

A Pragmatic Study on Speech Acts in Bukidnon Rituals

Hazel Jean M. Abejuela
 ORCID No. 0000-0003-2825-7556
 Bukidnon State University

Abstract

This study attempted to present a pragmatic description of Bukidnon rituals, in particular, the speech acts, sequential organization and cultural norms of this indigenous discourse. The results indicated that the most frequently performed speech acts in Bukidnon rituals were directives and representatives. The former were attempts of the speaker (ritualists) to get the addressee(s) (supreme ruler, deities and/or participants of the ritual) to do something, i.e., to heed orders or grant requests. When issuing directives, Bukidnons are explicit and straightforward. They believe that the stronger the directive, the better are the chances for positive responses. Representatives are also prevalent specifically involving claims, affirmation, or declaration. Like other discourses, Bukidnon rituals are found to follow a distinct pattern beginning with *Panawagtawag* (call) or *Pandalawit* (invitation). The spiritual guardians, custodians, and the supreme God, *Magbabaya* are invoked to bless and guide the ritualists and the participants during the rituals. The invitation part (*pandalawit*) was followed by a series of requests interspersed with representatives specifically information, description and explanation. The prayers of requests were further reinforced with the offering and partaking (*panampulot*) of sacrificial animals. As a distinct form of religious discourse, rituals involve customary requirements expressive of the distinct ethnocultural identity of this speech community. It is through a pragmatic analysis of the speech acts that the readers are able to see ritual as an authentic communicative event.

Keywords: *Oral traditions, rituals, pragmatics, speech acts, indigenous discourse*

Background and Rationale

Bukidnon is a province known for its diverse cultural heritage being the home to the seven tribes, namely, Bukidnon, Talaandig, Higaonon, Tigwahanun, Manevu, Umayamnun, and Matigsalug unified by two indigenous languages – Binukid and Manevu. One of the cultural artifacts which needs to be preserved and maintained are the oral traditions particularly the rituals passed down from generation to generation.

The study of Bukidnon rituals is relevant to UNESCO's program on the preservation and revitalization of cultural heritage including oral traditions (UNESCO, 2003; 1996). A challenge for language specialists like language educators

and linguists is to collect, document, and analyze data on indigenous speech events and acts. While speech acts have been extensively studied over the years, a survey of these researches reveals that only few scholars have studied speech acts in cultural and religious rites.

Rituals are speech events of which their language constitutes a fundamental "concrete act of religious and cultural observance" which creates, reinforces and sustains a people's conviction. As Unabia (2000) emphasized, it is through ritualistic discourse that "the people invoke and praise God, they hear the messages of their faith, they make requests from God,

they ask forgiveness and they feel repentance and reassurance.” For pragmatic analysis, one of the most challenging tasks is this area of social behavior thus becomes the investigation of how the speech acts in rituals accomplish these things for the Bukidnon people.

The study of ritual speech acts is crucial to one’s understanding of Bukidnon culture. It is through which the non-Bukidnon readers are able to understand the communicative functions of rituals for which they serve. Just like other forms of discourses, rituals involve action and interaction (van Dijk, 1997) between the ritualists who mediate for the supplicants and the divine interlocutors. It is through a functional analysis of the speech acts that the readers are able to see ritual as an authentic communicative event.

With the need to safeguard the oral traditions of the Bukidnon people, the documentation, i.e., collection and analysis of data relating to indigenous discourses is in consonance with one of the research thrusts of Bukidnon State University which is to undertake ethnicity and culture studies for which very few studies have been conducted. Subsequently, the data can be used by literature and language teachers in teaching Bukidnon literature (which is incorporated in Philippine Literature), Bukidnon Cultural Studies, and Language and Culture (English 154).

Review of Related Literature

Despite the call for research on indigenous discourses, only few scholars have conducted studies on rituals.

In 1986, Du Bois conducted a study on the features of language in ritual speech. He pointed out the distinct characteristics of ritual language which included (1) a ritual register with archaic elements and a specialized vocabulary; (2) euphemism and metaphor; (3) semantic-grammatical parallelism and repetition; and (4) personal volition disclaimer. He claimed that the speech acts in a religious rite was determined by the prescription and fixity of the texts used by the participants.

Szuchewycs (1994) also carried out a study on ritual discourse by looking into how specific linguistic means were exploited to achieve the purpose of a religious event. Specifically, he analyzed the individual speech acts, as well as marked use of evidentials to attribute spiritual authorship and authority to personal speech acts during prayer meetings. Contrary to Du Bois’ assertion that ritual speech was controlled by the ‘fixed’ ritual texts, Szuchewycs concluded that the verbal behavior of the participants during the observed ritual was spontaneous. Through the personal narrative and sharing of experiences, they were able to participate actively in the speech event.

In another study which emphasized the interlink of culture and language, Fong (2000) analyzed the cultural speech acts of Luck talk during the celebration of Chinese New Year. Luck talk is a cultural-linguistic system believed to create balance and harmonize communication behaviors in order to invite good fortune to the people who practice this way of speaking. Two major categories of speech acts were found that characterized the nature and enactment of Luck Talk: the one increasing one’s good luck, and the other minimizing one’s bad luck. The former included greetings and wishes, positive conversation, Chinese food words, and prosperity food rhymes; the latter involved colloquial expressions, implied statements, and homophones/homonyms. This study displayed both a practical and theoretical, communicative, and pragmatic understanding of Luck Talk.

In the local context, specifically in Bukidnon, one survey was conducted on speech acts. As part of her ethnographic study, Opeña (1985) compiled Binukid expressions commonly used in daily conversations. These speech acts were classified into eight categories: greetings, expressions of feelings, Bukidnon idioms, Bukidnon admonitions, useful adjectives, swearings or curses, and derogatory terms. The researcher believed that through the familiarization of these speech acts, other cultural groups in Bukidnon would better understand and communicate with the locals.

Unabia (2000) has also conducted a study on Bukidnon folk literature reflecting the indigenous people's experiences and environs both physical and spiritual. The compilation and translation of these literary traditions have provided the readers insight into the Bukidnon belief and value systems.

In a recent study, Valdez (2011) has collected and analyzed Bukidnon folk stories including myths, folktales and legends. Using the grounded theory analysis, the researcher examined prevalent patterns of water protection practices as reflected in these narratives and subsequently generated theories about water management.

The review of the foregoing studies shows that most of the local studies undertaken are mainly focused on the collection of indigenous discourses. For this reason, there is a need for more studies that would analyze these resources from various perspectives.

Framework

The current study is anchored on two major concepts: speech act (Austin, 1962; Searle, 1965, 1977) and rituals (Unabia, 2000).

Austin (1962) defined speech act as an utterance, which is a functional unit in communication. According to him the utterance of sentences requires not just saying things but also doing them. He then categorized utterances into performatives and constatives. The former is used to do things while the latter is employed to issue assertions or statements. Further, he made a distinction among the acts into locutionary, illocutionary, and perlocutionary. The first act is concerned with the production of a meaningful linguistic expression. The use of words and sense make up the locutionary act. The second act, on the other hand, refers to the function the speaker intends to fulfill when producing the utterance. Language functions include making requests, complaints, assertions, praising, giving admonition, warning, etc. Finally, perlocutionary act entails the effect or consequence of an utterance to the recipient.

The theory of Austin was further refined by another proponent, Searle (1965, 1977) who established a five-part category of speech acts: assertives, directives, commissives, expressives, and declaratives. Assertives are those kind of speech acts that commit the speaker to the truth of the expressed proposition, and thus, carry a truth value. These include making assertions, claiming, concluding, reporting, and stating. Directives, on the other hand, are those that represent attempts by the speaker to get the addressee to do something. They express the speaker's desire/wish for the addressee to do something. These include advice, commands, orders, questions and requests. In issuing directives, the speaker intends to elicit some future course of action on the part of the addressee, thus making the world match the words via the addressee.

The third type, commissives, are speech acts that express the speaker's intention to do something. These include offers, pledges, promises, refusals, and threats. The fourth type includes verbal behaviors such as apologizing, blaming, making complaints, cursing, congratulating, and thanking. These speech acts express the speaker's attitude or mood. The fifth type is composed of speech acts that effect immediate changes in some current state of affairs. In performing this linguistic behavior, the speaker brings about changes in the world. Examples of this sort are declaring war, nominating a candidate, proclaiming a winner, excommunicating, or announcing a verdict.

Another underpinning concept is rituals. Unabia (2000) explains that a ritual is a ceremony performed according to traditionally prescribed rules and differentiated by specific needs. Its presiding figure is a ritualist or a ritual performer who mediates between the worshippers and the supernatural. In Bukidnon, a ritual is called *pamuhat*, from the word *buhat* which means *to do*. *Pamuhat* can either be simple (a common *pamuhat* lasting three to four hours) or complex (*kaliga*, a ritual lasting for three to nine days).

The first category has five types: 1) *indengana ha etaw* or rituals addressed to major

spirit custodians; 2) *pamuhat ha dinatu* or rituals to formulate or revise the custom laws; 3) *pamuhat ha in-ayaw* or rituals performed upon the dictation of a spirit; 4) *pamuhat ha dinalinsay* or rituals directly offered to Magbabaya, the Supreme Being; and 5) *buhaton hu maayad ha etaw* or rituals to obtain benefits, offer thanksgiving or pray for forgiveness.

Objectives

Motivated by the need to add to the limited number of studies on cultural speech acts, the researcher intended to determine the speech acts involved in Bukidnon rituals from a pragmatic perspective. Specifically, the researcher attempted to:

1. describe the speech acts performed in Bukidnon rituals;
2. analyze the sequential organization of Bukidnon rituals; and
3. examine the cultural norms in Bukidnon rituals

Methodology

The research study used a mixed paradigm involving qualitative data, pragmatic method, and statistical analysis. The qualitative data were generated from rituals which have been audio-video recorded and archived. Using the principles of pragmatic approach, the researcher analyzed the speech acts found in this authentic discourse. Pragmatic method studies how people understand and produce communicative acts in naturalistic settings. To accomplish an understanding of the communicative functions of these cultural events, Searle's speech act theory was used. This theory enabled the researcher to analyze the participants' utterances, the functions for which they served and the means through which they were accomplished. Although the research was mainly qualitative, the researcher used descriptive statistics (measures of frequency count) to determine the predominance and patterns of speech act occurrence in rituals. According to Mackey and Gass (2005), quantification of some kind

can be used in qualitative research especially in the verification and summary of features and patterns, generation of hypothesis, and provision of a simple summary of results to bring out the data's most obvious features.

The data were drawn from five types of rituals: *Singampu*, prayer requesting permission; *Pangumpaya*, prayer of request to the guardian of man's mind; *Layag-Layag*, prayer requesting for successful farming; *Panliteb & Amimisil*, prayer to ward off misfortune; *Pamahandi*, yearly worship of Bukidnon families for all blessings; and *Kagdulang hu Kapiyaan*, wedding ceremony.

The research involved the speech community of ritualists from the three tribes of Bukidnon: Bukidnon, Higaunun, and Talaandig. Out of the seven tribes of Bukidnon, these three use Binukid as their language. The other four, on the other hand, use Manevu.

The data were gathered following a series of steps. First, the researcher sought permission from the National Commission on Indigenous People (NCIP), the datu and other key members of the community and informed them about the purpose of the study. The participants were assured of protection of rights to privacy by not identifying their real names. Secondly, the rituals were audio and video recorded, with the researcher observing. To add to the corpus of study, the researcher also conducted a document analysis of Dr. Carmen Ch. Unabia's compilation of recorded rituals. Although rituals follow a structure, the datu's utterances are natural and spontaneous. Stein et al. (1997) argued that "naturally occurring language behavior can be studied quite easily within an experimental setting without disrupting the natural flow of negotiation or conversation." Thirdly, the rituals were transcribed in discourse units (taken as a stretch of talk uttered by a datu). These texts in Binukid were translated to English for the non-Bukidnon readers to understand.

Utterances from the transcribed rituals were analyzed using Searle's (1977) taxonomy of speech acts. The first round of analysis

involved the identification and labeling of macro-communicative functions. These included assertives, directives, commissives, expressives, declaratives, and the corresponding sub-functions. The second round involved the description of macro-structure based on the sequential organization of rituals. Finally, the norms of interaction in conducting the rituals were analyzed.

Results and Discussion

The rituals in Bukidnon are the primary means through which the people connect with their Supreme God, *Magbabaya* and the lesser gods and goddesses. Although Bukidnons have been Christianized, their beliefs and practices are still preserved. Rituals are usually held before, during, and after cultural activities. The natives believe that in every event, in every celebration, *Magbabaya* and the other deities should always be invoked, invited, or consulted.

The corpus of data shows that rituals are conducted for various communicative purposes. These are shown in Table 1.

Table 1
Frequency Distribution of Speech Acts in Bukidnon Rituals

Speech Act Type	f	%
Directives	192	56.14
Representatives	126	36.84
Commissives	21	6.14
Declaratives	2	.58
Expressives	1	.29

Table 1 shows that the most frequently performed speech act in Bukidnon rituals is the directive type with more than half the total number of utterances that constitute the corpus of this study. Next to this is the second set of illocutionary acts composed of representatives with a little over a quarter of the data. The least used speech acts are commissives, declaratives, and expressives, respectively.

Most of the directives and representatives are observed in the *Pangumpaya*, *Singampu*, *Amimisil*, *Panliteb*, *Pamahandi* and *Kagdulang*

hu Kapiyaan rituals. A negligible number of directives and representatives are found in the ritual *Layag-Layag*. This is due to the fact that this ritual is brief and performed with very few words and more non-verbal activities.

Directives in Bukidnon Rituals

Rituals are speech events which involve a monologic communication to a Supreme Ruler, lesser gods and goddesses, and departed foreparents. Bukidnons believe that rituals are the highest forms of communication through which their supplications are conveyed. Specifically, they invite the spirits of these deities, invoke their guidance for all plans and undertakings, make requests for successful marriage, child-bearing, bountiful harvests, healing of illnesses, settle conflicts; cleanse and ask for forgiveness, and, ward off misfortune and animal pestilence. The success of these rituals is greatly determined by the performance of speech acts which correspond to the purpose of a particular ritual.

Table 2
Frequency Distribution of Types of Directives in Bukidnon Rituals

Types of Directives	f	%
Order	86	44.79
Supplication/ Request	75	39.06
Invitation	27	14.06
Suggestion	4	2.08

Table 2 reveals that the highest percentage of speech acts performed during rituals involve directives specifically order, supplication/request, invitation, and suggestion. These speech acts are attempts of the speaker (ritualists) to get the addressee(s) (supreme ruler, deities and/or participants of the ritual) to do something, i.e., to grant a request or follow an order. Almost half of the directives are orders and supplications or requests. Making invitations and suggestions are least performed in rituals. Findings also reveal that the directives are frequently done in *Singampu* and *Pangumpaya*.

The directives classified under orders are those illocutionary acts which are stronger than requests considering their syntactic form. They are considered to be more explicit and imposing.

Frame 1

Na hadi kaw magtalogbuut ta ba igpanawtawag day ha igpangam-amay day ha igpanginay-inay.

(Do not refuse to listen to our supplications which seek your fatherly and motherly concern.)

Hadi manulsuliman sa sumisigbat, sumasagelang ta kena day iyan tag-umawen.

(Stop the sumisigbat and sumasagelang from listening to us.)

Yan kaw matatau ha mangulin ta hai hadi day gayed mahimu ku hadi kaw umulin.

(You should assist and guide us because we cannot possibly realize our intentions unless you assure us of your assistance and guidance.)

Yan kaw magtatau ha sa talinga day na mabelad pa di hu bagyang ha ipaliman day para na masayun day matimu.

(Make our ears as wide as the bagyang (yam) leaves as we listen to the tapes so that we can easily hear the words and translate them properly.)

Yan nu ipagdalangin kandan imantu sa mandalawi sa buhuk dan ha manlonut sa lubayen dan ha mandagayday sa untung dan.

(Bless them until their hair turns white and bless their life so that it will continue to flow abundantly.)

The utterances show directives in the imperative construction. With the use of action verbs at the beginning of the utterances and the expressions 'Yan kaw' which connotes, 'You should or make', the directives are more emphatic and straightforward. According to the sub-maxim of quantity for directives, let the directive be as strong as required. Thus, in expressing directives during rituals, the datos make use of stronger directives like orders and commands believing that the more vigorous the prayers, the better are the chances for favorable response to the articulated needs.

Another type of directives expressed in the rituals are requests. Compared to orders, requests are implorative as indicated in the

polite expressions like 'Kid-u kanay. . ., buligi kay . . .' used to soften the force of this type of directives. Requests are also expressed in a more lengthy and detailed manner. These directives are exemplified in the following utterances:

Frame 2

Luwasa ku min ku Mulin-ulin daw aman temenged ha ku pandepetan ha basal ta ku napagtagenas haini sa padalandalanen day hu agi hu dalawitan.

(Please save my Mulin-ulin (guardian of the thoughts of men) if it ever happens that greater demand is charged concerning the processes of the ritual prayers.)

Buligi kay katai daw di kay ba isinunul ku duun yanaen ku hadi ku Mulin-ulin daw Dumalungdung.)

(Please help us so that we will not offend the lord Mulin-ulin and Dumalungdung.

Hindega hu indengana kanak ha dumalungdung, batuwa, balakat, Mulin-ulin..

(Let me be assisted by my guardians dumalungdung, batuwa, balakat, and Mulin-ulin.)

Daw yan daan magkahid-u kanay sumailing ku San Isidro imantu daw ki San Miguel ha yan tagtabang kanak, na iman pakalalag kanak pabanyug ka dini daw a imu buligi.

(San Isidro will pity us, likewise San Miguel because you are the ones who help me; come and help me.)

Duun yanaen hu magmantas magkulayan ta gawa ta kalibutan ta lagdeng katiyanen man ku Bai Mangunguyag ku Bai haMangunguyamu.

(Grant us all long life on earth for we shall be taken care of by the Bai Mangunguyag and Bai Mangunguyamu.)

Yan ta paman imantu ku kalalagan ha Mulin-ulin ku daw Dumalungdung ku ha duun alan binuhat ku duun taini ha huda asiyan hu ngaran ha pamilya ku imantu ta yank aw iman magkahid-u kanak imantu.

(To my kind Mulin-ulin, I beseech you to help me so that no member of the family will be cursed by the bad fate and misfortune.)

Still another very common type of directives are invitations. When rituals are performed, spirits are invited. It is believed that with their presence, the rituals will be successful and the prayers will be granted. Making invitations can be classified as directives because the

speaker (ritualist) instructs the hearer (spirit) to respond to the call. Take the case of the following utterances:

Frame 3

Na aman duun yanoen ha agsangpiten ku labi su tumanud ku mga laas ta yan man su tumanud ku mga laas tagbuhat hu iling ta ini.

(I am calling the guardians of the elders because indeed it was they who performed the same ritual.)

Yan ku anay tawagen su Mulin-ulin ha yan man sa legsa ku daw su takinan hu tumanud ha agngaranan ki Nuti ha Pigtendegan ha Ayuyu Pigkiraban.

(I will call first the Mulin-ulin who is my guardian, otherwise called the lord of the guardians named Nuti Pigtendegan or Ayuyu Pigkiraban)

Isab ha tawagen ku imantu duun taini nay an kug tawagen pa man imantu su kalalagan ha mangunguyamu ha ag ngaranan ku Sinyura ha Kaamulan ha Bai ha kauhangan ha yan ka magkakatau imantu ki maning daw ki Gilin.

(Next, I invoke the kind mangunguyamu (native midwife) who I named Sinyura Kaamulan or Bai Kauhangan to take care of Maning and Gelen.)

Na daludu ha tawagen ku duun imantu su inpabantay dini ta limbubungan ha agngaranan ki Diwata ha Inpatalwas. Iling din ku inpabantay ta puwirtahan ta balay imantu ha agngaranan hu Diwata haPananghiran na pagkalalag kaw ha dalepa kaw.

(Next, I call on the guardian of the ridge of the roof who is Diwata Inpatalwas; likewise, the guardian of the door who is Diwata ha Pananghiran; kindly come over here)

The data show that the invitations are combined with identification of deities and/or description of their functions.

Representatives in Bukidnon Rituals

The corpus of this study shows that representatives are performed in rituals. Representatives are speech acts that commit the speaker to the truth of the expressed propositions, and thus, carry truth values. In performing these speech acts, the speaker represents the world as s/he believes it is, thus making the word fit the world of belief. The distribution of representatives is presented in Table 3.

Table 3
Frequency Distribution of Types of Representatives in Bukidnon Rituals

Types of Representatives	f	%
Assertion	46	36.51
Description	36	28.57
Explanation	26	20.63
Identification	18	14.29

As revealed in the data, the most frequently performed representatives in Bukidnon rituals are assertions. Assertions are made in the following lines taken from the rituals:

Frame 4

Sa tindahan dan iman haini na manalinsing daan imantuna yan sedan imantu makaangken hu kaayad hu kagtima iman ta ganin iyan kaw mig kahid-u ta sa alan

(Their business will prosper such that they will soon live a comfortable and prosperous life because you shall indeed extend to us your kindness.)

Sa babuy dan daw manuk nahari agiyan hu bangkit ta inpalangesa daan imantu duun ku hinimu ha tangkal hu babuy.

(Their pigs and chickens will be spared because the blood of the sacrificial chickens and pigs were already spilled on this pigpen.)

Hari agiyan hu kulira sa agngaranan tai ha babuy dan ta ganin na inpananghid dan duun ku Wagas ha magbabaya.

(Cholera will not affect their pigs because permission has been asked from Wagas ha Magbabaya.)

Amayen sedan daw inayen sedan ta dini hangyu ha isan inu ha kalawad-en dan ta tantu yan sedan imantu nakaibit hu Pamahandi hu Gintuusan.

(They (petitioners) shall be recognized as parents and all the people will buy necessities from their store because they now possess favors from the Pamahandi hu Gintuusan (spirit guardian of wealth).)

Na sa tumitigal-i na daw da man hayan sedan agkahimu tagsigbat, tagtigal-I ku hadi mauntul sa kabuhatbuhata kandan.

(The tumitigal-I (evil ones) can only interfere when they are not treated properly.)

Huda en maisab mahitabu duun ta tindahan dan hai..

(There shall no longer be any misfortune and immorality that will happen in their store.)

As noted, assertions are expressed based on the beliefs and judgments of the ritualists. These take the form of declarative statements to make claims, affirmation, declaration, or reports. It is believed that for one to receive favorable response to prayers, s/he should already believe, affirm, and claim it to happen. Assertions are usually performed after the prayers of requests have been said and the sacrificial animals have been offered.

The data also reveal that descriptions are made when issuing representatives. The following utterances are descriptive in nature because they attempt to illustrate the effects of the ritual to the situation based on the ritualists' senses:

Frame 5

Iling hu wahig ha isan sa mainit agkabawah din, isan sa tagkalegdeg na agkapedengan din. Na iling hu wahig ha matinu, hadi mainit sa ulo day.

(Our minds shall remain cool like the water and they will not become hot and fiery. They shall not be easily irritated when confronting big and small problems).

Ba abu sa hustu ha katadengan ha hadi magkidukidu sa panagundalaen day hu agi hu buluhaten.

(So, like the kitchen, we easily find the right word in expressing this ritual.)

Iling hu lugung ha tagligiden dini ta gawa ta kalibutan haini sa kagtima hi Gilin daw Maning ha yan sedan makapparisa sa ngaranan ha kakigayun da..

(Like thunder, the life of Gelen and Maning who jointly share the effort in their business shall spread over the earth.)

Iling ha naugtu ha anlaw ha hangaren sedan asem hu mariyu daw maranhi ha amayen sedan.

(Like the sun that reaches the high noon, they shall be looked up to and respected by many, from near or far.)

The foregoing utterances show that description in rituals is expressed in metaphorical language. The use of similes signaled by the word 'iling' enables the ritualists to compare two unlike entities having similar qualities. The comparisons also illustrate vividly the positive consequences of rituals to

the participants.

Providing explanation is another sub-speech act which has been observed during rituals. It ranks third among the types of representatives. The following thought units involve clarification and elucidation of the rituals:

Frame 6

Ha aman sa manuk haena na hari bad aw igtuu hu mabelek ba huda lain agpahinungdan duun sa agngaranan imantu ighangyu na igpanluhud duun ku takinan imantu Magbabaya ha hura anay alambiten nay an sa ngaran din Diwata ha Suldahan ha ayan anay alambiten ha yan anay tinugyanaan hu kapamuhat din ta gawa ta kalibutan.

(This chicken will be killed as a means of request and supplication to the Lord Magbabaya and to no other alambiten (spirits who are invoked in rituals) except Diwata ha Suldahan, who is the earliest alambiten entrusted to attend to rituals offered here on earth.)

Ba yanaen ha tenged ha lalang ha kamulu man sugili, kamulu ag istudyuwi sa lagdeng ha kakasida daw danus daan ku lagdeng ha pamaagi ta basin ku kalipatan ta lagdeng.

(The reason for this ritual is that our culture is being studied for educational purposes so that it will not be forgotten by the later generations.)

Iman na yang kud paman hai himatayan saini ha igdaga ku tai ha salngsang ta ku panaglit nakaugsak dun tai sa madaet na mapalas ta langesa ta manuk hai ku nadas-egan ku nakalubungan ku nasuwayan, ku nahukungan na ibugwas ta langesa ta manuk hai ku bagtu tai ha uma din sa pigdaluwan sedan sa tagiuma na hadi masita iyan magkakatao sa tuman ha sinampit ku ha talawagen daw maayad sa katima dan daw megkatigayun sedan.

(The blood of the chicken, I will spill on the salangsang (spiced bamboo) so that any bad luck on the farm will be washed away by it and so that no misfortune will come to Juan and his family since all those that I have called will help them live in bounty.)

As noted, the utterances explain the reasons behind the ritual practices. The ritualists explicated the various aspects of the rituals.

Identification also emerged from the data as exemplified as follows:

Frame 7

Anilaw ha Humandung, anay ka namalana dawegdaweg hug miglagiba, migliena luganasan su kabukad ha mamaen, su kandin ha pigbiyaan, ba dini pinatutulus ta kataneban ta kalasan..

(Anilaw ha Humandung, you are known to sit on the blossom of the betel tree to keep them from falling because for they are under your custodianship and you are known to live in the forest.)

Sayan ha salapi, na bata haya hu Mulin-ulin, indengana kanak

(That money is the bata of Mulin-ulin, the guardian of our mind)

Impahinenged hai sa manuk hu Mulin-ulin, Batuwa, Balakat, dumalungdung and the Wagas ha Magbabaya ha migbaya, nanlitan, ha tag-ila kanay hu maayad ha panghenahena, tagtayawtaw hu henahena day.

(The chicken is being offered to the Mulin-ulin, Batuwa, Balakat, dumalungdung and the Wagas ha magbabaya who decides, takes care of, and provides for a good state of mind and enlightens our memory.)

Iman na mailman daan sa tagibugta ha nasalukuban tai ha uma hi Huwan daw sa duun ha taman hu dinagangdangan hu hapuy daw sa timamanuwa daw sa bulalakaw daw sa ibabasuk dini ta kaulu ta Dapitan ha ha migngadan ki Undagila Mapedta..

(And now the talabugta, spirit guardian of the soil is within the farm of Juan and the one that can be reached by the heat of the fire and the Timamanuwa, guardian of the people and Bulalakaw, custodian of water and Ibasasuk, custodian of plants in the head of Dapitan (river mountain) where the spirits invited to the rituals are fetched by Undagila Mapedta.)

Sa diwata dini napuun ta hiwain ha agngaranan hi Diwata hu Ugyaban yank aw matatau ha taming imantu.

(The diwata who comes from the east who is Diwata hu Ugyaban shall serve as the shield of protection.)

The utterances serve to identify the names and functions of spiritual custodians whose names are invoked during the rituals. In grammatical terms, appositives are used to identify the subjects.

Speech Act Sequence

Generally, Bukidnons conduct rituals to implore the help of the Supreme God, lesser

gods and goddesses, deities and guardians during social activities. The macro-speech act then is directive in nature. Along this context, the researcher also tried to determine the sequential organization of this macro-speech act of rituals.

According to van Dijk (1977), a macro-speech is known as a global speech act which involves various subordinate acts which appear before and after it. As mentioned, the rituals are directive in nature but an examination of these reveals that there are auxiliary speech acts surrounding the global speech act.

Firstly, Bukidnon rituals open with a call (*panawagtawag*) or an invitation (*pandalawit*). The extracts below exemplify the opening parts of the rituals.

Frame 8

Sa Mulin-ulin ta hustu ha pulutawan, na pamulungi hai hu dalangin daw hulugi hai hu grasya iling ta manuk hai daw inapugan hai ta agud ini ha lalang hadi day hai aglimbunagan.

(The true Mulin-ulin and pulutawan (guardians), please provide the prayer and give grace to these chickens and this inapugan (betel chew) because we use this as a means of supplicating the souls of the elders so that we will not offend them.)

Agsangpiten ko labi su tumanud ku mga laas ta yan man su tumanud ku mga laas tagbuhat hu iling taini. Na yank aw matatau. Yan kaw daan matuen hu mga buluhaten nay an kaw daan matatau ha mangulin kanay ta para matuman gayed ha mangagi gayed sa pangangampuan day.

(I am calling the guardians of the elders because indeed it was they who performed the same ritual. Please take the responsibility for us. You were the experts on religious rites so please guide us now.)

Dalawitenku tai ha bibiyagen ta mantay sa migbaya hu luy-a ha migngadan ki Manektek, Dawegdaweg. Iman na dalepa kaw dini daw yank aw megkakatau taini ha bibihagen. Na isab din, nay an kud paman sampiten sa migbaya hu manuk ha migngadan ki Anyukesa sad aw ke Kamaliles daw ki Mukalbukal daw Pamulaw daw si Hapunan. Iman na hadi kaw mabayanbayan na dalepa kaw kini daw yu batuka hu mata s ailing ta iman na huda man pila agpatengedan taini ha bibihagen.

(May this prayer through these chickens become effective through the help of the guardian of the ginger, whose name is Manektek daweg-daweg Maladpalad. Come and bless these chickens. I will also call on the guardian of the chickens who is

Anyukesa Kamaliles Mukalbukal, Pamula-, waw Hapunan. Do not hesitate, come and witness the offering of these chickens.)

Yan ku anay tawagen su Mulin-ulin. Yan man sa legsa ku daw su takinan hu tumanud ha agngaranan ki Nuti ha Pigtundugan ha Ayuyu Pigkiraban.

(I will call first the Mulin-ulin (spirit guardian) who is my guardian, otherwise called the lord of the guardians named Nuti Pigtindegan or Ayuyu Pigkiriban.)

The data show that the first part of Bukidnon rituals involves the acts of calling and making invitations. The spiritual guardians, custodians, and the supreme God, Magbabaya are invoked to bless and guide the ritualists and the participants during the rituals.

However, in another ritual, Pangumpaya hu Mulin-mulin, the ritualist explained first the purpose of the ritual (assertive) before making invitation. The extract below exemplifies this.

Frame 9

Sayan ha tris pibus bata hayen hu ilingen ta Mulin-ulin, batuwa, balakat and dumalungdung. Ta ilingen ta siak ba kun lugar agkayanaen ha tag-tulabung a bas a igkayanaen ku ha malu lugar agkauntul sa kagtulabung ku ta iyan man sa Mulin-ulin ha inpaulin kanak. Na sibu kun migtunghaay a na sibu kun sa nakabulig kanak. Paghayagan kiyu daw masayun taw matun-an, masayun taw masabut sa agbuhataun taw.

(These coins, worth three pesos, serve as bata (tribute) to the Mulin-ulin, batuwa, balakat and dumalungdung. Being a datu, I offer these coins to them. This chicken is being offered as we render our prayers so that we who undertake this writing will be guided accordingly. Let me be assisted by my guardian dumalungdung, batuwa, balakat and Mulin-ulin. Please be responsible for guiding me so that I can easily articulate the purpose for which this chicken is being offered.)

The following extract from the ritual, *Singampu*, demonstrates this speech act:

Frame 10

Hari luyahan sa duun iling sa managanuy daw sa manalt-aw ha halus mangabugadu nay an hari luyahan na mulig hu dalawitan. Daw iyan daan hari luyahan sa lalawag hu mamaen hu

mignadan ki Anilaw ha Humandung. Anay ka namalana dawegdaweg hug miglagiba, migliena luganasan su kabukad ku mamaen, su kandin ha pigbayaan. Ba dini pinatutulus ta kataneban ta kalasan ha yan hadi luyahan mulig hu dalawitan.

(Do not let those who protect us feel weak. So with the managanuy and manalat-aw who become weak. Let them assist our prayers. Let it be similarly so with the lalawag who is Anilaw ha Humandung. You are known to sit on the blossom of the betel tree to keep them from falling for they are under your custodianship and you are known to live in the forest. Help us in our prayers.)

The ritual, *Panliteb*, indicates a variation by following the information-identification-request pattern. This is shown below.

Frame 11

Aman siky u imantu yank u inyu agsaligan ha s ailing ta agbuhaten ku haini ha agngaranan ha agliteban ku duun ta ini ha balay tindahan hu mailing ki Gilin daw ki Maning su pamalihi, maliit hu bubuhay. Na yank u aghangyuun imantu su diwata dini inpabantay ta hiwalan imantu ha agngaranan imantu ki Diwata ha Nangiliakila ta yan habay, yan dalu etaw ku hadi matawag. Na iman tu saksiha sa agbuhaten ku hai. Na yun ku aghangyuen ha hari liaran, hari baligturan sa pamilya ku imantu ta duun da kataman ta langesa ta manuk, ha imantu sug liteben ha pamalihi, amliit ha bubuhay.

(Now, it is you I am depending on. This ritual that I am going to do will cover the pamalihi (misfortune) and maliit (bad luck) in the house and store of Maning and Gelen. Now I am going to put a request to the diwata who watches the east named Diwata ha Nangilakila because it is he who causes illness when he is not given due respect. Now please stand as our witness. I am requesting that my family be spared of illness because all the pamalihi and maliit that I am going to cover will terminate through the blood of these chickens.)

In *Pangumpaya hu Mulin-Ulin*, request-explanation pattern is evident.

Frame 12

Agpanayu kay hu panabang, bulig. Agpanayu kay daan hu dipinsa ha hadi kay madaluwan. Hadi madaet sa ulu day. Aman pirmahan hayen sa tris pibus duun tayana ta yan hayen bata hu Mulin-ulin. In-ila hayen ki Mr daw Mrs Unabia

para lugar ha sa Mulin-ulin ku hu kagbuliga kandan na maniguru en humupit. Maniguru en manikadsikad sa kabuligi ku kandan na hadi en maalang-alng ta duun yanaen ha matulen gayed sa ikauntul hu tagbuhaten dan. Na yan hayan bata hu Mulin-ulin. Inpaha lugar tayan ha tagbuhat tai ha inilahan kaw hu impurtansiya.

(We want to seek his assistance and protection so that we will not get sick. Our minds shall function efficiently. Please testify on those three peso coins because they are a bata (tribute) to the Mulin-ulin. That is being offered by Mr. and Mrs. Unabia so that my Mulin-ulin will do their best in rendering us the much needed assistance. Now let it be that in the future, Mrs. Unabia will be able to defend her work before the judges who may pass judgment on this work. That money is the bata of the Mulin-ulin. Take note of that because it is not for me but for you. It is a proof that you are being given due importance by the person who makes this endeavor.)

In general, the focal part of the ritual highlights the petitions of the ritualists expressed through the speech act of request or order.

After the requests have been conveyed, the ritualists proceed to the killing of the sacrificial animals. This non-linguistic act can also be considered a speech act because it is the ultimate expression of the ritualist's supplication so that the spiritual beings will grant the requests made. This is followed by an intermission period when the pigs and/or chickens are cooked. Once food is cooked, a second call is made by ritualists inviting the spirits to partake of the food. This is shown in the following excerpts.

Frame 13

Ehs dun yanaen kug kapaliman a ganin ku tinawag ku ha indengana kanak ha batuwa, balakat, dumalungdung, Mulin-ulin. Na duun yanaen ha agsublad a agpanawagan ta duun yanaen ha nahutu en hai sa kan-en daw sa manuk hai daw ha agkakaen duun tai ha lamisahan. Na duun yanaen ha ubay en dini sa sinampit ku ganina daw agen-ena yud sa banyug tai ha kan-en ta duun. Yank aw man tagbulig, tagtabang, tagnau, tag-ulin kanay hu tagbuhaten day mailing tai ha tagsulataen iman.

(Ehs, in this manner let me be heard again by my guardian Batuwa, Balakat, Dumalungdung and Mulin-ulin whom I called awhile ago. Now I am calling you once

again because the food and chicken have been cooked and are ready to be served. Now therefore, I invite you all to come over and smell the fragrance of this food being offered to the guardians who help, teach, and guide us in writing down the Bukidnon beliefs.)

In other rituals, the second invitation is interspersed with requests like the one below.

Frame 14

Agud sa tagbaya hu sugudan daw inpaipat hu singampu na hugmuni hu dalangin daw hulugi hu grasya tai man nalutu sa manuk daw sa kawyagan hai. Ba duun ku yanana-a hub a ad en pasayluwa hu salengana ta maistra hai daw mailing ta s ailing hu hipanaw na yan a man duun. Dumayun sa lalang kun a duun yanaen ha dig kabayanbayan sa duun yanaen tagbaya hu mamaen daw lalawag hu manika daw duun yanaen hu tagbaya hu kuwa ha bata ku Bulalakaw. Buligi kay. Henta kan tawaga daan iman sa migtuwang hu tumbaga daw migtapnay hu bagtingen daw lalawag hu kandila ha mimgadan Lintungayan. Ipananawag tai ba iyan anay-tawaga sa lalawag hu balay ha mimgdan ki Panggabaw ha Hanungan, Datu ha Salilungan, Indisalgan Inabyan daw Inbangel Inamuma, Sinyuda ha Hampangan, Bai ha Benengaan, Salagya ha langkuban daw Kagwas ha Limbubungan.

(Now the custodian of the ritual prayers, please assist our supplications and give us the grace we need because the chickens and all other food have been cooked. Please let me be accompanied by the guardians of these petitioners. Please let me not be abandoned by the keeper of the mamaen. Also the keeper of the manika (buyu leaves) and the child of Bulalakaw. Please come over and help us in our prayers. Please also call the holder of the bronze and the bagtingan (bell) and the lord of the candle who is named Lintungayan who transfers the tulub and palina (incense). Please call the lord of the house, Panggabaw ha Hanungan, Datu ha Salilungan, Indisalgan Inabyan daw Inbangel Inamuma, Sinyuda ha Hampangan, Bai ha Benengaan, Salagya ha langkuban and Kagwas ha Limbubungan.)

The final part of the rituals is *panampulot* or partaking of the food offering. The *Baylan* leads the rest in picking a little sample of the different parts of the chicken or pig. As the participants eat of each part, they utter a prayer of request. The speech acts performed are still directive in nature.

Frame 15

Na duun yanaen ha sampulutan kud sa ulu din ta duun ha mangulu-ulu kay en asem hu kabantug ta matuman sa buluhaten day na huda en lumabaw hu kaayad ta duun yanaen ha yan kay en labi mangulu-ulu hu kagsulat iling hu kagkuan hu Bukidnun ha mga kinaiyahan, kultura kagi dan da.

Na duun yanaen ha dini a ta ilalabaw ta sulu din ta laus ha man labawlabaw kay en labi hu kabantug hu ngadan din kagbalagsulat daw kagpanigayun.

Na din a ta wahig haan tad aw duun yanaen hailing hu wahig ha isan sa mainit agkabawah din, isan sa tagkalegdeg na agkapedengan din. Na iling hu wahig ha matinu, hadi mainit sa ulo day. Hadi dali madaet sa ulu day hu atitiyu lang ha prublima.

Na panampulet kaw.

(Now I will sampulot (take) the head so that in the same manner we will lead with honor in the future. Our work shall not be superseded by the rest because we would indeed lead in writing the Bukidnon culture.

Now I will take the longest claw so that in the same manner we will excel in writing and make a living.

Now I will take the water so that in the same manner we will receive the power of the water to cool off the heat and put off the flame. Our minds shall remain cool like the water and they will not become hot and fiery. They shall not be easily irritated when confronting big and small problems.

Now make your panampulot.)

In the case of the tribal wedding ceremony, the structure is composed of two parts: *Pabugwas hu Banuwa daw Panluhudan hu minantay hu batasan* (cleansing ritual) and the actual *Kagdulang hu Kapiyaan* (wedding ceremony). The second part consists of six steps: march and arrival of the groom, the negotiation, *Taltaga hu Batasan* (accounting of obligations and dowry), *Pamalalas* (the blessing), *Saluwa hu Batasan* (communion of bride and groom), and *Kaamulan* (gathering with dances, songs and music).

The groom with his party (parents and relatives) marched along with his *Abay*, a single young woman from their house, to the Hall of Peace. Upon their arrival, their spokesperson

(a datu) rendered greetings. Once welcomed, they then proceeded to the bride's house. Both parties were all seated in opposite sides for the negotiation. The *Kagun* put a coin known as the *Pangadap ha Batasan* on a cloth. He then put another coin to introduce the groom's party and their intention. Then he requested the Customary Counsel of the bride to lay down the customary requirements and obligations they need to comply for the wedding. The *Taltaga ha Batasan* ensued with the datu of the bride's party putting eight peso coins on a plate symbolizing the eight ancestors of the early tribes in Mindanao. Once the coins were laid down, the groom's counsel placed another eight peso coins to signify their adherence to the customary procedure of *Apu Nanguletay*, the ancestor of the tribe. The bride's party also placed eight peso coins to allow the negotiation to proceed. Then the accounting of obligations and requirements due to the bride's party was presented. Once settled, the guardian escorted the bride and brought her in front of the groom's party. She was seated with her *Abay*, a young man relative.

The next step was the *Pamalalas* (blessing) which was opened with prayers by the datu and the bai. During this stage, the bride opened her hands supported by the groom's as the officiating datu blessed them with a feather smeared with blood from a chicken. Then the cleansing with water and the signing of marriage documents followed. After the pronouncement as husband and wife, the communion followed. The chickens were cooked for the *Saluwa ha Batasan*. The tribal midwife known as *Mangunguyamu* (or a mother who has a successful marriage) officiated the communion where the bride and the groom offered each other a mold of rice prepared by their respective abays. After the exchange of food, the couple ate together in one plate to symbolize their unity. They were joined later by their respective parents to symbolize their continued support. The ritual ended with *Kaamulan* feast with dances, songs, and music led by the newly-married couple.

Cultural Norms in Tribal Rituals

Cultural norms vary according to the

purpose and nature of the rituals. Among the rituals, it is worth citing the customary obligations (*Taltaga ha Batasan*) of wedding ceremonies in the form of symbolic objects. In this particular union, the bride was impregnated prior to the wedding; hence, there were additional requirements from her family. The obligations included one head of carabao as restitution of dignity and honor of the bride (*Bangun ha bansa*); a customary obligation for bypassing the elder sister of the bride (*Linakadan ha batasan*); the dowry asked by the parents of the bride (*Batang hu lilay*); a blanket to compensate the sleepless nights of the parents in raising the bride (*Kapulangan*); a coin to be given to the midwife who took care of the bride at birth (*Apu*); a piece of black cloth and a chicken for the departed relatives (*Bungkaku*); a knife to symbolize the breaking of virginity (*Tastas or Balbag*); three porcelain plates to symbolize the union (*Lihilihi ha Batasan*); and any amount of coin to symbolize in-law relationship.

During the blessing (*Pamalas*), the following symbols were also produced: one chicken for the blessing (*Igpamalas ha Batasan*); three chickens as offering to the keepers of the customs and traditions of the tribe (*Igpanuntay hu Batasan*); one chicken for the communion of the couple (*Agsaluhan*); one chicken each for the couple's parties (*Sebala ha Batasan*); one black chicken, black cloth and coin (*Bungkaku*); and a glass of water for washing the hands of the couple (*Igpangenaw*).

In general, Bukidnon rituals are organized sequentially beginning with *Panawagtawag* (call) or *Pandalawit* (invitation). This is followed by a series of requests interspersed with representatives specifically information, description and explanation. The prayers of requests are further reinforced with the offering and partaking of sacrificial animals.

Conclusion

This study has attempted to present a pragmatic description of Bukidnon rituals, in particular, the speech acts, the sequential

organization, and cultural norms. Based on the results, the following conclusions were drawn:

First, Bukidnon rituals are authentic communicative events which predominantly use the speech act of directive often done in an imperative and implorative manner. This study also shows that Bukidnons use a straightforward and stronger illocutionary force when making orders than when conveying requests. Characteristically, Bukidnon rituals involve directives through which the supplicants express their desires to which they expect the spiritual beings would hear and respond. While the speech act theory used in this study involved only verbal activities, Bukidnon rituals are performed with more non-verbal acts and symbols.

Second, the macro-speech act of directives performed in Bukidnon rituals yields a systematized pattern. They begin with invitations or calls, proceed with requests, then the second invitation and end still with prayers or requests. In between directive utterances are representatives specifically identification, description, information, and explanation. While rituals are perceived to belong to a frozen and formulaic discourse, they are spontaneously constructed according to their communicative intent. They may appear homogenized in the surface but they are structurally and contextually organized.

Finally, rituals as a distinct form of religious discourse involve customary requirements expressive of the distinct ethnocultural identity of this speech community. These are obligatory rules of conduct, practices, and beliefs essential to the Bukidnon tribes governing various aspects of their life enacted through sacred symbols and scenes. Maintaining and respecting these protocols is a means of preserving their cultural identity.

With the urgent need to protect, preserve and maintain the cultural heritage of the Bukidnons, the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples should provide directions for relevant conservation programs. The local government units in the province may likewise

facilitate the collection and documentation of indigenous languages, literatures and artifacts. City and provincial museums may be set up to serve as repositories of these cultural works.

Within the academe, the challenge for educators is to integrate the study of indigenous culture of Bukidnon in the four-fold function of the University. This entails cultural mapping and initiating the Bukidnon Studies program to be participated by all academic programs and stakeholders. Aside from research, cultural heritage can also be infused in instruction in relevant basic and major subjects. Subjects on Binukid language, Bukidnon literature and/or Bukidnon culture may also be offered. Subsequently, instructional materials may be developed such as modules, big books, glossary, or pictionaries. In terms of extension, the university may undertake community-based documentation projects, capability trainings for basic education teachers handling the IP curriculum, on-air class on the Bukidnon culture, and the like.

References

- Austin, J.I. (1962). *How to do things with words*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.
- Du Bois, J. (1986). *Self-evidence and ritual speech*. Norwood, NJ: Ablex.
- Fong, M. (2000). Luck talk in celebrating the Chinese new year. *Journal of Pragmatics*.
- Mackey, A., & Gass, S. (2005). *Second language research: Methodology and design*. New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc.
- Opeña, L.R. (1985). *Bukidnon: My Home*. A cultural brochure about the traditional people of Bukidnon. Malaybalay: The Bukidnon Heritage Foundation, Inc.
- Searle, J. (1965, 1977). *A classification of illocutionary acts*. Arlington, VA: Center for Applied Linguistics.
- Szuchewycs, B. (1994). Evidentiality in ritual discourse: The social construction of religious meaning. *Language in Society* 23(3).
- Unabia, C. (2000). *Bukidnon myths and rituals*. Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University

- Press.
- UNESCO. (1996). *Barcelona universal declaration of linguistic rights*. Retrieved from <http://www.unesco.org/most/Inngo11.htm>.
- UNESCO. (2003). *Education in a multilingual world*. Paris: UNESCO. Retrieved from <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0012/001202e.pdf>
- Valdez, M. (2011). Bukidnon folk stories of waterways: Water protection practices. *The Bukidnon State University Research Journal*, 8, 45-72.
- van Dijk, T.A. (1977). *Discourse and structure and process*. London: Sage Publications.

Acknowledgment

This study is made possible with the generous funding of the Bukidnon State University Research Unit.