
Exploring Animal Terminologies Across the Three Districts of Surigao

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How to cite this article: Gemma R. Escultor (2024) Exploring Animal Terminologies Across the Three Districts of Surigao. *Library Progress International*, 44(3), 28247-28251

ABSTRACT:

This study investigates the linguistic diversity of animal terminologies in the districts of Surigao City, Surigao del Norte, and Surigao del Sur in the Caraga Region, Philippines. Employing qualitative research method, including interviews and focus group discussions, the research aims to document local terms for fourteen common domesticated animals and analyze variations influenced by cultural practices, geographic distribution, and historical contexts. The findings reveal significant differences and similarities in terminologies, reflecting the communities' relationships with their ecological environments. The study underscores the importance of preserving local knowledge as a tool for biodiversity conservation and cultural identity, while also highlighting implications for education, communication, and economic development in the region. Understanding and respecting local dialects can enhance community relations and enrich visitor experiences.

KEYWORDS:

linguistic diversity, cultural practices, biodiversity conservation

Introduction:

The districts of Surigao City, Surigao del Norte, and Surigao del Sur in the Caraga Region are renowned for their notable linguistic and cultural diversity. This area is characterized by a mosaic of languages and cultural practices that significantly influence the local terminologies used for domesticated animals. Understanding these variations is crucial for linguists, anthropologists, and educators as it provides insights into the complex interplay between language, culture, and history. This study aims to explore the factors contributing to the variations in domesticated animal terminologies in these areas of Caraga.

Previous studies have suggested that the terminology for domesticated animals is shaped by a multitude of factors, including linguistic diversity, cultural practices, historical influences, and geographical isolation [1]; [2]; [3]. The disparity in animal names across Surigao's areas may lead to misunderstandings and communication problems, particularly in regions where several dialects are spoken, including Tagalog, Cebuano, and Surigaonon. For instance, a common animal like a dog is referred to as "aso" in Tagalog but "ido" in Surigaonon and "iro" in Cebuano. These variations can cause confusion, especially for visitors or individuals unfamiliar with the local dialects.

This topic extends beyond casual discussions, impacting sectors such as business, agriculture, and education. Distinct terminology for the same animal can create confusion for children in early childhood education, who are still acquiring their native language. Misunderstandings regarding animal terminology in commerce and agriculture can lead to complications in product distribution, animal health, and customer interactions. Therefore, it is essential to conduct thorough studies and discussions on local animal terminologies in Surigao del Norte, Surigao del Sur, and Surigao City. Understanding and disseminating this knowledge can significantly enhance communication and interactions across various community sectors. By exploring the local lexicon related to animal names, scholars can gain insights into the region's ecological history and cultural practices [4]. Additionally, organizing workshops and seminars dedicated to these terminologies can play a crucial role in expanding knowledge and appreciation of local linguistic heritage, thereby alleviating misunderstandings caused

by dialect differences [5]. Such educational initiatives not only foster a sense of community and identity but also contribute to the preservation of intangible cultural heritage [6].

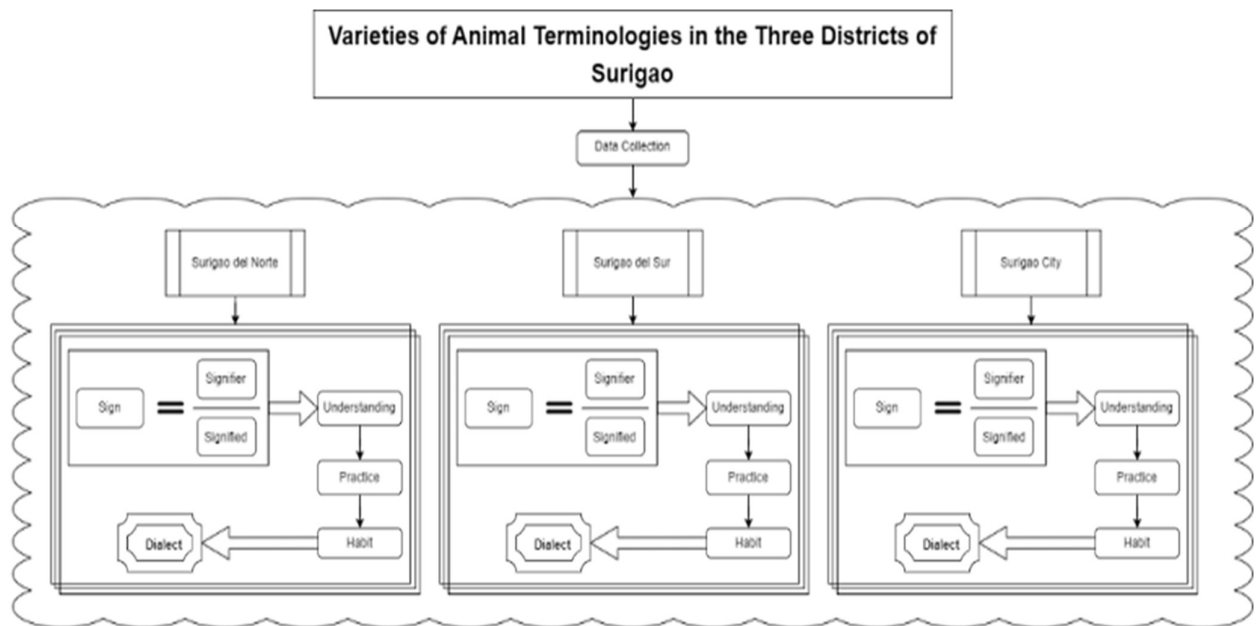


Figure 1. Varieties of Animal Terminologies in the Three Districts of Surigao

This study draws on Ferdinand de Saussure’s theory of structural linguistics emphasizes the arbitrary nature of signs [7]. According to Saussure, the relationship between the signifier (the word) and the signified (the concept) is not inherent but constructed through social conventions (Figure 1). This theory is crucial for understanding how different communities within the same language group, such as Surigaonon, can have various terms for the same animal based on their unique cultural and social contexts.

Another relevant theoretical foundation is the concept of linguistic relativity, associated with Edward Sapir and Benjamin Lee Whorf, which posits that language influences one’s understanding and categorization of the world. In the context of Surigaonon, the differences in animal names within Surigao del Norte, Surigao del Sur, and Surigao City may reflect the cultural values and ecological knowledge prevalent among the residents.

Lastly, Pierre Bourdieu’s theory regarding language as a form of social capital highlights how linguistic practices are influenced by power dynamics within a community. This perspective elucidates why certain terms are more favored or prestigious in different areas, emphasizing the social factors that contribute to linguistic diversity and the role of language in maintaining cultural identity.

This study investigates the local names of animals across the three districts in Surigao: Surigao del Norte, Surigao del Sur, and Surigao City. The primary objective is to identify and analyze the differences and similarities in local terminologies and to understand how these names reflect the cultural identities specific to each locality.

The scope of this research focuses on fourteen selected animal species within the three geographic areas mentioned. It deliberately excludes an examination of other languages or dialects found in the Mindanao region or other parts of the Philippines. Data collection methods are limited to interviews and ethnographic research conducted within selected communities, which may result in certain local variations and terminologies being overlooked.

Methodology:

The objective of this study is to identify and analyze the local terms for fourteen common domesticated animals across three distinct areas of Surigao: Surigao del Norte, Surigao del Sur, and Surigao City. Utilizing qualitative research methods, the study aims to document the terminologies used in English, Filipino, and Surigaonon, and subsequently compare these terms across each area to highlight linguistic variations and commonalities.

Data were collected through interviews and focus group discussions with residents from the selected areas. Participants were meticulously chosen based on their proficiency and use of the local language, ensuring that the information gathered was both authentic and reliable. This careful selection was essential for capturing the true linguistic landscape of each region. To achieve a comprehensive representation, the participant pool included a diverse array of population groups, comprising elders, teachers, and other community members who possess deep knowledge of the local language and cultural practices. This diversity was crucial for obtaining a well-rounded understanding of regional terminologies.

The study employed semi-structured interviews, which allowed participants the freedom to share their knowledge extensively. These interviews were specifically designed to focus on eliciting local terms for the fourteen common animals while also exploring the meaning and contextual usage of each term. The semi-structured format provided a consistent framework for all interviews while enabling participants to express nuances and detailed insights regarding the local terms.

After data collection, the information was analyzed using thematic analysis. This approach facilitated the identification of key themes and similarities in the terms used across the different regions. By comparing and organizing the collected terminologies, the study revealed both linguistic differences and similarities between the areas. This comparative analysis offered valuable insights into how language and culture intersect in the Surigao region, enriching ones understanding of regional linguistic diversity.

Results and Discussion

The exploration of animal terminologies across the three districts of Surigao reveals a rich tapestry of linguistic variation and cultural significance, underscoring the importance of local biodiversity. This research employed a qualitative approach to gather data on the specific terms used by residents to refer to various animal species. The findings reflect not only the animals themselves but also the cultural values, traditions, and experiences associated with them. Through interviews and field surveys, distinct terminologies emerged across the districts, revealing a strong connection between language and the ecological environment of Surigao [8]. The findings highlight the importance of understanding local vernaculars, as they provide insights into how communities relate to their natural surroundings.

In addition to documenting specific terminologies, this research examined the underlying reasons for these linguistic variations. Factors such as geographic distribution, economic activities, and cultural practices significantly influence how animals are named and categorized in each district. For instance, some terms have multiple meanings, reflecting the multifaceted roles that certain animals play in the lives of residents—ranging from sources of livelihood to symbols of cultural identity [9]. This discussion emphasizes the need for the preservation of local knowledge and suggests potential implications for biodiversity conservation efforts in the region, as language serves as a critical vessel for transferring ecological wisdom across generations.

Table 1. Varieties of Animal Terminologies in the Three Districts of Surigao

Common name	Filipino	Surigao del Sur	Surigao del Norte	Surigao City
Dog	Aso	Ido	Ido	Ido
Cat	Pusa	Iring	Miya	Miya
Rat	Daga	Ilaga	Ambaw	Ambaw
Fish	Isda	Isda	Isda	Isda

Common name	Filipino	Surigao del Sur	Surigao del Norte	Surigao City
Bird	Ibon	Langgam	Langgam	Langgam
Carabao	Kalabaw	Kabaw	Kabaw	Kabaw
Goat	Kambing	Kanding	Kanding	Kanding
Cow	Baka	Baka	Baka	Baka
Crab	Alimango	Kasag	Kayabang	Kayabang
Silver Stripe Round Herring	Dilis	Domod-ot	Domod-ot	Domod-ot
Chicken	Manok	Manok	Manok	Manok
Squid	Pusit	Nukos	Nukos	Nukos
crow	Uwak	Uwak	Uwak	Uwak
Bed bugs	Surot	Surot	Dugho	Surot

Several key observations can be derived from Table 1 regarding animal terminologies across Surigao. For instance, while the Filipino term for "Dog" is "Aso," in all three districts of Surigao it is referred to as "Ido." The term "Cat," which is "Pusa" in Filipino, changes to "Iring" in Surigao del Sur and "Miya" in both Surigao del Norte and Surigao City. Similarly, "Rat" is "Daga" in Filipino, transforming into "Ilaga" in Surigao del Sur and "Ambaw" in Surigao del Norte and Surigao City.

When examining fish and bird terminologies, "Fish" is uniformly referenced as "Isda" across Filipino and all three Surigao districts. However, for "Bird," while the Filipino term is "Ibon," all three Surigao districts use "Langgam." The findings regarding farm animals reveal that "Carabao" in Filipino is "Kalabaw," which converts to "Kabaw" in all districts. Likewise, "Goat" (Filipino: "Kambing") is consistently termed "Kanding" across all districts, while "Cow" remains "Baka" in both Filipino and all districts.

Upon analyzing marine animals, the term "Crab" is "Alimango" in Filipino but changes to "Kasag" in Surigao del Sur and "Kayabang" in Surigao del Norte and Surigao City. The specific species "Silver Stripe Round Herring" retains the name "Dilis" in Filipino and "Domod-ot" in all three districts. Notably, "Squid" is referred to as "Nukos" across all districts despite being absent in the Filipino lexicon. Among miscellaneous animals, "Chicken" remains consistently "Manok" across all districts, "Crow" retains the term "uwak," and "Bed bugs" are termed "surot" in Filipino and Surigao del Sur, with "Dugho" used in Surigao del Norte.

Table 1 presents fascinating implications related to language, sociocultural dynamics, educational practices, preservation, standardization, and local economies.

Language and Dialectal Diversity. The table illustrates significant dialectal variation within close geographical areas. The different terms for "Cat" (Iring and Miya) and "Rat" (Ilaga and Ambaw) highlight distinct linguistic identities within Surigao del Sur, Surigao del Norte, and Surigao City. Consistent terms such as "Fish" (Isda), "Chicken" (Manok), and "Cow" (Baka) indicate areas of linguistic unity, likely influenced by shared cultural or historical factors. However, the variations reflect local linguistic diversity and could point to different cultural or environmental influences [10].

Sociocultural Dynamics. The diversity in terminology indicates a strong sense of local cultural identity within each district. Variations in names for common animals suggest localized transmission of cultural and linguistic knowledge, indicating that each district may have unique communicative norms and traditions regarding common species [11].

Educational and Practical Implications. Educators and curriculum developers must recognize these linguistic

differences to effectively teach and communicate with students in these regions. Local variations should be integrated into educational materials. Healthcare providers, particularly those involved in public health campaigns, must use terms familiar to local populations. For example, understanding that "Ambaw" is the local term for Rat in Surigao del Norte and Surigao City is crucial for effective communication. Similarly, extension services and environmental programs should take these terminologies into account to ensure clear communication and better community engagement [12].

Implications for Preservation and Standardization. The unique terminology in each district underscores the need to preserve local dialects and prevent their erosion amid modernization. While standardization can enhance uniformity in communication, acknowledging linguistic pluralism is vital for cultural respect and identity. Striking a balance between standard adherence and local linguistic recognition is essential [13].

Impacts on Local Economy and Tourism. Familiarity with local terminologies can enhance cultural tourism, enriching visitors' experiences and deepening their understanding of local cultures. Knowledge of these terms can further aid in marketing local products. For instance, clearly defining local names like "Domod-ot" (Silver Stripe Round Herring) can add authenticity to culinary marketing efforts [14].

Overall, this research not only documents the diverse linguistic landscape of animal terminologies in Surigao but also emphasizes the importance of recognizing and respecting local dialects in various domains to foster effective communication, cultural appreciation, and stronger community relations.

Conclusion:

The study reveals not only a rich linguistic diversity but also profound cultural significance tied to local biodiversity. The study underscores the intricate relationship between language and the ecological environment, demonstrating how specific terms reflect the community's cultural values, traditions, and experiences. Through the analysis of varied terminologies, this research highlights the importance of preserving local knowledge as a means to enhance biodiversity conservation efforts and strengthen community identity. By acknowledging and respecting the unique vernaculars within each district, one can foster effective communication, promote cultural appreciation, and enhance educational and economic opportunities within the region, ultimately enriching both local lives and visitor experiences.

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