



Between policy promises and colonial legacies: A systematic review of power asymmetries and preservation mechanisms in Philippine languages

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Abstract

The Philippines is among Southeast Asia's most linguistically diverse and increasingly threatened speech communities, but there remains a lack of significant scholarly work on how Philippine languages are recorded, maintained, and revived. This systematic review examines the existing body of Philippine language-preservation research, the mechanisms of preservation it documents, and the gaps and imbalances it reveals in the relationship between language policy and language justice. This article presents a systematic review of language preservation studies in the Philippines based on the PRISMA framework. Out of an initial database of 185 citations collected through a multidisciplinary approach, only 14 studies met the eligibility criteria of being specifically focused on language preservation, maintenance, revival, or documentation arising from the Philippines. Thematic analysis of these studies yielded four main themes: the role of institutions and policies; the role of families and intergenerational transmission; the recording of under-reported indigenous languages; and the role of oral tradition in language preservation. The academic research in this area is deeply influenced by the structural inequalities created by the Spanish and American colonial language ideologies, unequal attention to different languages spoken in the archipelago, and the gap between national language policy and everyday socialization practices regarding languages.

Keywords: *language preservation, language policy, indigenous languages, critical language studies, systematic review*

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1. Introduction

Language can never be taken as a neutral means of communication; language is “a socially constituted cultural product that shapes and, at the same time, is shaped by a variety of social, political, and historical contexts in which it is used” (Van Viegen et al., 2023). A prime example of the connection of language with history and authority is the Philippines, an archipelago of more than 7,000 islands that has been affected by the settlement of Austronesians before colonization, more than three centuries of Spanish rule, nearly 50 years of American colonization, and a postcolonial experience focused on the official language and introduction of Filipino as the national language of the new state (Eberhard et al., 2025). Ethnologue lists around 184 languages currently in the Philippines, of which 175 are indigenous; some are endangered, and two have ceased to exist (Eberhard et al., 2025, as cited in Gasing & Al-Saggaf, 2025).

This phenomenon is not exclusive to the Philippines. Bromham et al. (2021) argue that about half of the approximately 7,000 languages spoken around the world are on the brink of extinction – and one of the most significant global predictors of this process is colonial history. The noteworthy feature of the Filipino case is that the density and complexity of colonial history within one still multilingual country led to the emergence of a large, yet scattered, body of academic literature across fields including linguistics, education, anthropology, and communication studies. Nevertheless, a systematic overview of this literature has never been conducted. While individual studies have focused on a particular endangered language, a specific classroom policy, or a specific piece of oral literature, no synthesis has yet been made to answer the following question: what is known about efforts to preserve languages in the Philippines in general?

This paper fills this gap by systematically reviewing literature on language preservation in the Philippines, using PRISMA as a guide. Rather than treating language preservation as merely a technical, descriptive-linguistic issue, this review adopts a critical perspective: language preservation is a site of interaction among colonial legacy, state policy, institutional practices, and community agency. This review addresses three issues.

1. What does the existing literature consist of, once the studies that make short mentions of either indigenous knowledge or preservation have been excluded?
2. What ways of language preservation, whether institutional, familial, documentary, or oral traditional, are there?

3. What are the gaps and imbalances in existing literature, and what can they tell us about the links between language policy and language justice in a postcolonial multilingual country?

2. Literature Review

2.1. The Philippine Linguistic Landscape: Colonial Legacies and Contemporary Policy

Before the Spaniards arrived in 1521, the Philippines consisted of a blend of different Austronesian-speaking people grouped in barangays, and no one used a common language. In the era of the Spanish Colonial Administration (1565 to 1898), Castilian loanwords were introduced into previously spoken languages, as well as the Latin script and institutions working in Spanish among the colonial elite, while the process of evangelization took place in the main languages used in the country, such as Tagalog, Cebuano, and Ilocano, which made a few regional languages very popular, while the majority of languages remained largely undocumented; for instance, the toponymic layer that can be found in the texts under consideration. The American colonial era (1898 to 1946) established English as the language of the newly created public education system, as reflected in the discussion below on the impact of this decision.

Postcolonial language policy efforts to address layering have been inconsistent. The 1987 Constitution of the Philippines states that Filipino, a regulated variety of Tagalog, shall be the national language while English remains an official language for purposes of the legal system, higher education, and international trade. The Indigenous Peoples' Rights Act of 1997 (Republic Act No. 8371) confirms Indigenous Cultural Communities' right to use, develop, and sustain their own languages and writing systems as part of their right to cultural integrity. Yet these initiatives largely depend on the ability and willingness of local government units and the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples to implement these provisions. Finally, the Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013 (Republic Act No. 10533) introduced Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education (MTB-MLE) as a legally mandated instructional mechanism for kindergarten and grades 1 to 3, thereby giving regional and indigenous languages legal weight as media of instruction.

2.2. Critical Language Policy and the Political Economy of Linguistic Hierarchy

According to Tollefson (1991), the idea of language policy comes from the perception of language policy, not as a technical fix but rather as an instrument of inequality rooted in history and geography, in which the concept of linguistic imperialism articulated by Phillipson (2013) implies that any policy aiming at encouraging multilingualism formally can coexist with, instead of replacing, structural dominance of colonial languages. The tension between language policy and the social system that values knowledge of Philippine languages is present in all the studies reviewed in this paper.

Aspects of three distinct scholarly disciplines support the analytical framework of this review. The first is the political-economy view of language advanced by Bourdieu et al. (1991), who argue that linguistic competence is a form of capital whose value is specified by the language market rather than by any particular characteristic of the code itself. From this perspective, speakers do not just select particular languages but exist in a market where some types have value, converting into diplomas, employment, and respect, and others do not. The second strand is the linguistic-rights tradition, illustrated by Skutnabb-Kangas (2013), which reinterprets the elimination of minority languages by schools as a systematic injury rather than a side effect of modernization and provides the terminology of language justice applied later in this work. The third is the translanguaging perspective by García and Wei (2013), which criticizes the assumption that labeled languages are closed systems and instead highlights the fluid resources of multilingual speakers' repertoires. Any evaluation of efforts to preserve languages must account for what the law assures in practice and what the everyday language market rewards.

A separate line of research considers the geopolitics of knowledge production in relation to endangered languages. Canagarajah (2017) explains that research produced in peripheral academic contexts is actively marginalized, even when it addresses issues of global importance, while Smith (2021) examines the extractive nature of research conducted about Indigenous communities, reducing them to sources of information rather than collaborators in the research process. Both viewpoints have significance for the review of literature in the area of language preservation, as the very body of research being reviewed serves as a manifestation of the mentioned issues of inequality, with questions about the sorts of language being studied, researchers, and journals publishing the results of their studies being less than neutral

information. In this regard, Thomas and Harden (2008) justify using thematic synthesis to analyze the literature.

2.3. Language Preservation as Intangible Cultural Heritage

Concerns about language preservation are also linked to broader discussions of safeguarding intangible cultural heritage, where issues such as custodianship, commodification, and community benefit are key focus areas. In particular, empirical evidence shows how cultural practice can both continue and change when it is used as a resource for local development. For example, Dimaano et al. (2025) show how the Niyogyugan Festival in Candelaria, Quezon, contributes to local economic development while facilitating the transfer of traditions and revealing how the benefits of this practice are distributed disproportionately. In turn, Ikalina and De La Peña (2026) investigate the One Town, One Product initiatives in Iloilo to see how cultural identity is created and used for destination branding, and raise the question of whose account of local tradition is recognized as authoritative. Similarly, Younas (2026) shows the constant negotiation of heritage practice in religious tourism in Cebu, involving devotion, commerce, and tourism.

These studies help this review in two ways. First, they show that protecting intangible heritage has already been recognized as a contested practice involving institutions and market actors in the Philippines, which is exactly the point this paper makes about language. Furthermore, they highlight the unevenness of cultural research in the Philippines. Festivals, craftsmanship, and heritage sites receive much attention as research subjects regarding their preservation. However, languages that transmit those elements have not been studied as much in relation to cultural heritage as other areas.

2.4. Research Gap

Policies on Philippine languages are inclusive by nature, but they are complicated from a historical perspective and unevenly implemented. Critical language scholarship provides tools to study this unevenness through power, not administrative capacity. While the study of cultural heritage development in the Philippines has produced a sophisticated account of preservation, it has not contributed to language studies. What is missing is a comprehensive overview of what has been achieved in the Philippines regarding language preservation studies.

3. Methodology

3.1. Review Design

This study follows the reporting recommendations of the PRISMA 2020 statement (Page et al., 2021). It describes the modifications made to the PRISMA framework to accommodate an interdisciplinary document corpus defined in advance for this review. These modifications and their implications are discussed in the Limitations section. Because the included literature is qualitative and methodologically heterogeneous, the study employs thematic synthesis rather than meta-analysis. Studies that meet the assessment criteria are analyzed and grouped according to thematic codes.

3.2. Information Sources and Search Strategy

In line with PRISMA's transparency objectives, we fully describe the origin of the corpus. The review process did not begin with a simple database query from scratch. It was based on an existing cross-disciplinary reference collection formed in two rounds (Batch 1, $n = 29$; Batch 2, $n = 156$; $N = 185$) and included sources in fields such as linguistics, education, anthropology, ethnobiology, public health, and computer science. This reflects a deliberate modification of the PRISMA methodology rather than its neglect, and Limitation covers the implications.

The search string integrated the conservation aspect with geographic and language aspects based on the described Boolean approach applied to the means used by each platform: ("language preservation" OR "language maintenance" OR "language revitalization" OR "language documentation" OR "language endangerment" OR "language change" OR "native language" OR "oral tradition" OR "oral literature" OR folklore) AND (Philippines OR Philippine OR Filipino OR Cordillera OR Mindanao OR Visayas OR Luzon OR Bangsamoro) AND (language OR linguistic* OR indigenous OR vernacular). No language-of-publication filter was applied at the search stage, and the reference lists of the examined articles were checked to identify additional publications. The detailed screening log provided reasons for excluding each record.

3.3. Eligibility Criteria

The corpus consisted of 185 results taken from a multilingual reference pool that included linguistics, education, anthropology, ethnobiology, public health, and computer

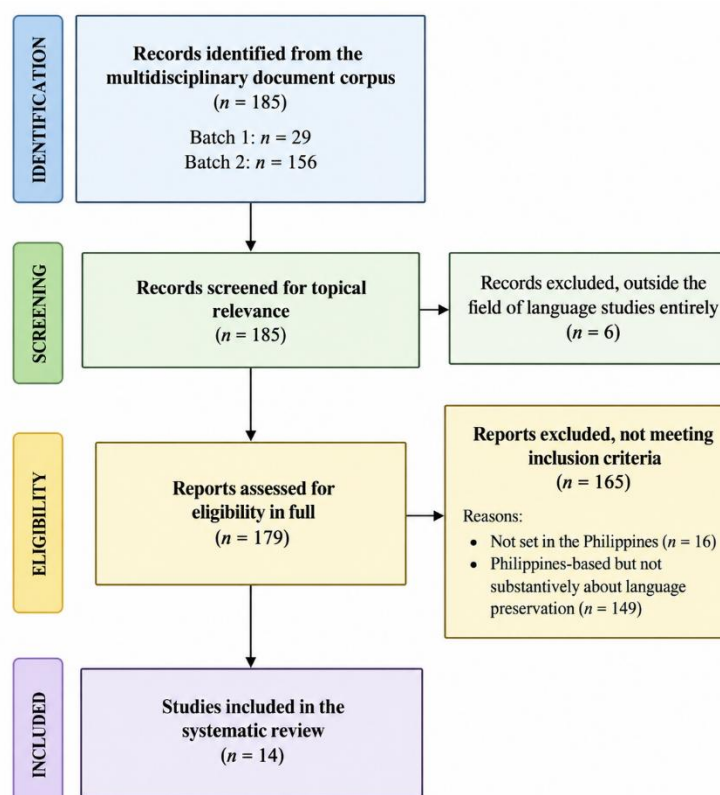
science. The results were included in the corpus if (a) they contained important information about language preservation, such that language preservation, maintenance, revitalization, endangerment, or language documentation, including oral tradition or oral literature as identified by the authors of the papers, was one of the main topics and (b) the results originated from or were concerned with the Philippines. The results were excluded from the corpus if they (a) did not contain any relevant information about language preservation (such as those relating to food preservation, ethnobotany, indigenous ecological knowledge, health policy, or culturally responsive pedagogy that did not relate to language) or (b) did not focus on the Philippines or the Philippine language or population.

3.4. Screening Procedure and Study Selection

Figure 1 presents the corresponding PRISMA 2020 flow diagram.

Figure 1

PRISMA 2020 flow of record identification, screening, eligibility, and inclusion



Screening was completed in two phases using the following steps. First, all 185 documents underwent title and abstract screening, or, in places where abstracts were not present, content snippet screening, to filter out documents that had no relevance to language

studies; six documents were filtered out in this step (class examples include computer language models and the medical use of the term preservation).

In the second step, the remaining 179 documents underwent a full eligibility assessment according to the eligibility criteria. This assessment resulted in exclusion of 165 documents, with 16 being filtered out because language preservation was discussed in a country other than the Philippines (e.g. Ghana, India, Thailand, Bangladesh, Saudi Arabia, Ireland, France, Malaysia, and Indonesia) and 149 others being filtered out even though they were related to the Philippines, but not to language preservation (in most cases, they were ethnobotanical studies, ethnomedical research, indigenous knowledge related to agriculture, health, or conservation studies, and teaching practices that are culturally responsive, in which language is not researched). Fourteen studies satisfied all eligibility requirements.

4. Results

The fourteen studies in Table 1 appeared in print from 2020 to 2026 in regional Philippine journals (e.g., the Southeastern Philippines Journal of Research and Development), respected international linguistics and applied linguistics publications, and only one indexed database record. Of these fourteen studies, twelve used qualitative methods based on archival review, ethnography, content analysis, and semi-structured interviews, with no quantitative assessments using sociolinguistic indicators such as UNESCO's nine-factor framework or the Expanded Graded Intergenerational Disruption Scale. The samples appear predominantly from Mindanao (eight studies) and Cordillera/Northern Luzon (three studies), with Visayas, Metro Manila, and others appearing occasionally.

Theme 1: Institutional and Policy Mechanisms

Three studies investigated the role of formal institutions in language preservation. Ngo (2023) traced the survival of one Chinese school in Iligan City during the twentieth century and found that, despite years of nationalization regulations aimed at eradicating foreign institutions, this heritage-language institution remained the only medium for Chinese language transmission in the Philippine-Chinese community. Dreisbach and Mendoza-Dreisbach (2023), however, looked at the 2019 Bangsamoro Education Code and concluded that this code, while being extensive about languages, privileges Arabic, Filipino, and English as the main languages of instruction in the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao,

Table 1*Summary of included studies*

Author(s) & Year	Language(s)	Region	Design	Preservation Theme	Source
Ngo (2023)	Chinese (heritage)	Iligan City, Mindanao	Historical case study	Institutional/policy	China and Asia, 4, 270–285
Catoto (2022)	Iranun; Maranaw	Maguindanao; Lanao del Sur	Qualitative content analysis	Documentation	World Journal of English Language, 12(6), 320–330
Cutillas et al. (2025)	Filipino	Central Visayas	Qualitative interviews	Family/intergenerational	Forum for Linguistic Studies, 7(7), 298–312
Lamorinas et al. (2025)	Filipino	Zamboanga City	Qualitative interviews	Family/intergenerational	Forum for Linguistic Studies, 7(3), 451–466
Gasing & Al-Saggaf (2025)	Obo Manobo; Kinamiging Manobo	Mindanao	Archival review	Documentation	Southeastern Philippines Journal of Research and Development, 30(2), 165–180
Abiog & David (2020)	Ayta Mag-Antsi	Central Luzon	Documentation study	Documentation	Journal of Language and Linguistic Studies, 16(4), 1774–1783
Bantilan et al. (2025)	Blaan; Tboli	Mindanao	Archival review	Documentation	Southeastern Philippines Journal of Research and Development, 30(1), 93–103
Dreisbach & Mendoza-Dreisbach (2023)	Arabic; Filipino; English; IP mother tongues	BARMM	Policy analysis	Institutional/policy	International Journal of Islamic Thought, 23, 50–55
Lumidao et al. (2024)	Kalanguya (MTB-MLE)	Ifugao	Qualitative phenomenology	Institutional/policy	Pakistan Journal of Life and Social Sciences, 22(2), 4110–4126
Yu et al. (2022)	Kagan	Davao de Oro; Davao Oriental	Ethnographic/oral literature	Oral tradition	Southeastern Philippines Journal of Research and Development, 27(2), 47–60
Sevilla & Estremera (2026)	Agta-Tabangnon	Masbate	Ethnographic-developmental	Documentation/oral	Journal of Ethnic and Cultural Studies, 13(1), 141–165
Tuban (2021)	Bagobo Tagabawa	Davao, Mindanao	Descriptive/folkloric	Oral tradition	Southeastern Philippines Journal of Research and Development, 26(2), 109–131
Budeng & Valera (2024)	Iloko; Igorot (epic)	Amburayan region	Content/oral-narrative analysis	Oral tradition	International Journal of Society, Culture & Language (advance online publication)
Trocio et al. (2023)	Blaan (flalok)	General Santos; Sarangani; South Cotabato	Qualitative-descriptive	Oral tradition	Southeastern Philippines Journal of Research and Development, 28(2), 13–24

while the languages and cultures of non-Muslim indigenous peoples are given little importance. At the same time, Lumidao et al. (2024) found a case that represented a successful implementation of a mother tongue policy, as Kalanguya-language teachers in Tinoc District, Ifugao, were reported to implement gender-sensitive pedagogy in Kalanguya instruction and demonstrate that a formal policy can be implemented in routine, everyday language use.

Theme 2: Family and Intergenerational Transmission

Two studies moved from institutions to household and peer-group environments where language is transmitted or lost informally. In interviews with 25 parents in the Central Visayas region of the Philippines, Cutillas et al. (2025) identified clear strategies, language-rich home practices, various channels of media exposure, and participation in cultural and culinary traditions, that help parents build their children's emotional ties to the Filipino language. Another study by Lamorinas et al. (2025), conducted with 20 Zamboanga City-based Gen Z college students, showed that while Filipino became part of the students' cultural identity, their everyday language use was considerably affected by English-centered social media platforms, job mobility opportunities, and educational materials. The intergenerational transmission of even a national language is neither automatic nor guaranteed by policy and requires ongoing parental effort to overcome conditions that favor English.

Theme 3: Documentation of Endangered and Under-Documented Indigenous Languages

Four studies document selected indigenous languages. Catoto (2022) used Austin's speech-act theory and Swadesh list methodology to show that Iranun and Maranaw are mutually intelligible, yet neither language has sufficient linguistic documentation. Gasing and Al-Saggaf (2025) reviewed archived materials on two Manobo languages and found that Obo Manobo has strong documentation across various linguistic domains, while its sister language, Kinamiging Manobo, has no documentation. Bantilan et al. (2025) noted a similar asymmetry affecting the Blaan and Tboli languages. In contrast, Abiog and David (2020) presented the most comprehensive documentation in this literature, completing a word list of 376 words and a morphological description of the Mag-Antsi language of the Ayta Mag-Antsi community in Central Luzon, with only speakers from the oldest generation remaining.

Theme 4: Oral Tradition as Vernacular Preservation Practice

The last five studies focus on oral tradition, including folktales, proverbs, riddles, epics, and verbal exercises, which have functionality outside formal linguistics. Yu et al. (2022) studied Kagan folktales from Davao de Oro and Davao Oriental and argued that folk narratives play an important role in preserving indigenous culture, even as their social function declines with modernization. Tuban (2021) used the classification systems developed by Murdock and Eugenio to analyze 90 proverbs and 97 riddles from Bagobo Tagabawa, presenting the final corpus as a contribution to cultural preservation while recommending its dissemination through the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples. Budeng and Valera (2024) researched the epic work Biag ni Lam-ang through comparative content analysis and argued that different cultural elements of courtship, marriage, and supernatural elements found in this work could be clues to understanding Igorot people's traditions, hence questioning whether the epic belongs to one specific ethnolinguistic group and showing that recorded folk epics are scarce in the Philippines.

Trocio et al. (2023) collaborated with a social initiative known as the Flalok Project to document recurring cultural themes in Blaan flalok oral texts using Thompson's Motif-Index Theory. For the authors, this project is not merely about documenting the existing situation but about revitalizing Blaan culture. Lastly, Sevilla and Estremera (2026) document several lexically equivalent terms used in the Agta-Tabangnon language and in Filipino and English in the context of ethnomathematical practices, and show how people develop their numeracy vocabulary through these practices.

Several patterns emerge when looking across all four themes. One noticeable trend is the biased geographical spread of the outcomes, with Mindanao and Cordillera languages being far more numerous than languages from the Visayas, Metro Manila, and other provinces of Luzon besides Cordillera that are believed to have several languages documented and not documented. Most studies, methodologically speaking, are classed as archival and qualitative, while none of the authors specifically mention methods such as corpus linguistics, digital documentation staging, or computational tools. A third factor is that nearly all documentation studies present the data as global and country-specific figures on local languages, drawn from Ethnologue and other non-participant sources (Bantilan et al., 2025; Catoto, 2022; Gasing & Al-Saggaf, 2025). Four of the fourteen studies also involve close collaboration with relevant

institutions, and such collaborations could lead to follow-up actions (Abiog & David, 2020; Lumidao et al., 2024; Trocio et al., 2023; Tuban, 2021).

5. Discussion

Individually, the fourteen studies presented in this research reflect fourteen languages, institutions, and communities. When read as a whole, in light of the existing critical language policy literature that has argued that language preservation work is an exertion of power and not a mere technical exercise (Phillipson, 2013; Skutnabb-Kangas, 2013; Tollefson, 1991), this literature points to the possibility of a single recurring structural phenomenon whereby formal inclusion exists alongside informal marginalization. Theme 1 best illustrates this phenomenon. While the Bangsamoro Education Code (Dreisbach & Mendoza-Dreisbach, 2023) appears to be a multilingual policy success story on the surface, as it refers to Arabic, Filipino, English, and local languages, the Code makes these languages of non-Islamic indigenous people only an option. The point of distinction here is that, under what seems to be an inclusive and even post-colonial legal document, the languages of indigenous people constitute a mere recreation of core-periphery relations of colonial Spanish and America's language policies, witnessing some languages being used as means of legitimate public activities for some languages seen by the authorities as optional.

Theme 2 takes the concept of structure and applies it to everyday socialization through language. According to Lamorinas et al. (2025), Gen Zs are not simply opting for English over Filipino. Instead, they exercise their freedom of choice in language within a defined linguistic marketplace where English offers convertible resources in academia, career, and social communication, while Filipino is valued mainly for emotions and self-identity. The parents in Cutillas et al. (2025) study are shown to be struggling against the power of that market by means of very labor-intensive language socialization practices at home, aiming to maintain the national language that, differently from all other languages reviewed in this research, is not endangered but still loses its presence among the youth. The need to defend one's national language shows that multilingualism policies in the Philippines have made it possible to place Filipino, along with several regional languages, on the official map of languages, without affecting the socio-economic realities that continue to favor English.

Themes 3 and 4 bring another pertinent asymmetry: the dynamics of centers and peripheries in the production of preservation knowledge. In this regard, all the documentation

studies that were reviewed in this paper (Bantilan et al., 2025; Catoto, 2022; Gasing & Al-Saggaf, 2025) are archival and lack field-generated data. In fact, these studies are more about the synthesis of existing literature than reporting new fieldwork, and it is notable that they are mostly published in local universities in the Philippines, which highlights their peripherality in Canagarajah (2017) sense of the term, when research produced outside centers still addresses topics of international significance. In cases when their studies are actually executed, for example, Abiog and David's (2020) studies concerning the Ayta Mag-Antsi language or Sevilla and Estremera (2026) studies dedicated to Agta-Tabangnon, it is done mostly by education scholars rather than qualified linguists, and for pedagogical purposes rather than for the purposes of descriptive linguistics, although this approach can be interpreted as scientific inaccuracy from the perspective of the impoverished people's point of view (Smith, 2021).

Studies on oral traditions in Theme 4 clarify the essence of this decolonizing approach. Trocio et al. (2023) collaborated with the Flalok Project, while Tuban (2021) turned to the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples, highlighting a preservation research method that connects both the academic and practical aspects of the studied community. This participatory method has long been advocated by critical and Indigenous research paradigms (Smith, 2021), in contrast to the prevailing style of academic and traditional research discussed in Theme 3. These approaches illustrate the field's incipient transformation: archival synthesis remains dominant, while community-based methods are gaining importance.

Finally, the near-total absence of digital or computational means for language documentation and revitalization among all fourteen studies is not just a methodological gap but a major finding. Techniques and methods such as corpus creation, vocabulary enhancement with mobile apps, and using machines for transcription work have been successfully applied as part of language revitalization strategies elsewhere. The absence of these methods in the Philippine context, despite its strong digital economy, points to either a lack of funding and expert training or a gap between language preservation in the Philippines and computational linguistics. Since Lamorinas et al. (2025) identify social media as a leading contributor to language shift among Filipino youth, the digital space presents an excellent opportunity for language preservation.

6. Limitations of the Review

Limitations affect the conclusions drawn here. The review process used an already assembled multidisciplinary repository rather than conducting a new search of specific databases. While this was done because of the diverse nature of the material, it means it is impossible to guarantee recall on a PRISMA scale; therefore, studies published in local, non-digitally indexed journals may have been missed. However, the screening log was retained so the process can be audited. Furthermore, no formal risk-of-bias assessment was employed for the fourteen chosen articles, as they are too diverse in nature for standard appraisal tools to be applicable. Lastly, the final group of fourteen studies is small, and the thematic scheme should be interpreted as a characterization of the already published and indexed literature rather than as a representation thereof.

7. Conclusion

This systematic review aimed to identify what is known about language preservation research in the Philippines within a broad, multidisciplinary body of literature. It identifies a research area developing through four interconnected, albeit uncoordinated, mechanisms: institutional policy, family socialization, archival documentation, and oral tradition. It shows that formal, inclusive, multilingual language policy exists alongside the informal replication of colonial language hierarchies. These four mechanisms describe a field in which the formal commitments of language policy and the informal conditions of language transmission pull in opposite directions.

8. Implications

For future research, this study suggests comparative cross-regional studies, integrating digital and computational methods into documentation and revitalization efforts, and using dual-rater systematic reviews based on online database searches and local language academic production.

The review proposes for policy and practice that regional autonomy legislation such as the Bangsamoro Education Code is due for review so as to avoid the systematic de-emphasizing of non-majority indigenous languages in relation to Arabic, Filipino, and English; that implementation of mother-tongue based multilingual education should correlate with

investment in local informal oral tradition documentation efforts such as those exemplified in the Flalok Project and by Tuban (2021); and that those endangered languages mentioned here that are still understudied, with Kinamiging Manobo being almost foremost, must undergo urgent studies by linguists while there are still speakers left. More generally, and consistent with the critical perspective adopted here, language preservation in the Philippines should not be treated as a technical issue or a documentary problem. This is an issue of power no less; who has the right to speak a certain language, whose labor sustains the intergenerational preservation of a language, whose knowledge production is authoritative.

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AI Declaration

The author declares the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in writing this paper. In particular, the author used Grammarly to refine grammar. The author takes full responsibility for ensuring proper review and editing of content generated using AI.

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