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LANGUAGE SOCIALIZATION, IDEOLOGICAL STANCE-TAKING, AND ASPIRATIONAL NARRATIVES AMONG MULTILINGUAL FILIPINO CHILDREN

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Abstract: This study investigates the language socialization processes, ideological stance-taking, and agentive self-positioning of multilingual Filipino children through an analysis of 100 aspirational narratives. Grounded in language socialization theory, positioning theory, and the framework of language ideologies, the research employs a mixed methods design to examine how children aged eight to nine discursively construct their future social roles. Quantitative frequency analysis of thematic categories is integrated with qualitative discourse analysis of verbatim excerpts. Findings reveal that children encode collectivist ideologies using specific linguistic features, including Ilokano discourse markers, inclusive pronouns, deontic modality, and benefactive constructions. The narratives demonstrate that socialization is a bidirectional process influenced by diverse agents, primarily parents, extended family, peers, teachers, and mass media, who mediate the children's understanding of socioeconomic and environmental vulnerabilities. Furthermore, the children position themselves not merely as future professionals, but as active social agents dedicated to agrarian solidarity, digital equity, disaster preparedness, and nationalist-patriotic advocacy. The study highlights the capacity of young multilingual learners to navigate the inequalities of multilingualism and articulate transformative civic aspirations, offering significant implications for mother tongue-based multilingual education and curriculum development in postcolonial contexts worldwide.
Keywords: *Language socialization, ideological stance-taking, aspirational narratives, multilingualism, Filipino children*

INTRODUCTION

Within highly stratified multilingual contexts, children's aspirational narratives offer a privileged analytical window into the ideological and sociolinguistic environments shaping their development. In the Philippines, a linguistically diverse nation marked by colonial histories and persistent socioeconomic disparities, children navigate competing cultural and linguistic forces daily. The Philippine educational system has historically reproduced linguistic inequalities, privileging English and Tagalog-based Filipino while marginalizing regional and indigenous mother tongues. Tupas (2015) conceptualizes this as the "inequalities of multilingualism," wherein linguistic diversity does not guarantee linguistic equity. Rather, languages are hierarchically arranged, often resulting in the systemic marginalization of minority language speakers. This stratification is rooted in colonial histories and neoliberal imperatives that prioritize English proficiency as a tool for global labor brokering, a process Tupas (2008) argues relies on a "historical forgetting" of colonial symbolic violence. In the Ilocos region, Ilokano-speaking communities occupy a precarious position within this hierarchy, their linguistic heritage rendered subordinate by institutionalized preferences for Filipino and English.

Recent policy shifts have attempted to address these inequities, most notably through Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education (MTB-MLE). However, as Metila et al. (2025) document, the policy has faced severe implementation challenges and a recent legislative reversal that effectively dismantled the national MTB-MLE mandate. Igarashi et al. (2024) find that while MTB-MLE reduced the linguistic distance between home and school languages, it also produced statistically significant negative effects on foundational reading skills in Filipino or

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English, underscoring the structural tensions inherent in this policy. The erosion of political priority for first language-based education deepens the precarious status of local languages and sharpens the urgency of examining how children themselves engage with these linguistic conditions.

Despite these macro-level contestations, the voices and agentive capacities of the children who are the primary subjects of these educational frameworks remain underrepresented in empirical research. Hornberger and Wang (2008) argue that heritage language learners must be understood not merely in terms of linguistic proficiency but through their sociohistorical relationships, cultural identities, and ideological negotiations. Phyak (2013) similarly demonstrates that even well-intentioned local language policies face profound resistance when the cultural and linguistic capital of minority groups remains unrecognized in the broader educational market. Childhood studies and linguistic anthropology have increasingly affirmed that children are not passive recipients of adult instruction. Schieffelin and Ochs (1986) posit that language socialization is an inherently bidirectional process in which children actively interpret, negotiate, and sometimes resist the ideological messages of their social environments.

Aspirational narratives offer a particularly rich site for observing agentive stance-taking. When children articulate future professional ambitions, they are not simply naming careers. They are discursively positioning themselves within a projected social order, negotiating moral obligations, and responding to the material realities of their communities. The ideological stances they articulate are shaped by intersecting conditions: language, social class, and geographic positioning within rural, agrarian contexts compound one another in constituting the possibilities for their aspirations. This intersectional configuration, wherein linguistic marginalization compounds class disadvantage and rural vulnerability, deepens the postcolonial analytical lens applied throughout this study (Crenshaw, 1989; Tupas, 2015).

The multilingual practices observable in children's narratives are best understood through the theoretical lens of translanguaging. Rather than treating Ilokano, Filipino, and English as separate, bounded systems, García and Lin (2016) propose that multilinguals draw on a single unified linguistic repertoire, deploying features fluidly according to communicative need. Otheguy et al. (2015) refine this view, defining translanguaging as "the deployment of a speaker's full linguistic repertoire without regard for watchful adherence to the socially and politically defined boundaries of named languages." From this perspective, Ilokano discourse markers embedded within predominantly Filipino narratives are not instances of code-switching between two separate grammars but authentic expressions of an integrated multilingual identity. Wei (2018) positions translanguaging as a practical theory of language with transformative implications for understanding multilingual cognition and social practice. Canagarajah (2011) further argues that translanguaging represents a form of codemeshing in which multilingual resources are strategically deployed rather than treated as errors or deficiencies, a perspective particularly relevant for understanding how Ilokano discourse markers function rhetorically in these children's narratives.

Several theoretical frameworks inform the analytical approach. Positioning theory, as articulated by Davies and Harré (1990), provides tools for examining how children discursively construct their identities. Rather than viewing selves as static, Davies and Harré propose that selves are dynamically produced through discursive practices. Bamberg (1997) proposes three levels of narrative positioning: how characters are positioned relative to one another in the story world, how the narrator positions themselves relative to the audience, and how narrators position themselves relative to broader social discourses.

Bamberg and Georgakopoulou (2008) extend this through the concept of "small stories," arguing that brief, forward-looking projections are key sites where identity work is conducted in real time. The language ideologies framework (Woolard & Schieffelin, 1994; Kroskrity, 2015) further illuminates how children's linguistic choices index moral and political interests. Bandura's (2001) social cognitive theory contributes the concepts of forethought and collective efficacy, both directly applicable to narratives in which children position themselves as future agents of community transformation. Norton's (2000, 2013) identity and investment framework establishes that learners invest in imagined future identities as part of broader projects of community membership.

Despite these theoretical advancements, a distinct gap remains in the literature. Few studies have systematically analyzed the linguistic features and thematic content of young multilingual Filipino children's own narratives to understand how they internalize and articulate collectivist ideologies. The specific mechanisms through which multilingual repertoire use shapes the form and content of children's future-oriented narratives have not been examined in the Philippine Ilokano context. To address this gap, the present study investigates the aspirational narratives of 100 multilingual Filipino children aged eight to nine. Three research questions guide the inquiry:

1. What linguistic features do Filipino children aged 8 to 9 use to encode collectivist ideology in their aspirational narratives?
2. What socialization agents do Filipino children reference in their aspirational narratives?
3. How do Filipino children discursively construct themselves as future social actors in their aspirational narratives?

METHODOLOGY

This study employs a mixed methods research design. The quantitative strand uses coded categories and frequency counts to establish the prevalence of specific themes, socialization agents, and future-oriented roles. The qualitative strand involves close textual analysis of verbatim narratives to examine how these themes are discursively constructed through specific linguistic features. This integrated approach ensures that interpretive claims regarding child agency and ideological formation are supported by both distributional evidence and rich textual data.

The primary data source is a corpus of 100 aspirational narratives collected from multilingual Filipino children aged eight to nine in public elementary schools in the Ilocos region. Partner classroom teachers administered a structured narrative prompt; children were invited to respond in whichever language or combination of languages felt most natural to them, producing the predominantly Filipino-Ilokano mixed utterances analyzed throughout this study. The elicitation setting was embedded within familiar instructional routines to minimize observer effect and encourage authentic self-expression.

Data analysis proceeded in sequential phases. Pre-coded thematic categories and keyword merges were first quantified to generate frequency distributions summarizing the prevalence of specific linguistic markers, socialization agents, and thematic constructions of future social actorhood. Following the quantitative summary, qualitative discourse analysis was conducted on the verbatim excerpts, informed by multiple complementary analytical frameworks. At the level of critical discourse analysis, the study drew on principles articulated by Van Dijk (1993, 2001) and Fairclough (2003), who examine how discourse structures enact, confirm, or challenge relations of power and dominance in society. At the level of systemic functional linguistic analysis, the study employed Halliday and Matthiessen's (2014) transitivity and modality frameworks. For the narrative dimension, the study drew on De Fina and Georgakopoulou's (2012) approach

to narrative as social practice and Bamberg's (1997) three-level positioning model.

Prior to data collection, written informed consent was obtained from the parents or legal guardians of all participating children, in compliance with institutional ethical guidelines governing research involving minors. Children's names in the verbatim excerpts are pseudonyms used to maintain participant confidentiality. To ensure interpretive validity, a process of peer debriefing was employed: two colleagues with backgrounds in sociolinguistics reviewed a 20% subsample of the coded narratives and provided written reflections on the thematic assignments. Discrepancies were resolved through discussion until consensus was achieved. All claims regarding the children's ideological stances and agentive capacities are directly supportable by the dataset without fabrication or unwarranted extrapolation.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Linguistic Encoding of Collectivist Ideology

The first research question investigates the linguistic features that Filipino children utilize to encode collectivist ideology within their aspirational narratives. Children do not merely state future professions; they employ specific grammatical and lexical resources to frame their aspirations as responses to community needs. Table 1 summarizes the primary linguistic features identified in the dataset.

Table 1. *Linguistic Features Encoding Collectivist Ideology in Children's Aspirational Narratives*

Linguistic Feature Category	Examples from Dataset	Associated Thematic Category (n)
Ilokano Discourse Markers	adda, naimbag sana, dagiti, naimbag a	Ilokano Heritage and Identity Preservation (14)
Inclusive / Collective Pronouns	aming, ating, nating, para sa lahat	Nationalist-Patriotic Agentive Positioning (9)
Deontic Modality	hindi tama, dapat, kailangan	Civic Integrity and Public Safety (5)
Benefactive Constructions	libre, para sa mahihirap, tutulungan ko	Prosocial Benefaction (6)
Future-Oriented Service Language	kung magiging... gagawin ko...	Infrastructure-Oriented Community Care (5)
Moral-Evaluative Language	hindi korap, mabuting, tapat	Media-Informed Anti-Corruption Ideology (3)

The quantitative distribution indicates that features encoding collectivist ideology are pervasive across multiple high-frequency themes. The prominent use of Ilokano discourse markers within the most frequent theme (Ilokano Heritage and Identity Preservation, n=14) reflects a strong reliance on localized linguistic resources to anchor ideological stances. The presence of inclusive pronouns and benefactive constructions across themes related to patriotism and prosocial benefaction underscores a structural preference for framing future actions in terms of collective benefit rather than individual gain.

Theme 1. Ilokano Discourse Markers as Authentic Collectivist Anchors

Among the most linguistically distinctive features of these children's narratives is the strategic embedding of Ilokano-language discourse markers within predominantly Filipino-medium speech. Analyn's narrative (No. 8) illustrates this pattern:

> *"Adda (Ilok) basura sa ilog at namatay na ang isda (Fil). Sinabi ng tatang ko (Ilok) na dati maraming isda sa ilog (Fil). Kung magiging scientist ako, linisin ko ang ilog at turuan ang mga tao kung paano alagaan ang kalikasan (Fil)."*
> [Translation: "There is garbage in the river and the fish have already died. My father told me that there used to be many fish in the river. If I become a scientist, I will clean the river and

teach people how to take care of nature."]

The opening Ilokano existential marker "Adda" immediately grounds her observation of river pollution in the epistemological frame of her first language. As Otheguy et al. (2015) would argue, Analyn is not switching between two separate grammars but rather deploying features from her unified multilingual repertoire in a way that indexes her Ilokano cultural position at the moment of locating a problem only she, as a community member, can fully perceive and name. This reflects what Canagarajah (2011) calls codemeshing: the strategic weaving of multilingual resources into a single text as voice construction and cultural authentication. When children discuss family hardship, agrarian loss, or collective obligation, Ilokano discourse markers cluster at precisely those junctures, suggesting that Ilokano functions not as an interchangeable code but as the affective register of sincerity and belonging. Filipino and English, by contrast, carry the register of formal aspiration and civic proposal. The subsequent turn to future-oriented material process language, "linisin ko" (I will clean) and "turuan ang mga tao" (teach the people), demonstrates in Halliday and Matthiessen's (2014) transitivity terms how localized awareness translates into an agentive self-positioning as an active, volitional agent. The full arc of Analyn's narrative thus enacts a collectivist pedagogy: from culturally grounded observation, through intergenerational memory, to a future mandate of ecological restoration and community education.

Theme 2. Deontic Modality and Moral-Evaluative Language

Deontic modal expressions and moral-evaluative lexicon together construct a civic identity defined by obligation and integrity. Jerome's narrative (No. 3) offers a paradigmatic example:

> *"Kung magiging pulis ako, pangalagaan ko ang lahat ng tao sa aming bayan para ligtas silang lumabas kahit gabi (Fil). Susundin ko ang batas at hindi ako korap (Fil)."*
> [Translation: "If I become a police officer, I will protect all the people in our town so they can go out safely even at night. I will follow the law and I will not be corrupt."]

Within the Hallidayan (2014) modality framework, the deontic dimension of Jerome's language is unmistakable. His use of "Susundin ko ang batas" (I will follow the law) encodes a high degree of deontic inclination, a willful commitment to legal obligation, while "hindi ako korap" (I will not be corrupt) functions as a negated deontic, explicitly rejecting the moral failure he has observed in the world around him. In Van Dijk's (1993) critical discourse framework, this moral self-positioning enacts a counter-discourse against prevailing narratives of institutional corruption. The inclusive pronouns "aming bayan" (our town) and "lahat ng tao" (all the people) further embed this moral stance within a collectivist framework, framing the function of legal authority as fundamentally social. As Fairclough (2003) observes, styles, the identities enacted through discourse, are constituted in part through the evaluative commitments speakers make in what they say. This degree of ideological sophistication in an eight-year-old child attests to the depth of his socialization into community discourses about justice and public safety.

Theme 3. Benefactive Constructions and Prosocial Framing

Benefactive grammatical structures, in which actions are framed as done for the explicit benefit of others, constitute a third major linguistic resource. Aldrich's narrative (No. 1) is the clearest instantiation of this pattern:

> *"Gusto ko pong maging doktor paglaki ko (Fil). Kasi nanang ko (Ilok) nagkasakit pero wala kaming pera para sa ospital (Fil). Maraming tao sa amin na mahirap at hindi makapunta sa doctor (Fil). Kung magiging doktor ako, libreng gagamutin ko ang mga mahihirap sa*

aming bayan (Fil)."
[Translation: "I want to become a doctor when I grow up. Because my mother got sick but we had no money for the hospital. Many people in our place are poor and cannot see a doctor. If I become a doctor, I will treat the poor people in our town for free."]

Aldrich constructs a narrative arc that moves from personal biographical experience to generalized community vulnerability to an agentive future commitment. The benefactive construction "libreng gagamutin ko ang mga mahihirap" (I will treat the poor for free) explicitly dismantles the commodification of healthcare, transforming the physician role into one of unconditional communal service. In Halliday and Matthiessen's (2014) transitivity analysis, Aldrich is the Agent and the poor of his community are the Goal, confirming his self-positioning as an active material agent in service of a defined beneficiary population. This framing demonstrates how children linguistically encode a moral economy in which professional expertise is understood as a public good rather than a private commodity. The possessive community marker "aming bayan" (our town) further embeds the commitment within a collectivist frame.

In synthesis, the analysis of the first research question demonstrates that children possess a sophisticated linguistic repertoire for encoding collectivist ideologies. Benefactive constructions, deontic modality, and L1 discourse markers are systematically distributed across key thematic categories. The excerpts illustrate how children deploy these tools to authenticate local experiences, articulate moral imperatives, and redefine professional aspirations as acts of communal service.

Socialization Agents in Children's Aspirational Narratives

The second research question examines the socialization agents referenced by the children in their aspirational narratives. The data reveal that children's ideological formations are heavily mediated by specific figures and institutions within their social ecology. Table 2 outlines the primary socialization agents identified in the dataset and maps them to the thematic categories where their influence is most explicitly articulated.

Table 2. *Socialization Agents Referenced in Children's Aspirational Narratives*

Socialization Agent	Domain of Influence	Associated Thematic Category (n)
Tatang / Father	Agrarian hardship, economic vulnerability, technology	Agrarian Solidarity (9)
Nanang / Mother	Food insecurity, literacy, healthcare access	School-Socialized Nutritional Advocacy (4)
Lolo / Lola / Grandparents	Heritage, OFW grief, historical memory	Ilokano Heritage and Identity Preservation (14)
Manang / Ate / Siblings	Disability, mental health, missed opportunities	Rights-Based Mental Health Advocacy (4)
Kaibigan / Peers	Educational equity, child labor, drug awareness	Peer/Sibling-Socialized Inclusive Education Stance (5)
Media / TV / Facebook	Anti-corruption, social justice, nationalism	Media-Informed Social Justice Stance (5)

The quantitative summary highlights the diverse array of socialization agents shaping the children's narratives. While familial figures, particularly fathers, mothers,

and grandparents, remain foundational in themes related to agrarian solidarity and cultural heritage, the data also reveal the significant impact of extra-familial agents. Notably, mass media and digital platforms emerge as critical socialization agents in themes concerning social justice and anti-corruption ideology.

Theme 1. Parents and Grandparents as Anchors of Agrarian and Heritage Awareness

Parents emerge consistently across the dataset as the primary socializing force for critical awareness of economic hardship, land exploitation, and systemic poverty. This socialization does not occur through explicit parental instruction but rather through the children's acute observation of their parents' material realities. Shiela's narrative (No. 6) captures this dynamic with particular clarity:

> *"Dagiti (Ilok) kaibigan ko sa barangay namin, kinakaltas ang lupa ng kanilang nanang at tatang (Ilok/Fil). Hindi iyon tama (Fil). Kung magiging abogado ako, ipaglalaban ko ang mga mahihirap na walang makausap na abogado (Fil)."*
>
> [Translation: "The land of the mothers and fathers of my friends in our barangay is being grabbed from them. That is not right. If I become a lawyer, I will fight for the poor who have no lawyer to talk to."]

Parental figures occupy the narrative's moral center not as speakers but as victims of agrarian injustice, whose experienced suffering constitutes the socializing lesson. Shiela reflexively positions her future self as a legal advocate specifically dedicated to those who lack access to justice. Crucially, this positioning is mediated through her Ilokano linguistic repertoire; the narrative opens with "Dagiti" (the Ilokano plural article), grounding her observation in her mother tongue and authenticating her claim to community membership. Schieffelin and Ochs (1986) would recognize in this narrative the quintessential mechanism of language socialization: the child is socialized not by direct instruction but through the accumulated weight of observed experience, which she appropriates into a future-oriented discursive commitment. The role of grandparents as bearers of Ilokano cultural memory is similarly notable. Consistent with Hornberger and Wang's (2008) heritage language biliteracy framework, grandparents function as living repositories of ancestral linguistic and cultural knowledge whose embodied presence socializes children into a sense of historical continuity and cultural obligation.

Theme 2. Media and Digital Platforms as Windows to National Inequities

Mass media and digital platforms constitute a second major socialization ecology through which children develop their understanding of national and geopolitical realities. Aldwin's narrative (No. 19) exemplifies the ideological work performed by media exposure:

> *"Ang dagat ng Pilipinas ay para sa mga Pilipino (Fil). Ipaglalaban ko ang ating bansa (Fil)."*
>
> [Translation: "The sea of the Philippines belongs to Filipinos. I will fight for our country."]

The brevity and declarative force of this narrative belie its ideological density. In Van Dijk's (1993) terms, Aldwin invokes national sovereignty as a taken-for-granted ideological premise and then converts this premise into a personal mandate. The possessive identity markers "ating bansa" (our nation) and "dagat ng Pilipinas" index a national community Aldwin has come to feel a member of through media socialization, expanding his sense of community from the immediate barangay to the sovereign nation-state. The digital equity theme surfacing across the dataset further underscores the role of mediated socialization. For children in rural Ilocos communities, the shift to modular and online instruction during the 2020 to 2022 school closures rendered the digital divide not an abstract inequality but an

immediate, embodied barrier to continued schooling. Children who had witnessed siblings and peers miss months of instruction due to lack of devices or connectivity articulate digital access not merely as convenience but as a matter of educational rights. This reading aligns with research documenting how COVID-19 school closures disproportionately impacted children in low-income, rural Philippine communities (Metila et al., 2025).

Theme 3. Peer and Community Experiences as Catalysts for Equity Advocacy

Peer observation constitutes a third major socialization pathway through which children develop concrete and practically oriented aspirations for educational and social equity. Roselyn's narrative (No. 2) illustrates this clearly:

> *"Naimbag sana (Ilok) kung lahat ng bata ay natututo (Fil). Kung magiging guro ako, pupuntahan ko ang mga batang hindi makarating sa klase at turuan sila sa kanilang bahay (Fil)."*
>
> [Translation: "It would be good if all children could learn. If I become a teacher, I will go to children who cannot reach school and teach them in their homes."]

The Ilokano optative phrase "Naimbag sana" (It would be good if) encodes a normative vision of universal education rooted in her home-language epistemology, before the narrative pivots to an agentive commitment expressed in Filipino. The aspiration this narrative articulates is not a conventional vision of classroom teaching but a radical re-imagination of pedagogy as mobile, community-embedded, and equity-driven. Roselyn's witnessing of her peers' enforced absence functions as what Schieffelin and Ochs (1986) would call a socializing event: an observed experience that becomes the ideological foundation for a future-oriented commitment.

The findings for the second research question illustrate that language socialization among these children is a complex, multi-agentic process. While traditional familial agents dominate themes of agrarian and heritage preservation, media and peer networks are crucial for socializing children into broader civic and social justice ideologies. Children do not passively absorb messages from these agents. They critically observe the vulnerabilities of their parents, peers, and nation and use these observations as the ideological foundation for their agentive, future-oriented aspirations. From a translanguaging perspective (García & Lin, 2016; Wei, 2018), the children's fluid weaving of Ilokano, Filipino, and English resources represents not a failure of language separation but authentic multilingual expression. As Creese and Blackledge (2010) demonstrate, releasing students from monolingual instructional constraints can expand rather than restrict learners' capacity for complex meaning-making.

Discursive Construction of Filipino Children as Future Social Actors

The third research question explores how Filipino children discursively construct themselves as future social actors. The analysis demonstrates that children consistently reject individualistic careerism, instead positioning themselves as active agents of community upliftment, cultural preservation, and national transformation. Table 3 presents the thematic distribution of future social actorhood across the 100 narratives.

Table 3. *Thematic Distribution of Future Social Actorhood Across 100 Narratives*

Theme	Frequency (n)
Ilokano Heritage and Identity Preservation	14
Digital Equity and Educational Access	10
Agrarian Solidarity	9
Nationalist-Patriotic Agentive Positioning	9
Ecology-Driven Environmental Agency	7
Prosocial Benefaction	6
Civic Integrity and Public Safety	5
Disaster-Driven Community Preparedness	5

Infrastructure-Oriented Community Care	5
Peer/Sibling-Socialized Inclusive Education Stance	5
Media-Informed Social Justice Stance	5
Disaster-Driven Healthcare Aspiration	4
Rights-Based Mental Health Advocacy	4
School-Socialized Nutritional Advocacy	4
Media-Informed Anti-Corruption Ideology	3
Others	5
Total	**100**

The quantitative distribution reveals a profound orientation toward collective welfare. The highest frequency themes, Ilokano Heritage (14%), Digital Equity (10%), Agrarian Solidarity (9%), and Nationalist-Patriotic Positioning (9%), indicate that children conceptualize their future roles primarily in terms of cultural defense, technological democratization, economic justice, and national service.

Theme 1. Nationalist-Patriotic Agentive Positioning

Children in this theme project themselves not merely as future professionals but as architects of national transformation. Immaculada's narrative (No. 50) represents a particularly ambitious instance:

> *"Gusto ko baguhin ang Pilipinas (Fil). Gusto ko na walang batang magutom (Fil)... Magiging tapat ako at hindi ako magnakaw ng pera ng bayan (Fil). Naimbag a (Ilok) Pilipinas para sa amin at sa lahat ng susunod na henerasyon (Fil)."*
>
> [Translation: "I want to change the Philippines. I want no child to go hungry... I will be honest and I will not steal the people's money. A good Philippines for us and for all the generations to come."]

"Gusto ko baguhin ang Pilipinas" locates Immaculada as the Agent of national-scale transformation, with the Philippines itself as the Goal of her future action. In Bandura's (2001) terms, this constitutes a highly developed expression of forethought and collective efficacy, the conviction that one's agency can produce desired social outcomes at a systemic level. Her explicit vow of honesty and rejection of corruption enact what Fairclough (2003) describes as stylistic identification through evaluative commitment: Immaculada is not merely describing her future behavior but constituting a moral self through language. The narrative's culminating turn to the Ilokano phrase "Naimbag a Pilipinas" (A good Philippines) is analytically striking. By expressing her intergenerational vision in her mother tongue, Immaculada weaves her regional Ilokano identity into the fabric of her nationalist aspiration, embodying in a single utterance the complex multilingual identities documented by Hornberger and Wang (2008) for heritage language learners.

Theme 2. Ilokano Heritage and Identity Preservation

As the most frequent theme in the dataset (14%), Ilokano Heritage and Identity Preservation reveals the extent to which children consciously mobilize their regional identity as the foundation for future social actorhood. Lorraine Mae's narrative (No. 100) distills this orientation into a powerful statement of cultural advocacy:

> *"ipakilala ang Ilocos sa mundo at ipakita na ang mga batang Ilokano ay matalino, malakas, at puno ng pangarap (Fil)."*
>
> [Translation: "to introduce Ilocos to the world and show that Ilokano children are intelligent, strong, and full of dreams."]

In Davies and Harré's (1990) positioning framework, this constitutes a reflexive act of collective repositioning. Lorraine Mae actively constructs a counter-narrative against deficit-based representations of provincial youth that circulate in dominant discourses. Her use of the evaluative triad, "matalino, malakas, at puno ng pangarap" (intelligent, strong, and full of dreams), functions as a moral-evaluative linguistic choice (Fairclough,

2003) that asserts the full humanity and capacity of Ilokano children. In Kroskrity's (2015) terms, this narrative enacts a language ideology of valorization: an explicit, agentive promotion of Ilokano cultural and linguistic capital against the hegemonic preferences for Filipino and English. Her aspiration is not personal success but collective vindication, making this one of the study's most vivid examples of language socialization producing an agentive, ideologically committed social actor.

Theme 3. Agrarian Solidarity and Ecological Stewardship

The themes of Agrarian Solidarity (n=9) and Ecology-Driven Environmental Agency (n=7) together reflect the children's deep embeddedness in agricultural lifeworlds and their acute awareness of ecological and economic vulnerabilities. Children in these categories consistently position themselves as future agricultural engineers, environmental scientists, or ecological educators who intend to return their expertise to the communities from which they come. This discursive construction embodies a form of what Canagarajah (2004) calls the "safe house" dynamic of resistant identity formation: rather than seeking escape from the agrarian context through upward individual mobility, these children articulate aspirations of structural transformation from within. They do not aspire to exit the farming world; they aspire to acquire specialized knowledge in order to return and empower their communities. In Bandura's (2001) social cognitive framework, this represents the exercise of proxy agency, using specialized knowledge as a lever for collective benefit.

The findings for the third research question confirm that multilingual Filipino children possess a robust capacity for agentive self-positioning. The quantitative data demonstrate a clear prioritization of community and national welfare over individualistic goals. Qualitatively, the narratives reveal that children utilize their discursive resources to construct future identities deeply intertwined with cultural preservation, political integrity, and socioeconomic justice.

Multilingual Identity and Civic Agency

The findings illuminate the complex mechanisms through which multilingual Filipino children navigate their sociolinguistic environments, internalize collectivist ideologies, and discursively construct themselves as future agents of social change. The frequent use of benefactive constructions, inclusive pronouns, and deontic modality demonstrates that these children do not view their future professions through a lens of individualistic careerism. The systemic functional analysis of transitivity and modality (Halliday and Matthiessen, 2014) reveals that children consistently construct themselves as material agents: actors who do things to and for others, rather than relational participants defined by individual attributes. This grammatical pattern is ideologically consequential. It is through the transitivity choices of their clauses that these children encode their most fundamental conviction that the purpose of professional expertise is communal action.

The strategic deployment of Ilokano discourse markers authenticates local epistemologies and performs a distinct regional identity within a multilingual expressive repertoire, consistent with Kroskrity's (2015) and Woolard and Schieffelin's (1994) frameworks of language ideologies. The children's ideological stances also reflect the intersectional character of their social positioning. Their aspirations cannot be attributed to language or class disadvantage in isolation. The rural, agrarian, and ethnolinguistically marginalized conditions of their lives compound one another in ways that shape the specific content and urgency of their civic commitments. Crenshaw's (1989) intersectionality framework illuminates how simultaneous positioning as Ilokano speakers, members of economically precarious households, and residents of geographically peripheral rural communities produces an ideological formation oriented toward solidarity, ecological stewardship, and justice that would not emerge from any

single axis of identity alone.

The analysis of socialization agents confirms the bidirectional and multi-agentic nature of language socialization posited by Ochs and Schieffelin (2017) and Schieffelin and Ochs (1986). The data show that children critically observe the struggles of their parents and peers and use these observations as catalysts for their own ideological formation. The role of grandparents as bearers of Ilokano cultural memory is particularly notable. Moreover, the influence of media in shaping nationalist and anti-corruption stances indicates that children are actively engaging with discourses far beyond their immediate domestic spheres. This active appropriation of diverse socializing inputs is consistent with what Canagarajah (2004) describes as the creative negotiation of competing identity positions in the construction of a coherent multilingual self.

The children's discursive construction of future social actorhood provides compelling evidence of human agency as conceptualized by Bandura (2001). Using the three-level positioning model developed by Bamberg (1997), the analysis shows how children reflexively position themselves within transformative storylines at the level of their story-world characters, at the level of their narrative performance, and at the level of broader social discourse. Norton's (2000) framework of investment is also illuminating: these children are investing in imagined future identities as civic actors. Block (2007) reminds us that such identity construction is inherently fragmented and contested; the children's narratives represent not finished identities but identity projects in process, subject to revision as their social experiences evolve.

The overall contribution of this study must be understood against the backdrop of the inequalities of multilingualism (Tupas, 2015) and the precarious state of language-in-education policies in the Philippines. As Metila et al. (2025) document, the recent reversal of the MTB-MLE policy threatens to further marginalize local languages and the epistemologies they carry, while Igarashi et al. (2024) demonstrate that the policy's outcomes require nuanced, context-sensitive approaches. The aspirational narratives analyzed here serve as a powerful counter-discourse to the historical forgetting Tupas (2008) describes. By articulating their visions for the future using their mother tongues and focusing on localized community needs, these children demonstrate that local languages are not merely pedagogical stepping stones to English proficiency but vital instruments for civic engagement, cultural preservation, and critical social consciousness. As Norton (2013) would predict, the children's strong sense of ownership over their own meaning-making is precisely what enables them to construct empowered learner identities and project bold visions for their communities.

CONCLUSION

This study investigated how multilingual Filipino children aged eight to nine discursively construct their future social roles, focusing on the linguistic encoding of collectivist ideologies, the influence of socialization agents, and the children's agentive self-positioning. The analysis of 100 aspirational narratives reveals that children utilize specific linguistic features, such as Ilokano discourse markers, benefactive constructions, and deontic modality, to articulate profound commitments to community welfare and social justice. Language socialization emerges as a dynamic, bidirectional process wherein children critically synthesize observations of parental hardship, peer struggles, and media narratives to formulate transformative civic aspirations. By positioning themselves as future defenders of agrarian rights, digital equity, and cultural heritage, these young learners reject individualistic paradigms in favor of collective efficacy. The analysis reveals that their multilingual practices are not signs of linguistic deficiency but of a sophisticated translanguaging competence (García & Lin, 2016; Otheguy et al., 2015) that enables them to express their most deeply held civic convictions with

authenticity and precision.

Regarding implications for policy and pedagogy, the robust articulation of civic and collectivist aspirations through local linguistic markers provides compelling empirical support for the retention and strengthening of mother tongue-based multilingual education. As the policy faces political erosion (Metila et al., 2025) and its empirical outcomes remain contested across different instructional contexts (Igarashi et al., 2024), policymakers must recognize that local languages are essential vehicles for children's moral and civic identity formation. Removing the mother tongue from the classroom risks silencing the very linguistic resources children use to process community vulnerabilities and articulate social responsibility. In terms of curriculum and pedagogy, educators should move beyond rote language acquisition to incorporate critical, place-based pedagogies that allow students to explore local socioeconomic and environmental issues. The translanguaging framework (García & Lin, 2016; Wei, 2018) offers a particularly rich pedagogical orientation: by legitimating children's full multilingual repertoires in the classroom, educators can unlock authentic communicative competences and allow Ilokano discourse markers, Filipino grammar, and English civic vocabulary to work together in the service of critical literacy.

Several limitations must be acknowledged. The analysis is inherently dataset-bounded, relying exclusively on a pre-existing corpus of 100 aspirational narratives, and the findings are specific to predominantly Ilokano-speaking children from the Ilocos region. They may not be fully generalizable to all Filipino children across different regions or socioeconomic strata. Future studies should investigate analogous dynamics in other Philippine ethnolinguistic communities, such as Cebuano, Hiligaynon, and Kapampangan contexts, to determine whether comparable patterns of L1-anchored collectivist ideology appear across the archipelago's diverse multilingual landscape. The reliance on pre-coded data may also constrain the interpretive scope, potentially overlooking discursive nuances that a raw, uncoded dataset might reveal. The absence of audio recordings means that prosodic and paralinguistic features of the narratives cannot be analyzed, limiting the depth of the positioning analysis at the level of real-time narrative performance (Bamberg and Georgakopoulou, 2008; De Fina and Georgakopoulou, 2012). Longitudinal ethnographic studies, guided by the language socialization tradition of Schieffelin and Ochs (1986) and extended by Duff's (2010) academic discourse socialization framework, would be particularly valuable for tracking how children's ideological commitments evolve as they progress through the educational system.

Ultimately, this research demonstrates that multilingual Filipino children are not merely passive inheritors of structural inequity. They are highly capable, visionary social actors who are actively and discursively constructing a more equitable and just future for their nation. These children's narratives speak directly to Phyak's (2013) call for educators and policymakers to recognize the socio-political significance of local language valuation, and to Norton's (2000, 2013) argument that learners' investment in their identities is the engine of their engagement with language and literacy.

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