**RESEARCH ARTICLE**

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# Unveiling the Experiences of Indigenous People (IP) Students on Assessment Tasks

**Authors' contribution:**
A. Conception and design of the study
B. Acquisition of data
C. Analysis and interpretation of data
D. Manuscript preparation
E. Obtaining funding

Armand James A. Vallejo ID [A-E]

Tagum College, Tgaum City Davao del Norte, University of Mindanao, Philippines

Corresponding author: Armand James A. Vallejo, Tagum College, Tgaum City Davao del Norte, University of Mindanao, Philippines; E-mail: armand.vallejo@umindanao.edu.ph

**Abstract.** Assessment tasks for Indigenous People Students have a significant impact on their academic endeavors. Some of this IPs failed to continue their education because of the different educational factors they have encountered, such as language proficiency, class participation, and the like. Using phenomenology as research design, I explored the experiences and coping mechanisms of the IPs during the assessment task. The assessment task is under the umbrella of formative assessment. The IPs include Mansaka, Mandaya, Dibabawun, Kamayo, and Waray. They are all part of the Indigenous People group in the university. Results revealed that the experiences of IP students on assessment tasks are the complexity of the language used, the complexity of the question used, difficulty understanding the assessment, and uncertainty in the interaction, utilization of context clues. Further, IPs deal with their experiences through persisting in responding to the instruction, using alternative language in the instruction, preparing in advance for the assessment, and understanding the complexity of the assessment. These are manifestations that IPs need to strengthen their educational foundation.

**Keywords:** education assessment; indigenous people; students; phenomenology; University of Mindanao
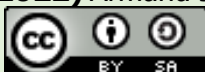
## INTRODUCTION

Indigenous People students have an equal opportunity to be assessed equally. Their presence is crucial and inevitable since they are vulnerable in any assessment task given, and there are a lot of considerations and adjustments for them to jive. Both IPs and teachers are doing their job. However, as the academic endeavor has started, there are noted academic problems among them. Some IPs are struggling with their academics. Some failed in the assessment task, and worse, were unable to finish their education. As noted, their performances are declining. Their speaking ability, Mathematical skills, and others are failing based on the school records as presented by teachers using the different assessment tools in the school.

Savage, Hindle, Meyer, Hynds, Penetito, and Sleeter (2011) claimed that there are reasons why some of these IP students failed in various academic tasks, including fluency of the language used, the complexity of the assessment tasks, and among others. Richards, Vinning, and Weimer (2010) stated that the tasks could be incongruent to the ways of learning and the implemented curriculum is culturally insensitive (Vallejo, 2018 & 2019).

Meanwhile, students and teachers find it challenging to employ the assessment in the different assessment tasks because it comprises different standards (Hidalgo, 2014). It defeats to achieve the set assessment process (Graham & Chixapkaid, 2013) by the school. However, Gawthrop and Escamilla (2014) contested that there is still hope in solving this problem because there are other ways of employing and assessing various tasks to the IP students.

### Experiences of Indigenous People Students on Assessment Tasks.

*Complexity of the Language Used*. The language difficulty of the IP students in the assessment has a big barrier in communication. It was observed by Leaño, Rabi, and Piragasam (2019) observed that Indigenous learners in the Philippines are having difficulty recognizing some of the words. There is a correlation with speaking problems in three domains, including deficiencies in alphabet knowledge, phonics and word recognition difficulties, and phonological awareness weaknesses. Riley and Johansen (2019) revealed that different entities gave importance to the education of the IP Students. They ensure that the assessment of these IPs provides cultural appropriateness, which highlights the use of the language for them to interact with those high breeds. Furthermore, Lowe, Tennent, Moodie, Guenther, and Burgess (2021) suggested that IP Students must have a quality education by giving them different resources such as access to cultural knowledge and unique language.

*Complexity of the Question Used*. Baker and Germain (2020) stressed that the way the questions are thrown to the students follows the guiding principles of formative assessment, making the IP Students' perspectives more complicated. In particular, knowing the formative principle, it can be done through the different activities and artifacts. It has been confirmed by Boyce-Jacino et al. (2020) that the unfamiliarity with the domain in question can make it harder for individuals to learn from others. It proposes that there must have a modifier to escalate the comprehension of the students. Thus, the experiences of IP Students have brought to the idea of Trumbull and Nelson- Barber (2019), who stated that when the educational curricula and pedagogy are imbued with indigenous knowledge and ways of knowing, indigenous students learning improves. Thus, the complexity of the questions must be addressed by the different entities in the educational system.

*Difficulty Understanding the Assessment*. The cognitive factor of the IP students is far different from students exposed to the rigorous practice of comprehending the text in the assessment. Nortvedt et al. (2020) stated that students have difficulty in understanding the educational assessment. The diversity of the students in the classroom are noted of having different respective dominant culture and pedagogy which aim to enhance the learning.   Wilches et al. (2018) added that this kind of action would ensure that learning does not become an impediment to indigenous students finishing their college degree in conditions of fairness, honor, and genuine affirmation of their ancestral languages, cultures, and knowledge. Moreover, there are other reasons why students encountered difficulty in the assessment. The inability to establish fair and equitable assessment policies and practices for Indigenous students is incredibly detrimental because of the potentially harmful consequences of assessments that are ill-matched to students' necessities. It was already known what it would take to work toward that ideal (Barber & Trumbull, 2019). Furthermore, learners who are culturally diverse and believe that their religious beliefs, way of life, language, and traditional practices differ from the rest of the class typically perform poorly on educational assessments. Utilizing different perspectives such as interaction with students and examining the student's community to consider culture and socialization helps to improve the quality of indigenous students' academic achievement (Tapia et al., 2017).

*Uncertain in the Interaction*. IP Students are hesitant to express themselves in the various assessment. Some of them are afraid to talk when asked by the teacher and stutter when answering the question, just making sure that the answer is correct. Leaño, Rabi, Piragasan (2019) stated that poor vocabulary and an inability to express themselves resorting to uncertainty. In addition, Vecaldo et al. (2020) described that some IP Students come to school unprepared and have limited knowledge (Eduardo et al., 2021). However, Walton et al. (2020) stated there are factors such as social relationships with the students and the faculty that can positively affect every indigenous student's social and academic life. Thus, it might be a reason for the uncertainty to be certain in the interaction.

*Lack of Orientation on the Utilization of Context Clues.* The IP Students' lack of orientation on context clues (Trumbull & Barber, 2019) realized that this kind of orientation needs to have critical understanding since the IPs are still learning the English language, which is based on a lack of literacies (Leaño et al., 2019). However, Shanmugam et al. (2021) disagreed since some of the IPs nowadays are able to understand the utilization of context clues. It elicited better resulted and assured validity of the assessment.

**Indigenous People Students Dealing on Assessment Tasks**

*Persist in Responding to the Instruction*. Hill, Sleep, Lewis, and Ball (2007) claimed that students persist in responding to the instruction since there is an excellent chance of interacting with instructors and peers. Having said this, the cultural relevance and appropriate learning materials are sensitive to the learning needs of the IPs. However, Cochrane and Maposa (2018) contradicted this by stating that IPs struggle in recitation. They have demonstrated a lack of self-understanding on the topics because of the language barrier.

*Use Alternative Language in the Instruction*. IPs must be engaged in the instruction and improve their academic performance through utilizing any alternative (Tedick & Loyster, 2019). One of which is the mixing of the language in the teaching to manifest fluency of the topic and gradually adapt the system of learnings. Since the alternative is

one of the concerns, Black et al. (2019) suggested that IPs must showcase different strategies, practices, and programs to meet their educational needs.

*Prepare in Advance for the Assessment*. IPs are prepared for the assessment by informing them in advance. The teacher may assess the students in many ways, including oral responses, tests, student demonstrations, and group projects (Perso & Hayward, 2020). Moreover, Wilks et al. (2020) highlighted that instructors need to be creative in assessing learning, so indigenous students are not restricted to written assignments. Also, adapting and or translating tests to the mother tongue of the IP students is an aspect of improving assessment. Riley and Johansen (2019) noted that the effective assessment practices for Indigenous students are group-oriented and simulate real-life experiences. Such assessment could be a holistic or project-based assessment, as experienced through outdoor education or culture camps (Preston et al., 2017).

*Understand the Complexity of the Assessment*. Students should be able to understand the complexity of the assessment to enhance and develop their abilities more. In addition, teachers should make sure that the assessment is challenging and following the IP Students' level (Burgiss, 2019). Thus, this kind of strategy used by the teacher is to let the IPs embrace their strengths and work in the community to facilitate success. The assessment is a tool to let these IPs realize their value and worth in society (Wilks, Dwyer, Wooltorton, & Guenther, 2020). The diversity of the students in the classroom affects their academic performance. Their experiences revealed that they have a hard time understanding the different assessment tasks. The language used, questions in the task, assessment itself, interaction among students, and lack of orientation on the use of context clues depreciate the academic performance of the IP Students. Meanwhile, IP students can deal with it through persistence, mixing the language used, preparation for the test, and comprehensively understanding the assessment.

This study is undertaken to describe the experiences of IP Students on various tasks. Specifically, it aims to answer the following questions:
1. What are the experiences of IP Students on assessment tasks?
2. How do IP Students deal with the experiences on assessment tasks?

## METHOD

This study is congruent with the philosophical assumption ex ontological, which discusses the nature of social reality and its characteristics (Creswell, 1998). An ontology is a philosophical belief system about the nature of social reality - what can be known and how. Thus, society is the one that creates and influences the person.

Furthermore, it is rooted in the qualitative assumption of constructivism, wherein it believes that reality is subjective and that social environments are personal constructs created by individual interpretations. It described the experiences of IP Students on assessment tasks. Therefore, the assumption is that there is no generalized reality that is quantifiable for a larger population. Qualitative researchers assume that detailed description and a deep understanding indicate this methodology (Velez, 2012).

Therefore, the qualitative-phenomenology research design is applied for this undertaking. Phenomenology is used in this study because it is synchronous with holistic indigenous cultural lifeway and values. The research method in this study assists the indigenous people in reproducing, through narrative communication, features of the past, present, and future experiences (Struthers & Peden-McAlpine, 2005). Thus, this explored the experiences of the IP students on assessment tasks.

The informants of this study were IP students coming from Mansaka, Mandaya, Dibabawun, Kamayo, and Waray. They were enrolled in the 2nd semester of the academic year 2017-2018. IPs took different courses such as Bachelor of Secondary Education (BSED), Bachelor of Elementary Education (BEED), Bachelor of Science in Business Administration (BSBA), Bachelor of Science in Accountancy (BSA), Bachelor of Science in Accounting Technology (BSAT), Bachelor of Science in Criminology (BSCrim), Bachelor of Science in Hotel and Restaurant Management (BSHRM), Bachelor of Science of in Engineering (BSEngineering), and Bachelor of Arts (AB). Among the 25 identified IP Students, 12 were selected as the primary informants and were part of the In-Depth-Interview, Focus-Grouped Discussion, and classroom observation. Also, they are members of the Indigenous People club in UMTC. The informants were purposefully identified (Mack et al., 2005). Meanwhile, students who are not IPs and not enrolled in 2017-2018 academic were not included in this study.

The researcher utilized the semi-structured interview guide to set an interactional dialogue attached with the consent. The expert validated this tool before conducting the study, such as linguists and IP teachers, to ensure the sanctity of the data collected. The questions were based on the experiences of IP Students (Mason, 2002; Dornyei, 2007) on assessment tasks given by the teacher.

Data were collected by identifying the IPs' profile from the Office of the Student Affairs, In-Depth Interview, and Focus-Grouped Discussion (Sergeant, 2012; Williams, 2011). I make sure that answers are based on their experiences during their formative assessment in particular. Thus, the assessment task was concentration.

During the conduct of the study, I had a mock interview among identified the IPS. In the IDI, asked permission from the individuals for the dialogue. Meeting and gathering in a particular place were done. After this, a formal interview commenced. Each IP shared their experiences regarding the assessment tasks employed by their professors. In the FGD process, asking some IPS to gather in one setting is done. Before this, an initial talk was done by attending classes from one session to another. It marks the avenue to be close with the group of IPS. After that, the formal interview was done. Informants were eager to share their experiences to the extent that almost all want to talk when expressing their thoughts. It would somehow filter some words which are not clearly heard during the transcription of the data. Debriefing for both IDI and FGD is done after a couple of interview days to validate and saturate the data. This process was observed right after the first, second, third, and final examination.

The interviews and observations were transcribed and analyzed through thematic analysis (Cresswell, 2007). First, I thoroughly read the transcription comprehensively by understanding the message deeply. Second, I identified the segments and divided the texts accordingly. Third, eliminated the unnecessary phrases or words that were not related to the topic. Lastly, I summarized the text and created themes. It was followed by the data reduction process patterned after (Creswell, 2005).

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The result of this study generates the different backgrounds of the Indigenous People Students in the University of Mindanao Tagum College. It shows the profile of the IPs, experiences on the assessment task, and insight on the assessment task.

### Profile of the Indigenous People Students

The Academic Year 2017-2018 has recorded five major Indigenous People (IP) Students enrolled in the University. Table 1 presents the profile of the Indigenous People Students. The Mansaka obtained the populous tribe with 62.5, Mandaya with 16.67, Dibabawun with 12.5, and Kamayo and Waray populated with 4.17. Data showed how diverse students have enrolled in the University of Mindanao – Tagum College.

**Table 1.** General Profile of the Indigenous People Students

| Ethnicity | Population in 2017-2018 |
|---|---|
| *Mansaka* | 62.5 % |
| *Mandaya* | 16.67 % |
| *Dibabawun* | 12.5 % |
| *Kamayo* | 4.17 % |
| *Waray* | 4.17 % |

### Experiences of IP Students on Assessment Tasks

Indigenous People Students have encountered different experiences during the assessment tasks. These shared experiences include the complexity of the language used, complexity of the question used, difficulty understanding the assessment, uncertainty in the interaction, utilization of context clues.

**Table 2.** Experiences of IP Students on Assessment Tasks

| Theme | Core Idea |
|---|---|
| Complexity of the language used | Ang problema nga na encounter naku sir kanang kung over complicated na kaayo ang ilang gina estorya sir murag naay double meaning (IP1, C1)<br><br>makalibog sya sir… kay ang uban man gud kay laglom kaayog English (IP2, C1)<br><br>Mga experience nako sa exam sir kay kanang ahh quite, kanang lisud pero…lisud gamay sya sir pero if imo jud syang i take time nga basahun jud nimo sya and then naa lang jud kay kanang mga analogy unsay imong possible nga answer nga imong gina ana ana. Ma answeran nimo.(IP5, C1)<br>Wala lang, magbasa ko pag study naku sir sayon raman, feeling naku.. kay e memorize ra nimu, kung unsa ang kanang mga unsay tawag ani? Mga facts man gud to siya sir, unya pag abot sa questions molahi naman gud ang questions sir (IP3, C1)<br><br>kay naa man gu'y times na libog, pareha sa bio namo sir na libog kayo ang mga question (IP2, C1)<br><br>Ang mga question nga murag situational sya sir (IP4, C1) |
| Complexity of the question used | Na gipa paraphrase. Siguro sir, kay katong, unsa gani ning, unsa gani to, ahh, about, unsay tawag ani, ahh, about atong, endogamy and then incest taboo kay sa incest taboo man gud kay kanang marrying the kanang, ang gibutang didtoa is the relatives. Pero ang gibutang man gud ni mam didto is very close to you. Ahh very close, ahh very, ahh close tie. Ahh, closely related. Ana. Ing ana and then ang mga gibutang didto is mga relatives, ing-ana rajud akong mga nahibal-an or siblings. Mga closely related. And naa man guy choices nga endogamy within your group so nag lisud ko ug unsa |

| | ang incest taboo or kuan, within your group. Nagalabag man daw, aha dapit didto ang naga labag about atong kuan so akoang gihunahuna incest taboo, endogamy, within the group so dako man gud ang endogamy kay within the group dili pud kuan pero close man jud kaayo, so ang akoang gipili sir kay incest taboo man kay nagalabag man. Feel nako kay labag jud ang incest. (IP5, C1) |
|---|---|
| | okay lang man siya sir kay naga hatag man sila og pointers then.. sa TAX man gud kay dali.. kay kanang naa siyay formula so .. kailangan lang jud nimo e analyze ang problem ..(IP6, C1)<br>Dili man jud sya masulod dayon sa utok sir (IP2, C1.) |
| | Or sa.. Basta sir nausab ang questions, siguro wala lang gyud siguro naku na gets (IP3, C1) |
| Difficulty understanding the assessment | Kuan lang sir, kanang murag sa amoa nalang mag prior knowledge nalang sir ba kay ang uban murag na tackle man pud to sa uban nga kuan, pero murag gipaningkamutan nalang nga mahinumduman, so ug unsa nalang ang pinaka duol sa among hunahuna. Mao na (IP4, C1) |
| | na naanad mi na okay lang ang flow sa question then naa man goy uban na pag during test.. kay murag libogon gud mig samot sir na dapat kung kabalo ka unsaon nimo siya pag analyze then makuha nimo ang tama na answer ..(IP6, C1)<br>Ing-ana. And then mangu, and then mag ask man gud si mam sa amoa, ing-ana isa isahon jud niya, ikaw unsa man imong gusto if kanang mag marry ka, unsa nimo pag deal sa imohang partner. Kanang ing-ana (IP5, C1) |
| Uncertain in the Interaction | ay ano gitawag ka una bago question then ikaw mu answer… nakuratan… maayo gani na tama pud (IP2, C1) |
| | Syempre, nay mga, nay usahay nga mag stutter ka sir kay dili ka sure sa imohang kuan, pero paningkamotan jud nga mahatag nimo imong idea about ato nga question (IP4, C1)<br>mag huna-huna ko sir kung unsay pasabot ana nga word, basta dili jud nako sya masabtan (IP2, C1) |
| Lack of orientation on the utilization of Context Clues | Unsa naman juy kanang murag unsa ba, kelangan jud siyang e analyze, mao to wala ko, wala ko kapasar sa first exam sir.. Hehe (IP3, C1) |
| | sa mga definition lang sir… mangita ug kanang …clue lang bitaw sir… ang kato daw molecules sir ahh bacteria daw kay 20… 20 minutes mag… mag times… times into 10 sir… mura syag nay lignin lignin (IP2, C1) |

## Complexity of the Language Used

The IP Students have encountered tremendous experiences during the formative assessment. The students were overwhelmed when the teacher used the English language during the discussion. They have met complicated words and discourses. Indigenous People Student 1 shared her experience with the formative assessment during the instruction. She articulated that she has a problem in a complicated discourse that comprises multiple meanings.

Ang problema nga na encounter naku sir kanang kung over complicated na kaayo ang ilang gina estorya sir murag naay double meaning (IP1, C1).

The problem I have encountered sir is that when they talk, it is overcomplicated. It seems that there is double meaning.

This has been confirmed by IP2 that she has a difficulty with the use of the language especially when it is used during the discussion. As she stated "Very confusing, sir" because for her, the language is profound.

makalibog sya sir… kay ang uban man gud kay laglom kaayog English (IP2, C1)

Confusing, sir. Some are unknown English.

IP2 has confirmed that she has difficulty using the language, mainly when it is used during the discussion. She stated, "Very confusing, sir," because the language is profound for her.

Mga experience nako sa exam sir kay kanang ahh quite, kanang lisud pero…lisud gamay sya sir pero if imo jud syang i take time nga basahun jud nimo sya and then naa lang jud kay kanang mga analogy unsay imong possible nga answer nga imong gina ana ana. Ma answeran nimo (IP5, C1).

My experiences on examinations sir are difficult but when you have time, read it. There is an analogy on it. Possibility of an answer.

The language difficulty of the IP students in the assessment has a big barrier in communication. It has been observed by Leaño et al. (2019) observed that Indigenous learners in the Philippines are having difficulty recognizing some of the words. It was correlated with speaking problems in three domains, including deficiencies in alphabet knowledge, phonics and word recognition difficulties, and phonological awareness deficiencies.

However, Riley and Johansen (2019) negated this proposition when they stated that different entities gave importance to the education of the IP Students. They ensure that the assessment of these IPs ensures cultural appropriateness, which highlights the use of the language for them to interact with those high breeds. Furthermore, Lowe, Tennent, Moodie, Guenther, and Burgess (2021) suggested that IP Students must have a quality education by giving them different resources such as access to cultural knowledge and unique language.

### Complexity of the Question Used

Formative assessment may be done differently, like Multiple Choice Questions, computations, and others. It is to know and understand the knowledge and skills of the students. In the experience of the IP Students in the formative assessment, they have encountered difficulty in understanding the posed question given by the teachers. They presumed that the instruction would be verbatim based on what was written on their fact sheets, but it turned out differently.

IP3 assumed that the instruction was easy to understand. As added, "I felt like I just memorized it… because everything is a fact". However, after giving the question, it turns out to be different from what they are used.

Wala lang, magbasa ko pag study naku sir sayon raman, feeling naku.. kay e memorize ra nimu, kung unsa ang kanang mga unsay tawag ani? Mga facts man gud to siya sir, unya pag abot sa questions molahi naman gud ang questions sir (IP3, C1).

There is none. When I read it, it seems that it is easy because you will just have to memorize it. In the fact sheets, things there are different when it is examination.

Other IP students like IP2 also had encountered the same trick from the teacher. As stated, "…there are times like in a Biology class, questions are confusing".

kay naa man gu'y times na libog, pareha sa bio namo sir na libog kayo ang mga question (IP2, C1). There are times that it is confusing like in our biology class. The questions are confusing.

This is also noted from the experiences of IP4 when she reiterated that questions in the formative assessment are like situational.

Ang mga question nga murag situational sya sir (IP4, C1)

### Questions are somehow situational.

Furthermore, IP5 expressed his disappointment after reading the instruction in test task. For him, choosing the correct answer between the two options is difficult, especially when there is no comprehensive background. As added, "But they included a related option from one another… They are closely related".

Na gipa paraphrase. Siguro sir, kay katong, unsa gani ning, unsa gani to, ahh, about, unsay tawag ani, ahh, about atong, endogamy and then incest taboo kay sa incest taboo man gud kay kanang marrying the kanang, ang gibutang didtoa is the relatives. Pero ang gibutang man gud ni mam didto is very close to you. Ahh very close, ahh very, ahh close tie. Ahh, closely related. Ana. Ing ana and then ang mga gibutang didto is mga relatives, ing-ana rajud akong mga nahibal-an or siblings. Mga closely related. And naa man guy choices nga endogamy within your group so nag lisud ko ug unsa ang incest taboo or kuan, within your group. Nagalabag man daw, aha dapit didto ang naga labag about atong kuan so akoang gihunahuna incest taboo, endogamy, within the group so dako man gud ang endogamy kay within the group dili pud kuan pero close man jud kaayo, so ang akoang gipili sir kay incest taboo man kay nagalabag man. Feel nako kay labag jud ang incest. (IP5, C1)

Paraphrased. I think sir. The endogamy and then in incest taboo, marrying the… they are related. But the teacher indicated the very closely related…There are choices on endogamy. Asked which is deviated. So what I thought is that it as incest taboo, endogamy within the group. So I choose incest taboo because it deviates. I just thought of incest.

Lastly, IP6 expressed that some teachers gave pointers for the drills. Subjects like TAX needs to memorize the formula. Not only that, it needs to analyze the problem intensively to arrive at the correct answer.

okay lang man siya sir kay naga hatag man sila og pointers then…sa TAX man gud kay dali.. kay kanang naa siyay formula so .. kailangan lang jud nimo e analyze ang problem (IP6, C1). It was all okay because pointers are given unlike in TAX. There is formula… need to analyze the problem.

Baker and Germain (2020) confronted that the way the questions are thrown to the students follows the guiding principles of formative assessment, making it more complicated to the IP Students' perspectives. In particular, knowing the formative principle, it can be done through the different activities and artifacts.  It has been

confirmed by Boyce-Jacino et al. (2020) that the unfamiliarity with the domain in question can make it harder for individuals to learn from others. It proposes that there must have a modifier to escalate the comprehension of the students.

Thus, the experiences of IP Students have brought to the idea of Trumbull and Nelson- Barber (2019), who stated that when the educational curricula and pedagogy are imbued with indigenous knowledge and ways of knowing, indigenous students learning improves. Thus, the complexity of the questions must be addressed by the different entities in the educational system.

### Difficulty Understanding the Assessment.

The cognitive factor of the IP students is far different from students exposed to the rigorous practice of comprehending the text in the assessment. This is shown when the IP Students shared their sentiments, such as the difficulty of understanding, comprehending, and depending.

Ultimately, IP2 shared that she had difficulty understanding the assessment. As stated, "It will not traverse to my mind, sir," which hinders her from understanding.

> Dili man jud sya masulod dayon sa utok sir (IP2, C1.)
> It will not traverse to my mind, sir

IP4 shared that the question was changed during the formative assessment. For her, this makes her confuse by stating, "I might not be able to understand."

> Or sa.. Basta sir nausab ang questions, siguro wala lang gyud siguro naku na gets (IP3, C1).
> Or, the questions were changed. Maybe I did not get it.

Additionally, IP4 claimed that she is dependent on her stock knowledge because she believed that some of the topics were already discussed. And, she is trying her best to recall everything, and the one that is closest to their memory would be the answer.

> Kuan lang sir, kanang murag sa amoa nalang mag prior knowledge nalang sir ba kay ang uban murag na tackle man pud to sa uban nga kuan, pero murag gipaningkamutan nalang nga mahinumduman, so ug unsa nalang ang pinaka duol sa among hunahuna. Mao na (IP4, C1)

> Like on our prior knowledge, sir because others are discussed already, yet we strive to remember it. So, what is the nearest answer to our mind would be the answer.

IP6 expressed that she used to have a good flow of the assessment. However, there are instances that the assessment destroys their understanding. As stated, "during the test, it seems that they want us to confuse us ultimately measure us the way we analyze and arrive at the correct answer."

> na naanad mi na okay lang ang flow sa question then naa man goy uban na pag during testkay murag libogon gud mig samot sir na dapat kung kabalo ka unsaon nimo siya pag analyze then makuha nimo ang tama na answer (IP6, C1)

> we are used to the flow of the questions then during the test, there are others who are confusing us. That is why, you should know how to analyze it to arrive in the correct answer.

This result of the study conforms to the idea of Nortvedt et al. (2020), who stated that students have difficulty in understanding the educational assessment. The diversity of the students in the classroom are noted of having different respective dominant culture

and pedagogy which aim to enhance the learning. Wilches et al. (2018) added that this kind of action would ensure that learning does not impede indigenous students from finishing their college degree in conditions of fairness, honor, and genuine affirmation of their ancestral languages, cultures, and knowledge.

Moreover, there are other reasons why students encountered difficulty in the assessment. The inability to establish fair and equitable assessment policies and practices for Indigenous students is incredibly detrimental because of the potentially harmful consequences of assessments that are ill-matched to students' necessities. It was already known what it would take to work toward that ideal (Barber & Trumbull, 2019). Furthermore, learners who are culturally diverse and believe that their religious beliefs, way of life, language, and traditional practices differ from the rest of the class typically perform poorly on educational assessments. Utilizing different perspectives such as interaction with students and examining the student's community to consider culture and socialization helps to improve the quality of indigenous students' academic achievement (Tapia et al., 2017).

### Uncertain in the Interaction.

IP Students are hesitant to express themselves in the various assessment. Some of them are afraid to talk when asked by the teacher and stutter when answering the question, making sure that the answer is correct.

IP5 expressed his experience when the teacher asked him. He stated, "When our teacher asked us, he tends to call us one by one." The question is personal, like how you will deal with your partner when you become married. He becomes uncertain since the question is too private for him.

> Ing-ana. And then manguta, and then mag ask man gud si ma'am sa amoa, ing-ana  isa isahon jud niya, ikaw unsa man imong gusto if kanang mag marry ka, unsa nimo pag deal sa imohang partner. Kanang ing-ana (IP5, C1)

> Just like that. Then ma'am asked us one by one like "how are you going to deal with your partner when you are married?" like that.

Another uncertainty in the assessment is the experience of IP2. It was expressed that the teacher called them first before providing the question. They have a scrambling mind on how to respond to the given question. As a result, IPs are shocked, stating, "…shock, the good thing is that the answer is correct".

> ay ano gitawag ka una bago question then ikaw mu answer… nakuratan… maayo gani na tama pud (IP2, C1)

> I was called first then question and answer. Shocked… good thing, it was correct.

In consonance, IP4 claimed that she stuttered during the assessment because she was unsure of her answer by stating, "Of course, sometimes we got stuttered because we are not sure with our answer, but we tried our best to give our idea about the question."

> Syempre, nay mga, nay usahay nga mag stutter ka sir kay dili ka sure sa imohang kuan, pero paningkamotan jud nga mahatag nimo imong idea about ato nga question (IP4, C1)

> Of course, there are time that you will stutter, sir because you are not sure with your… striving to provide your idea about the given question.

This confirms the study conducted by Leaño et al. (2019), which stated that they resort to uncertainty because of poor vocabulary and an inability to express themselves. Also, Vecaldo et al. (2020) conform that some IP Students come to school unprepared. They have a piece of limited knowledge (Eduardo et al., 2021).

However, Walton et al. (2020) stated in their study that there are also factors such as social relationships with the students and the faculty that can positively affect every indigenous student's social and academic life. Thus, it might be a reason for the uncertainty to be certain in the interaction.

### *Lack of orientation on the utilization of Context Clues.*

IP Students misunderstood the context of the assessment. They missed finding a solution to their cognition, failing to comprehend intensively. Here, IPs tend to think deeply but fail to understand, define the terms but fail in the test, fail to recognize the symbols in the test and reread to understand the intended task.

IP2 made use of critical thinking to know better the intended task. As stated, "I think of the word that is meant, so long that is not understandable." Undeniably, this seems that IP Students missed materializing the context clue of word definition.

> mag huna-huna ko sir kung unsay pasabot ana nga word, basta dili jud nako sya masabtan (IP2, C1)

> I am thinking the meaning of the word. I do not really understand.

This is also evident in the experience of IP3 when she said that "it needs to analyze. That is why I failed to pass the test".

> Unsa naman juy kanang murag unsa ba, kelangan jud siyang e analyze, mao to wala ko, wala ko kapasar sa test sir…Hehe (IP3, C1)

> What is really… it needs to analyze. That is why, I failed to pass the test.

In order for IP2 to understand the idea of the task well, she tends to look for a definition as a clue on it. However, she still arrives at a confusion knowing that she has no intensive background of the signs used in the chemistry class discussion

> sa mga definition lang sir… mangita ug kanang …clue lang bitaw sir… ang kato daw molecules sir ahh bacteria daw kay 20… 20 minutes mag… mag times… times into 10 sir… mura syag nay lignin lignin (IP2, C1)

> in some definitions, sir. Finding… clue, sir. The molecules sir, ahh bacteria has 20… 20 minutes. times in to 10… like circle.

This lack of orientation on context clues by the IP Students confirms Trumbull and Barber's study (2019). It was found that this kind of orientation needs to have a critical understanding since the IPs are still learning English. Leaño et al. (2019) added that this lack of orientation is based on a lack of literacies.

However, Shanmugam et al. (2021) disprove that some of the IPs nowadays can understand the utilization of context clues. It elicited better resulted and assured validity of the assessment.

### IP Students Deal with the Experiences on Assessment Tasks

The different experiences of IP students have noted on how they deal with it. For the IPs, they have to persist in responding to the instruction, use alternative language in the instruction, extend looking for the learning resources, prepare in advance for the assessment, and understand the complexity of the assessment.

**Table 3.** IP Students Deal with the Experiences on Assessment Tasks

| | |
|---|---|
| Persist in responding to the instruction | Yes sir, sometimes pag di ko kabalo, mangutana ko tapos moanswer pud sir. (IP3, C1) <br><br> Ma answeran nako sya sir kay lain man kaayo maulawan ta (IP2, C1) |
| Use alternative Language in the instruction | Ahh.. Sa, sa pagtubag sir mix ang pagstorya kay dili man kaayo fluent ang English tapos kanang tubagon sir ang question sa teacher kung unsa ang iyang gipangutana sa base lang pud sa ako nahibal an about sa iyang question sir.(IP2 C1) <br><br> Morespond ko sir by, sa akong nasabtan pud sir nya, then in English language or sometimes in Bisaya (IP1, C1). <br><br> murag e ano lang nako siya.. e paraphrase siguro ana .. pero mo sugot man pud gud silag bisaya sir pero usually naay uban na magpa English siya (IP6, C1) |
| Prepare in advance for the assessment | Mag basa jud sya sir in advance. Tapos, more books. Kintahay ang curriculum development  daghan man syag book (IP4, C1) <br><br> Kintahay, o kintahay karon, moingun siya na mag quiz ta ugma so kanang maka ready pa ko sir, maka study pa ko. (IP3, C1) <br><br> Tapos mag self-review ka.. ana tas daghan jud kay labon nga 2$^{nd}$ year nga baga kaayo among mga libro then nagdasok tanan  mga accounting na subject ..(IP6, C1) |
| Understand the complexity of the assessment | Nga ako jud gina paningkamotan sir nga naa gani koy dili masabtan ako jud ng e note tas balikan jud nako na sya kay sayang baya kaayo ug kintahay, ako jud syang  ginapaningkamotan  nga  bahalag  lisud  kaayo  sya,  ako  jud  syang makuanan. Ana sir.(IP4, C1) <br><br> Ay, ang akong na kuan sir kay ang thoughts sa, so ang kanang among handouts gibasa jud to namo and then sa exam is, ang ako lang na notice is kanang naay some words nga kanang gi balik si mam pero naa puy uban nga kanang naay mga relationship pero same thought lang man so dali rajud nako sya masabtan kay kanang basahan man jud nako unsa juy thought sa kuan sir ba and then and if sa exam na if same lang syag thought ing-ana, masabtan na nako sya (IP5, C1) <br><br> na handle nako siya sir.. kay pila na ka years .. naa gihapon ko diri sa USA nga kuan.. kay murag naanad na ko sir ba na murag sa the way mag solve kay murag naka formulate napud mi.. na dapat in a way nga maghatag mag formula .. ang isa.. ang libro dapat imo siyang e analyze og tarong sir dapat.. ako pud sir kay mag andam o mag memorize kog formula nako sir ba kay para pag mag exam kay madali nalang siya sir.. kanang dali na nako siya ma analyze ana ana then usually pud sir kay naga answer pud mig … ga answer pud kog different problems na same lang (IP6, C1) |

### Persist in Responding to the Instruction.

The IP Students do not want to fail in the assessment task. They tend to strive harder to accomplish it. IP3 stipulated that she sometimes got a problem with the task. If she does not know it, she persists in asking and answers the task.

> Yes, sir, sometimes pag di ko kabalo, mangutana ko tapos moanswer pud sir. (IP3, C1)
> Yes, sir. Sometime, when I do not know, I opted to asked and answered.

Added to that, IP2 claimed that she needed to finish the task. She does not want to be mocked, stating, "I can answer it because I do not want to be mocked."

> Ma answeran nako sya sir kay lain man kaayo maulawan ta (IP2, C1)
> I am able to answer sir since it is odd to be degraded

The result of this study is aligned with the findings of Hill, Sleep, Lewis, and Ball (2007). It was revealed that students persist in responding to the instruction since there is an excellent chance of interacting with instructors and peers in the school. Having said this, the cultural relevance and appropriate learning materials are sensitive to the learning needs of the IPs.

However, Cochrane and Maposa (2018) disagree on this by stating that IPs struggle in recitation. They have demonstrated a lack of self-understanding on the topics because of the language barrier.

### Use Alternative Language in the Instruction.

Another way of arriving at a certain task is to use alternatives—language as the primary concern. IP Students used two or more languages in the instruction phase. For some reason, IPs are not fluent in English and shift to another language.

IP2 has a big concern about her language fluency. She mixed the language during the instruction. It was stated, "In answering sir, I used the mix language because I am not fluent in English…". It was her way of responding to her teacher during the assessment according to her capacity.

> Ahh.. Sa, sa pagtubag sir mix ang pagstorya kay dili man kaayo fluent ang English tapos kanang tubagon sir ang question sa teacher kung unsa ang iyang gipangutana sa base lang pud sa ako nahibal an about sa iyang question sir (IP2 C1).
>
> Ahh, in answering sir, I mixed the languages since I am not that fluent in English. Then, answer the question of the teacher based on my knowledge about the question, sir.

IP1 claimed that she could respond based on her understanding using English or sometimes in Visayan

> Morespond ko sir by, sa akong nasabtan pud sir nya, then in English language or sometimes in Bisaya (IP1, C1).
> I responded, sir based on what I have understood, then in English or sometimes in Visayan.

IP6 stated, "I need to paraphrase…they allowed us to use Visayan language, but most of the time is English". This kind of alternative allows the IPs to be more engaged in the assessment task by finding ways to know the context of the instruction.

> murag e ano lang nako siya.. e paraphrase siguro ana .. pero mo sugot man pud gud silag bisaya sir pero usually naay uban na magpa English siya (IP6, C1)

It is like paraphrasing, somehow. But, they allow us to use Visayan. Usually, they asked us in English.

This study results conform to Tedick and Loyster's (2019) proposition, which stated that IPs must be engaged in the instruction and improve their academic performance by utilizing any alternative. One of which is the mixing of the language in the instruction to manifest fluency of the topic and gradually adapt the system of learnings. Since alternatives are the primary concern in this result of the study, Black et al. (2019) suggested that IPs must showcase different strategies, practices, and programs to meet their educational needs.

### Prepare in Advance for the Assessment.

It has been a practice for some IP Students to prepare in advance for assessment, more books to read, always ready, and self-review for the assessment. IP4 read in advance as a way of preparation for the assessment. As stated, "I need to read in advance." She tends to read more books and finds other resources.

Mag basa jud sya sir in advance. Tapos, more books. Kintahay ang curriculum development daghan man syag book (IP4, C1)

I need to read in advance, sir. Then, more books like curriculum development book, there are many.

The teacher of IP3 has given them an advance announcement about the quiz. It is for the IPs to prepare for the assessment. In this scenario, she now has an idea of what to prepare.

Kintahay, o kintahay karon, moingun siya na mag quiz ta ugma so kanang maka ready pa ko sir, maka study pa ko. (IP3, C1)

For instance, she would say that we will be having a quiz on the next day, thus I need to be ready

IP6 shared her preparation for the said test. She does a self-review "… then self-review, more because there are many thick books to read especially in accounting subject" as stated.

Tapos mag self-review ka.. ana tas daghan jud kay labon nga 2nd year nga baga kaayo among mga libro then nagdasok tanan  mga accounting na subject ..(IP6, C1).

Then self-review. Because there are many especially in the 2nd year level. Books are thick, and accounting subjects are many.

The result of the study is congruent to the principle of Perso and Hayward (2020) stated that IPs are prepared for the assessment by informing them in advance. The teacher may assess the students in many ways, including oral responses, tests, student demonstrations, and group projects.

In addition, Wilks et al. (2020) emphasized that instructors need to be creative in assessing learning, so indigenous students are not restricted to written assignments. Also, adapting and or translating tests to the mother tongue of the IP students is an aspect of improving assessment. Riley and Johansen (2019) note effective assessment practices for

Indigenous students are group-oriented and simulate real-life experiences. Such assessment could be a holistic or project-based assessment, as experienced through outdoor education or culture camps (Preston et al., 2017).

### Understand the Complexity of the Assessment.

IP Students have encountered difficulty in performing the assessment. The only way out to do this is to understand its complexity. Since they come from different backgrounds, IPs are striving to execute the task. Some of the ways are the repetition of knowing the exact context of the assessment and taking notes during the instruction.

IP4 shared her insights on the complexity of the assessment. She stressed that she was doing her best to understand the assessment task. For her to understand the complexity of the test, she stated that "I take note if there are things that are difficult to understand and return to its main context."

> Nga ako jud gina paningkamotan sir nga naa gani koy dili masabtan ako jud ng e note tas balikan jud nako na sya kay sayang baya kaayo ug kintahay, ako jud syang ginapaningkamotan nga bahalag lisud kaayo sya, ako jud syang makuanan. Ana sir (IP4, C1).

> I always strive sir. If there are things that I do not understand, I really take note on it, then I will return to that because it is important. I always strive no matter how difficult it was.

IP5 claimed that he used his handouts for the review. He noticed in the assessment that there are words that are similar to one another. So, he made sure that he could understand it.

> Ay, ang akong na kuan sir kay ang thoughts sa, so ang kanang among handouts gibasa jud to namo and then sa exam is, ang ako lang na notice is kanang naay some words nga kanang gi balik si ma'am pero naa puy uban nga kanang naay mga relationship pero same thought lang man so dali rajud nako sya masabtan kay kanang basahan man jud nako unsa juy thought sa kuan sir ba and then and if sa exam na if same lang syag thought ing-ana, masabtan na nako sya (IP5, C1).

> I always go with the thought, sir. The handouts are read. During the examination, I only notice that there are words being repeated, some are having relationship yet having the similar idea so it is easy for me to understand.

In dealing with Mathematics, IP6 shared that she tends to memorize the formula in the assessment for her to get a correct answer. She also added that it needs to have a critical understanding by analyzing the concept. In that way, it will become accessible in solving the Math problem.

> na handle nako siya sir.. kay pila na ka years .. naa gihapon ko diri sa USA nga kuan.. kay murag naanad na ko sir ba na murag sa the way mag solve kay murag naka formulate napud mi.. na dapat in a way nga maghatag mag formula .. ang isa.. ang libro dapat imo siyang e analyze og tarong sir dapat.. ako pud sir kay mag andam o mag memorize kog formula nako sir ba kay para pag mag exam kay madali nalang siya sir.. kanang dali na nako siya ma analyze ana ana then usually pud sir kay naga answer pud mig … ga answer pud kog different problems na same lang (IP6, C1).

> I already encountered this even when I was in USA. The way it is being formulated. The other book must be analyzed critically sir. I prepare or memorize the formula so that when it is time for the examination, it would easy for me, sir. I am able to analyze it quickly. Sometimes, I answered other problems.

This result of the study is in accordance with the research findings of Burgiss (2019). It was revealed that students should understand the complexity of the assessment to enhance and develop their abilities. In addition, teachers should make sure that the assessment is challenging and following the IP Students' level.

Wilks, Dwyer, Wooltorton, and Guenther (2020) concluded that this kind of strategy used by the teacher is to let the IPs embrace their strengths and work in the community to facilitate success. The assessment is a tool to let these IPs realize their value and worth in society.

Therefore, the result of this study supports the claim of Richards et al. (2010) that the experiences of the Indigenous People Students are always linked to their academic performance in the implemented curriculum. Their difficulties in the different assessment tasks manifested in their daily battle in the academe, where adjustments are prevalent.

## CONCLUSION

The findings of this study shed light on the academic endeavor of IP students. It affects their output when they are not able to understand the context of the assessment. The University of Mindanao may consider this problem of the IP Students in enhancing and developing their competence more. Knowing that the school aims for excellence, it could be the ground to intensify the instruction more. The teachers of the IP Students may help them elevate the performance of these IPs by constantly looking at and monitoring the students' academics. Thus, improve the utilization of teacher-students consultation to understand the situation of both parties.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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