the front central /au/, the low central back /ai/, the central /O/i/ and the back central /ou/. Significant findings include the following: identification of the pepet /e/, the alveopalatal affricate /j/; and the presence of the five diphthongs: the /O/i/, /au/, /ai/, /O/i/, and /ow/. These findings were not mentioned in the early descriptions of related Binukid phonology in the studies of Atherton (1953, 1963); Post (1965, 1968), and Post & Gardner (1965). Finally, the study found interchangeability of some vowels and consonants among the elderly in the community, and the preponderance of the /a/, the pepet /e/, and the /j/ in the corpus.

Keywords: Binukid, consonants, diphthong/indigenous language, pepet /e/, vowel/s
1. Introduction

1.1 Background of the Study

Philippines is a multi-lingual country and a home to many languages; however, a number of Philippine Languages (henceforth, PLs) still remain under-explored (Tajolosa, 2012). Binukid is one of these PLs, particularly belonging to a minority language category. It is a language spoken by the indigenous groups of Bukidnon Province at the north-central part of Mindanao, the largest island in Southern Philippines. These indigenous communities are often referred to as lumads, composed of seven (7) ethnic tribes, namely: the Bukidnons, the Tigwahanons, the Umajamnens or the Umayamnons, the Talaandigs, the Higaonons, the Manobos, and the Matigsalugs. Each tribe speaks a variant of Binukid, distinct from the other; thereby creating a rich ethnolinguistic landscape of the province. However, this rich cultural linguistic heritage has remained under explored as there are very scanty studies conducted on the language up to the present time. If ever there were, these studies were conducted decades ago, leaving a minimal documentation and description of the language, as it has evolved through time. In addition, its literature in standardized form is not yet widespread and sustainable, as pointed out by Lewis, Simons, and Fennig (2016). It is on this context that this study is conceptualized, specifically to describe the contemporary spoken Binukid language in terms of its segmental phonemes, particularly the consonants, the vowels, and the diphthongs.

1.2 Review of Related Literature

To date, studies on indigenous languages in the Philippines, particularly with Binukid language in Southern Philippines were very scanty. If ever there were, these studies were dated more than five decades ago. To recall, Binukid was the subject of study by the Summer Institute of Linguistics (SIL), through Atherton described Binokid phonemes in 1953, Binokid verb morphology in 1963, Binokid pronouns [n.d], and some minimal grammatical pairs in Binokid.
Atherton’s studies were more of identifying the features exhibited in the language; thus, from 1965 to 1978, Ursula Post, another SIL fellow, continued to describe the language a little further, this time with the grammatical aspects of the language. Her studies included Morphophonemic Alternations in Binukid (1965), Nuclear NonpredicateTagmemes of Verbal Clauses in Binukid (1965), The Phonology of Binukid (1965), Binukid Clause Structure (1968), Binukid Phrase Structure (1968), Binukid Sentence Structure (1968), and BinukidFolktale Texts (1978). However, these earlier studies were largely based on the Binukid language as spoken by bigger ethnolinguistic groups but not by the marginalized group of Binukid speakers.

Binukid language is to a large degree, belonging to the Manobo language family since it is spoken by Agusan Manobo to the east, Ata Manobo to the southeast, Tigwa Manobo to the southwest, and Western Bukidnon Manobo to the west. Moreover, due to the influx of migrants from the Visayas islands located north across Mindanao sea, it is also influenced by the Visayan language family. The language is related to Cinamiguin and Cagayano — the first branch in the family tree of Manobo languages within the Malayo-Polynesian language category. The term “Bukidnon” is a Visayan word that means “people of the mountains” and these people speaking the language are called “Bukidnons”, while the language spoken is commonly termed as “Binukid”(Post, 1978).

Aside from these early studies on Binukid language, other studies on PLs are found quite similar to this present study to some extent. The study of Liao (2004) pointed out that although the languages differed syntactically, Philippine-type languages were not as distinct as linguists originally assumed. She proved that the traditional conception about Philippine-type languages was incorrect; rather, she proved that the languages of the type apparently fitted in the general structures of different world languages.

In addition, the study of Ruffolo (2004) on Ibaloy of Northern Philippines which described Ibaloy’s phonology and the major phonological processes involved in Ibaloy as a language, is also similar to the present study as it provides a language description of a Philippine language.
Dita’s (2007) study is also related to the present study as she studied Ibanag where she came up with a reference grammar of Ibanag and where descriptions of the consonants and vowels are included. In 2012, Santos described the grammar of contemporary Hiligaynon using radio broadcasts, short stories, and news reports that were available online. As a framework for analysis, she used the articulatory model and acoustic phonetics, specifically the Praat computer program to explain the phonology of language. Her study is related to the present study in describing the phonological features of a language, only that she used a computer software in describing the segmental phonemes of the contemporary Hiligaynon. So, from 1900s, studies on PLs were so few and most of those were done by foreign scholars. This is the gap that the present study hopes to address, that is, to describe the phonological features of contemporary Binukid, as spoken by the Umajamnen tribe.

1.3 Research Aims
The study attempted to describe the phonological features of the contemporary Binukid language by specifically considering to:

1. Identify the consonants in contemporary Binukid;
2. Describe the vowels present in contemporary Binukid; and
3. Find out the presence of diphthongs in contemporary Binukid.

1.4 Theoretical Framework
In order to attain these aims, the study adopted the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) in Ladefoged (2012) as its point of reference, particularly in providing the phonemic transcription and description of the Binukid segmental phonemes.
2. Methodology

2.1 Research Design
This study was basically descriptive and highly qualitative in nature. It generally used the field method elicitation technique as espoused by Shobhana and de Reuse (2011), specifically the analytical, analysis-controlled, target-language translation elicitation. This kind of data-gathering technique requires the close coordination of the researcher and the consultant in such a way that the targeted data shall be elicited from the sources. This technique entailed re-visits to the setting, whenever necessary, for verification and re-validation of the data.

2.2 Sources of Data
The chief sources of data were the members of the Umajamnen tribe as the informants. It started with 21 participants, grouped together according to intergenerational age gaps (15 years old and below, 16-30 years old, and 31 to 60 years old). Later, they were trimmed to one family-informant, with members ranging from 30-50 years of age. These informants were carefully chosen as they played a very critical role in identifying the language data. In addition, three language experts were consulted with regards to accuracy and authenticity of the informants’ answers. These experts were consulted from time to time until the study was finally done. Vegafria (2014) mentioned that the selection of participants of the study is one of the critical parts of a qualitative study. Creswell (2007) pointed out that intent in qualitative research is to elucidate the particular and the specific details of the study.

2.3 Research Procedure
Proper research protocols were observed by the researcher, making sure that the necessary permits were obtained prior to gathering of data. First, permit was sought from the provincial office of the National Commission for Indigenous Peoples (NCIP). When the permit was finally granted, the researcher sought the
Datu’s approval and arranged for the dates of data gathering, which covered more than a year.

Proper indigenous research protocols were followed. Since the researcher is not affiliated with their ethnic community, the traditional pamuhat was required to be performed. It is the tribe’s belief that their religious deity Magbabaja would bestow blessings of the activity if the ritual is performed, which is required to anyone coming into their community, asking to obtain certain data on Binukid customs, culture, and tradition.

2.4 Ethical Considerations
All informants were given sufficient information about the study. They were given time to make informed decisions. From the start, they were told that confidentiality is the researcher’s top most priority; that at all time, anonymity would be observed during or after the interview. They were made to sign in the consent form. They were also assured that pseudonyms would be used in the discussion to ensure confidentiality. It was emphasized that their participation was purely voluntary and that at any time, they could discontinue their participation if they so desire and this will not be taken against them.

2.5 Elicitation Protocol
There were three (3) sets of elicitation protocol used in the study. First was the use of questionnaires eliciting responses for informant’s background, and their lexical and sentence translation tests in the Binukid language. The second was the interview protocol whereby the informants were asked for their language preferences and the reasons for using or not using their language. The last elicitation protocol was the situational, controlled, analytic, target-language translation elicitations whereby one set of the informants or one family was asked to record their conversations at home, their narratives and short stories that they used to tell their children, usually during their leisure times (Shobhana and de Reuse, 2011).
2.6 Transcription of the Data
Following the steps provided by Gumperz (1982), the recorded data were transcribed. After the transcription, the data were then translated into Cebuano so that the language experts could confirm the authenticity and accuracy of the transcribed data. Finally, the transcribed data were further translated into English, to provide the analysis and understanding of its phonological features.

3. Results and Discussions
Phonology is the study of how sounds are organized and used in natural languages and the distribution and patterning of speech sounds in a language including the tacit rules governing pronunciation. This is basically the same concept applied in this study, where the minimum meaningful unit is called a phoneme, with specific focus on segmental phonemes which include the consonants, vowels, and diphthongs.

3.1 The Consonants in Contemporary Binukid Language
In consonants, there are three types of articulatory features, namely the manner of articulation, the place of articulation, and the voicing. The place of articulation include labial, dental, velar, alveolar, palatal, and glottal, whereas the manner of articulation include the consonant class as to stops, nasals, fricatives, affricates, laterals, trills and glides. Further classification is whether the sound is voiced or voiceless.

Based from the corpus, this study has identified sixteen (16) consonant sounds in the spoken Binukid. These consonant phonemes are reflected in Figure 1 and discussed in details that follow.
Figure 1. The Consonant Chart in Binukid Language

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<tr>
<th>CONSONANT CLASS</th>
<th>PLACE OF ARTICULATION</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>LABIAL</td>
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<td>STOPS</td>
<td>/b/</td>
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<tr>
<td>NASAL</td>
<td>/m/</td>
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<tr>
<td>FRICATIVE</td>
<td>/s/</td>
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<tr>
<td>AFFRICATE</td>
<td>/tʃ/</td>
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<tr>
<td>LATERAL</td>
<td>/l/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RETROFLEX</td>
<td>/ɾ/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GLIDE</td>
<td>/l/</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As shown in the figure, there are 16 consonants, namely: /b/, /d/, /g/, /h/, /j/, /l/, /m/, /n/, /ŋ/, /p/, /r/, /s/, /t/, /w/, and /y/, with retroflex /ɾ/ and affricate /j/ added to the earlier descriptions of the language, which were not included in the earlier descriptions of Post (1965, 1968, 1978). However, Otanes and Wrigglesworth (1992), mentioned the /d/ phoneme, but not the alveo-palatal affricate /j/. This shows that what was found in the earlier studies of the language could be enriched in the contemporary spoken Binukid. It is significant to note further that the contemporary Binukid Umajamnen speakers are fond of the phoneme /j/, which was observed to be used in replacement of the phoneme /y/, as in Umajamnen-Umayamnon; where the phoneme /j/ replaced the phoneme /y/; thereby making it ‘Umajamnen’, instead of saying ‘Umayamnon’.

The Stops.
These are produced by blocking the air flow, then releasing it afterwards. Based on articulation and voicing, it can be further grouped as bilabial, dental, velar, and glottal. Those articulated without aspiration or a puff of air are considered voiceless, while those articulated with a puff of air are considered voiced. The bilabial stops of contemporary Binukid are composed of the voiceless /p/, as shown in pamanampera (to make it half, in English) and the voiced /b/, as shown in baoɔ’ (monkey) and mahęgbet (loud voice), which are found in the initial and medial positions, respectively. It must be noted, however, that the Binukid bilabial
The Dental Stops.
Two (2) dental stops were identified in the study. First is the voiceless /\(t\)/, as shown in tawag (call), hangtud (until), and namatoy(died), which are in the initial, medial, and final positions, respectively. Second is the voiced /\(d\)/, as in dajun (then) and maranid (near or close to), which are both in the initial and final positions, respectively. It is also significant to note that the voiceless initial /\(t\)/ phoneme in contemporary Binukid, is not at all aspirated if found in the initial position, unlike the voiceless /\(t\)/ phoneme in English, which is produced with a puff of air when found in initial positions.

The Velar Stops.
There were only two velar stops in contemporary Binukid. The first is the voiceless velar stop /\(k\)/ as in kandan (they) in the initial position, and nekey (what) in the medial position. The second is the voiced velar stop /\(g\)/ as in kahinog(ripe), uwog (drop down), and sugot(agree), which are located in the initial, medial, and final positions, respectively. In English language, the velar stop /\(k\)/ is aspirated when found at the initial position, but among the contemporary Binukid, this velar stop is produced without aspiration.

The Nasals.
There were three (3) nasals: the bilabial /\(m\)/, the dental /\(n\)/, and the velar /\(ŋ\)/. The bilabial /\(m\)/ is produced by closing the air stream of the lips as found in tanem (plant), and namaanan (known of), which are both located in final and medial positions. The nasal /\(n\)/ is produced by obstructing the airflow in the mouth and the tongue pressing the upper teeth or the alveolar ridge as found in namaanan (known of), which has both the initial and final positions. Then, the velar /\(ŋ\)/ is formed by obstructing the airflow in the mouth at the velum as found in saging (banana) in final position, ginganga (opened mouth) and langhag (closed eyes).
which are both in medial positions. It is so significant to note that all these three are voiced.

**The Fricatives.**

The study identified two fricatives: the voiceless alveolar /s/ and the glottal fricative /h/. The voiceless alveolar /s/ is produced similar to the English /s/ as in the initial and final /s/ in the word ‘semantics’. Examples of fricative /s/ are: saging (banana), asoem (tomorrow), and makaindes (feels like defecating), which are located at the initial, medial, and final positions, respectively. On the other hand, examples of the glottal fricative /h/ are: huo (yes) and langha (to look up), with positions in the initial and medial positions.

**The Affricate /ʃ/.**

This is the only one and voiced alveo-palatal affricate found in the contemporary Binukid language. This is produced like the English /ʃ/ as in /ʃoke/. According to the informants, it is represented in the orthography as the same /ʃ/ as in seja (he/she), marejew (much), and nahathantajay (felt), which could be located in the initial, medial, and final positions. It is more interesting to note that only the Binukid spoken by the Umajamnen tribe exhibited this 16th consonant phoneme in addition to the earlier identified fifteen (15) consonant phonemes from the study of Atherton (1953 & 1963), Post (1965, 1967, 1968, 1975 & 1978), Post and Gardner (1965 & 1966), Post, Gardner, and Kyle (1982), and in Otanes and Wrigglesworth (1992). This significant finding is another new discovery in the field of Binukid phonology.

**The Liquid /l/.**

The liquid alveolar consonant /l/ is pronounced as dental lateral in all environments. Similar to Ibanag in Dita (2007), this phoneme of Binukid language does not have a velarized variant like in English /l/ in syllable final position, as in: langha (look up to), kasugilen (story) and kuli-kuli (swaying), which denote initial and final positions. Another interesting feature is that this phoneme is one
of the least occurring phoneme in Binukid, and in cases where it occurs, these terms are most likely an evolved or borrowed term from the dominant language. For instance, langhag, which could be surmised as borrowed from the dominant Cebuano term yanghag, meaning ‘to look up to’. In addition, the Binukid term /kasugilën/, or ‘story’ in English, could be surmised as a borrowing from the dominant Cebuano language ‘kasugilanon’, or ‘story’. The paucity of other data in this present investigation implies for a more in-depth study on Binukid-Umajamnen lexical borrowings.

The Retroflex /t/. In this study, the /t/ is considered a retroflex, rather than the trill /t/ because it resembles like the /t/ in English such as /rat/. Other examples are: roen (there is/are), karaeg-daeg (to lose), and pamares-pares (dizzy), which illustrate the initial, medial and final locations.

The Glides. There are two glides in contemporary Binukid language: the /w/ and /y/. The labio-velar /w/ is formed with rounded lips and some obstruction of the velar part of the mouth, while the labio-velar /y/ is formed with unrounded lips with some obstruction of the mouth. The following samples illustrate the labio-velar /w/ in the initial, medial and final positions: wehig (water), buwa (both), and migpasiw (to ensure); whereas, the following also illustrate the labio-velar /y/ in the initial, medial, and final locations: yan (‘tis), nekey (what), and pataw-tawagay (called each other).

3.2 The Vowels in Contemporary Binukid
Based on the elicited data, the study has derived five (5) vowels as shown in Figure 2, which indicates how these five (5) vowels are produced in an utterance, whether front, center, and back, or whether high, middle, or low.
As shown in the figure, the contemporary Binukid vowels are: the central low /a/; the middle back pepet /e/; the front, high /i/; the back, low /o/; and the back, high /u/. Each of these would be described thoroughly in the following pages.

The Central Low Vowel /a/.
This vowel is observed as the most dominant among all vowels in contemporary Binukid. This vowel is a voiced phoneme /a/, produced similar to the English vowel /a/, as in /kaba-kaba/, meaning 'butterfly'. Other manifestations of the vowel /a/ could be seen from this Binukid folk song entitled, “MgeKaba-kaba” (The Butterflies) that follows.

1. Mgekabakabaniglalajang-lajang
tesangatekajo, nigpakukuli-kuli
KaMagbabajatelandit, mig-aha tekabakaba
nemiglajang–lajangtesangatekajomigpakukuli-kuli.

‘The butterflies were flying,
on tree branches, swaying;
God in heaven is watching the butterflies,
flying, on tree branches, swaying. (BFOS - 1 to 2)
From (1), the terms: kaba-kaba, niglalajang-lajang, sanga, kajo, nigpakukuli-kuli, ka, Magbabaja, langit, mig-aha, miglalajang-lajang, all of these terms carry the vowel /a/. From this very short Binukid-Umajamnen folk song alone, there are already thirty-three (33) occurrences. From the other set of elicited data, specifically from the transcribed family conversation, this vowel has occurred 3,923 times, while from the Binukid short story, entitled “Amu Dow Bao” or “The Monkey and the Turtle” in English, this vowel has occurred 4,524 times; whereas in the Binukid folktale “Nanangen”, this vowel has occurred 11,181 times, signifying that this vowel is indeed a dominant vowel in spoken Binukid by the Umajamnen tribe based on the given corpus.

The early works of Atherton (1953 & 1963), Post (1965, 1967, 1968, 1975 & 1978), Post and Gardner (1965 & 1966), Post, Gardner and Kyle (1982), and Otanes and Wrigglesworth (1992) had identified this vowel. Other studies of PLs such as the work of Dita (2007) also mentioned the dominance of this vowel in Ibanag; likewise, Ruffolo (2004) mentioned this low central vowel as the most common vowel in Ilocano language.

The Pepet /æ/. Conant in Pallesen (1979) has started the term pepet /æ/ vowel and defined it as original, indifferent vowel, colorless and indifferent in pronunciation. The Binukid dictionary in Otanes and Wrigglesworth (1992), mentioned that this sound is made at the back of the mouth with a rounded lip position. However, previous studies of Binukid language such as that of Atherton (1953 & 1963), Post (1965, 1967, 1968, 1975 & 1978), Post and Gardner (1965 & 1966), and Post, Gardner and Kyle (1982), did not mention this phoneme in their description of Binukid vowels.

From the corpus, the following samples containing this phoneme were categorized and described accordingly. First example is from the introduction of the folktale, “Amu Dow Bao”, in sample (2):
Our story is about the monkey and the tortoise who were very good friends. They even called each other “Bájok,” to really mean their closeness. One day, the monkey asked the tortoise, “Bájok, since we’ve been together for long, what do you think is a good source of living for us? Can we survive if we do not plant something for food?”

Regardless of its location in the syllable or in the lexicon, this vowel is produced with the tongue positioned back in a low-mid position, as in ne (DET), katel (itchy), and masing-et (pungent). From the gathered corpus: this vowel has occurred 1,151 times from the family conversation, 8 times from Binukid folk song, 1,954 times from the folktale, and 5,281 times from the Nanangen. Thus, based on frequency of occurrences, this vowel is observed to be the second in frequency of occurrences from the gathered corpus. Hence, it is considered the second most dominant vowel in the Umajamnen tribe, next to the central vowel /a/. The study of Ruffolo (2004) mentioned the presence of this vowel in Ilocano. The study of Dita (2007) also mentioned that this vowel /e/ is present in Ibanag, and it has a clear distinction from the other vowel /i/.

Based on the earlier studies of PLs, where this vowel was termed as pepet /el/, in Otanes and Wrigglesworth (1992) and Conant (1912) in Pallesen’s (1979) work with Sama-Bajaw, this study also adheres into the term “pepet /e/” to refer to this vowel sound. Regardless of which part in the lexicon this vowel is located, it is uniformly produced as the pepel /el/, where there is a little obstruction at the back of the tongue. This unique significant feature of spoken Binukid could be similar to what Liao (2004) has generalized that PLs are fit in the general structures of different word languages; and in the case of the spoken Binukid language, the identification of this vowel is an indication that indeed, this
language has this unique and definite phonological structure, which may either be similar or distinct from the other languages in the world.

**The Vowel /i/**

Based on data, the next vowel is /i/, which is produced as high front, unrounded position, and produced similarly to the English vowel /i/. From the Binukid folk song, “MgeKaba-kaba”, there were ten (10) occurrences of this vowel, 1,371 from the family conversation; 1,578 times from the Binukid short story “Amu Dow Bao”; and 3,397 occurrences from the Binukid folktale, “Nanangen”.


**The Vowel /o/**

Another vowel is the low, back /o/ vowel. From the introduction of the Binukid short story, entitled “Amu Dow Bao”, this vowel has already occurred sixteen (16) times, 777 times from the family conversation; 1,064 times from the Binukid short story “Amu Dow Bao”; and 2,449 times from the Binukid folktale, “Nanangen”.


Another salient observation on this vowel is how it can be interchangeable with the vowel /u/, especially among the old folks in the tribe in the case of Umajammen and Omajammen, for instance. Interestingly however, this vowel is distinctively produced by the young, especially those who were able to attend school. This was also confirmed by the consultant that there were instances of interchangeability of these two vowels among their old folks; however, they do
exhibit mutual intelligibility that these two vowels could have similar meanings in their corpus, across age groups.

The interchangeability of this vowel with /u/ was also noted in the earlier works of Atherton (1953 & 1963), where he used /o/ instead of /u/ in the term “Binokid” in his studies on “Binokid Phonemes”, “Binokid Verb Morphology”, “Binokid Personal Pronouns”, and the rest of his works with the SIL-Philippines. Moreover, the Binukid dictionary published in 1992, in Otanes and Wrigglesworth (Eds), has also noted this interchangeability, although no further elaborations were given to justify the claims. In another study of PLs, Dita (2007) also claimed that the vowel /o/ and /u/ are sometimes used interchangeably. Thus, this interchangeability of the vowels /o/ and /u/ could be a shared feature on PLs.

The Vowel /u/.

The last vowel phoneme /u/ is a close back rounded voiced vowel which may be produced from high position, as in amu, meaning 'monkey’; or produced from mid position, as in ‘nigpakukuli-kuli’, meaning ‘swayed’. From the entire corpus of the study, this vowel has exhibited 434 occurrences from the family conversation; 552 occurrences from the Binukid short story “Amu Dow Baoo”; and 1,312 occurrences from the Binukid folktale, “Nanangen”. However, as mentioned in the preceding pages, this vowel is used interchangeably with the vowel /o/, especially among the old speakers. The younger speakers, particularly those who have gone to school could already produce this vowel distinctively from /o/. As previously stated, Dita (2007), in her study with Ibanag, also noted that the vowels /o/ and /u/ are used interchangeably among Ilocano and Cebuano speakers. Ruffolo (2004), in her study of Ilocano, justified that the vowels /o/ and /u/ originally constituted one phoneme. She reiterated what Pallesen (1979) hypothesized that some phonological variation could be attributed to any of the following possibilities: a) that the variant feature in question is loaned and/or borrowed; b) that the reconstructed proto-forms are incorrect or incomplete insofar as they fail to indicate phonological variants of the proto-form; and c) that there are yet further developments with the language as to sound and other features.
3.3 The Diphthongs in Contemporary Binukid

The study was able to identify at least five (5) diphthongs, namely: the mid-front /ɔi/, the low central /au/, the low central back /ɔi/, the mid-center /au/ and the low center /ou/. These contemporary Binukid diphthongs are captured in Figure 3.

In the spoken Binukid language, these five diphthongs are present, although not very often found in their daily conversation. Sample of these diphthongs could be observed in (3a-3e).

(3a) /ɔi/

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<td>key</td>
<td>/key/</td>
<td>‘you’</td>
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<tr>
<td>nukey</td>
<td>/nu.key/</td>
<td>‘then’</td>
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<tr>
<td>paneytey</td>
<td>/pa.ney.tey/</td>
<td>‘After’</td>
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(3b) /ou/

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<td>‘man’</td>
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<td>anew</td>
<td>/anew/</td>
<td>‘you’ (Pron 2p)</td>
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<tr>
<td>tetew</td>
<td>/te.tew/</td>
<td>‘three’</td>
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</tbody>
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It was further observed that the occurrence of the diphthongs in Binukid vary from one-syllable, such as dow, to four or more-syllable words, such as kawkaboën. Although these diphthongs are not very widely used, what is significant is that this group of ethnolinguistic people exhibits the use of these diphthongs, which were not identified by the previous studies on Binukid. It is significant to note however, that this study was able to identify at least five diphthongs from the transcribed data from the various literary masterpieces of the Binukid. The identification of the five diphthongs is a significant contribution of this study to the existing data on Binukid Language. Not all studies on PLs have identified diphthongs, though. The work of Ruffolo (2004) did not include the description of diphthongs in her study. However, Dita (2007), in her study of Ibanag identified six diphthongs, namely: /iy/, /ey/, /aw/, /ay/, /oy/ and /uw/.

4. Conclusions

Binukid phonology manifests unique features, such as: the identification of the pepet /lɛl/; the identification of the five diphthongs, namely /ɔi/, /oul/, /ai/, /au/, and /ai/; the addition of the one consonant phoneme, the alveo-palatal affricate /j/, and the interchangeability of some vowels and consonants particularly the /o/ and /u/; and the /y/ and /j/, especially among old informants.
Binukid is rich with diphthongs particularly the mid-front /ɔi/, the low central /au/, the central-back /ai/, the mid-center /au/, and the low-central /ou/. This finding was never found in earlier studies of Binukid language.

Another significant feature of contemporary Binukid phonemes is the presence of the alveo-palatal affricate /j/, where it follows a unique orthography of being written the way it is produced, as emphasized by the informants. In addition, the palatal consonant glide /y/ was only found at the medial or final syllables of Binukid lexicon but was never observed at the initial syllabus in the corpus. Lastly, Binukid language is distinctively marked by the preponderance of the vowels /a/ and the pepet /el/, as well as the consonant affricate /j/.

Finally, this study has discovered the following four significant features of Binukid phonemes, which were not captured in the earlier studies. These four significant findings are the following: first, there is the addition of the pepet /el/ sound, whereby, though written in almost the same character but the way these phonemes are produced significantly marked a variation among Binukid speakers; second, the identification of the consonant /j/ phoneme, which is only present among the Binukid speakers; third, the interchangeability of certain vowel phonemes, the /o/ and /u/ and consonant phonemes /y/ and /j/, especially among older village community members; fourth and most important of all is the identification and the description of the five Binukid diphthongs, namely: /ɔi/, /əi/, /ai/, /ou/, and /au/. These four distinctive features of Binukid phonemes have certainly added a mark in the rich Filipino cultural heritage, particularly among the descriptions of minority languages.

5. Recommendations
In light of the findings and conclusions made in this paper, it would be worthy to consider the following: 1) more in-depth study is generally encouraged to elaborate all phonological aspects of Binukid language across indigenous communities; 2) diachronic and inter-ethnic language variation studies may be embarked to consider for issues on the intricacies of language, including its
linguistic features, identity, variations, and effect on assimilation, migration and globalization; and 3) more sophisticated tool of analysis such as the use of Praat particularly on prosodic variation may be considered for future investigations.

References


Phonological Features of Contemporary Spoken Binukid


About the Author

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