

Community Journalism: Its Roles in Ilocano Language and Culture Preservation

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Abstract- This study attempts to explore the social roles of community journalism in the preservation of Ilocano language and culture in Metro Vigan. Specifically, it determined the extent of effectiveness of the social roles of community journalism; the significant relationship between the profile and the social roles of community journalism; and the significant difference of the extent of effectiveness of community journalism when reader-respondents are grouped according to municipalities. Using a researcher-constructed and field-validated instrument, data were purposively gathered through informants from the four municipalities and one city of Metro Vigan. Two hundred fifty (250) participants were involved in the study and the following statistical tools were utilized: frequency and percentages, mean, Pearson r, ANOVA, and Scheffe' test. Results revealed that majority of the respondents are female; a great number of them belong to the parent age or 20-39 years old; majority resides in the rural areas; most of them are skilled workers; and many of them widely read Bannawag. The study further disclosed that there exist significant relationships between the personal attributes of the respondents and the social roles of community journalism. Furthermore, significant differences in the

responses between and among the reader-respondents exist when grouped according to municipalities.

Keywords - community journalism, language, culture, mother tongue/language

INTRODUCTION

Community Journalism is a trend that emerged in the late 1980's in the United States and continues to achieve widespread effects. It is a movement that aims for reforms in the practice of journalism. It got its name from a Montana editor, Ken Byerly, while he was a professor of journalism at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in 1957-1971. Although the term is relatively new, community journalism has been around since the founding fathers. He gave it its name because the concept had been referred to as "Hometown Newspapers," which did not fit the suburban newspapers in that time. He chose community journalism because it fit both the weeklies and small dailies of the day.

Metro Vigan, which composed of four municipalities (Bantay, Caoayan, San Vicente, and Sta. Catalina) and the City of Vigan (a UNESCO World Heritage City), have been identified as one of the country's potential growth centers. Such potential could be realized and accelerated through concerted development efforts, including the help of community papers published within the metropolitan area.

The role of community journalism in enhancing national and local development cannot be discounted. Aside from fostering community consciousness or disseminating vital information to the public, community journalism serve a major role in the preservation and promotion of the Ilocano language and culture. Through writing and publishing Ilocano articles, the uniqueness of the Ilocano language and culture can be preserved for they are of great help in making the Ilocano people remember their ethnicity. With the help of community journalism, the Ilocanos can share their cultural heritage not only to their fellow Ilocanos but also to others. Featuring in the community papers the historical landmarks, trails and beauty spots found not only in Metro Vigan but in the entire "amianan" or Northern Luzon is also one of the ways. Presenting the well-known leaders and

writers including their biographies, refined works and outstanding accomplishments may also help.

FRAMEWORK

The following views of authorities and contributions of researches were reviewed as a springboard in conducting the present study. In her dissertation on the development of public journalism, Sandra Nichols of the University of Wisconsin claimed that although the practice of public journalism seemed to have achieved widespread effects with several US news organizations engaged in doing it, still the movement has not achieved full institutionalization. Nichols' study provided a comprehensive analysis of the news organizations engaged in public journalism. Her study also revealed the development of community issues that have been tackled, and how journalists tapped into communities to make them participate in various events and activities where problems needed to be solved (Nichols, 2003 in Barrientos 2004)

Another study on public journalism was done by Barbara Zang in 1997, in which she discussed the participatory nature of public journalism. In her case study of *The Sun*, a daily paper in Washington, DC that practices public journalism, Zang (1997) as cited by Barrientos (2004) discusses the relationship of the newspaper to the community it serves. Her interviews and other documentary data revealed mixed reactions and attitudes between journalists and citizens on the practice of public journalism. Citizens appreciate *The Sun's* participation in community life which made citizens view them as credible. But journalists think participation made them less credible because it questions their sense of objectivity. Readers also appreciate the newspaper for opening more space for readers to write in their views. The study concludes that community building is a vital possible role for the press. It is inevitable that journalists will not find it easy to participate given their professional training. However, Zang suggested that maybe it is time these journalism standards and values be questioned in the background of a democratic community life.

One of the arguments that public journalism spawned is its lack of clear definition that consequently create uncertainty and fear on those who questioned it. In an article entitled *Public Journalism and*

the Problem of Objectivity, Meyer (1995) as cited by Barrientos (2004) defined the elements of what public journalism should be. He said that more than anything else, public journalism is all about a desire to rebuild a community's sense of itself. He stressed that public journalism should lead journalists to get the community's attention on important issues and discuss with them issues that affect their lives deeply and extensively. He further pointed out that public journalism should also give more attention to what is essential than what is peripheral by providing substance especially in its coverage of political affairs.

Mmusi (2002) critically examined and traced the impact of community broadcasting on rural development in South Africa. Mission statements of the radio stations in the region are as follows: (1) to keep the community informed and to revive, retain, and sustain the cultural heritage, traditions, and norms; (2) to empower the community by sharing skills and providing them training to eliminate crime and promote health awareness; (3) to develop the community through educational and cultural broadcasting; and (4) to operate an effective and sustainable community radio that will champion health care and community development within and around the area. In short, the radio stations have the aim of serving a community through information, education and entertainment.

In the study of Racoma (2005) on the effectiveness of radio stations in Vigan City, she found out that sex is significantly related with the ideological formation, consolidation and communication of the listener-respondents. She also revealed that there exist significant differences on the perceptions of the listener-respondents as to the effectiveness of the radio stations in terms of the quality of the delivery of service.

When Torricer (2009) explored the English language proficiency of the Second Year college students of Ilocos Sur Community College, she discovered that the speaking ability of her respondents are significantly related with their sex, fathers' occupation and educational attainment, availability of English newspapers and encyclopedia, exposure to radio programs in English and Iloko, and exposure to TV programs in English and Filipino.

The emergence of community journalism in the Philippines paralleled that of the United States, where journalists began to

reconsider their relationship with local communities which they observe to have become indifferent and less participative in local governance processes of which they are a part.

The scope of studies done on community journalism mostly dwelt on case and historical studies of a particular community newspaper. These studies usually determine the length of time the newspaper has been publishing, its impact on the community and its capability to stay in the business. Other studies tackled the role of particular newspapers in bringing public agenda into the consciousness of the public and determined whether the newspaper is faithful in living up its role as watchdog and advocates of truth.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

This study attempted to explore the social roles of community journalism in the preservation and promotion of the uniqueness of Ilocano language and culture in Metro Vigan.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Research Design. The researchers employed the descriptive method of investigation in exploring the social roles of community journalism in the preservation and promotion of the uniqueness of Ilocano language and culture in Metro Vigan.

Statistical Treatment of the Data. The following statistical tools were utilized to analyze and interpret the data gathered: frequency and percentages, weighted mean, Pearson r, Analysis of Variance, and Scheffe' test.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The frequency distribution on the profile of the respondents is summarized in Table 1.

On Municipality. The reader-respondents who participated in the study shared equal numbers and percentages: 50 (20%) were from Vigan City, 50 (20%) were residents of Bantay, 50 (20%) were settlers

in Caoayan, 50 (20%) were living in San Vicente, and 50 (20%) were residing in Sta. Catalina. This means that the four municipalities and one city of Metro Vigan were well-represented by the reader-respondents.

On Sex. Of the 250 reader-respondents, majority (157 or 62.8%) of them are female while only few (93 or 37.2%) are male. This means that readers of community papers are predominantly females. This further supports the fact that females have the passion to read any reading material during their spare time.

On Age. Most (105 or 42%) of the respondents belonged to the parent age or 20-39 age bracket; while a large portion (76 or 30.4%) of them belonged to the grandparent age or 40-65 years old; then, by children age or 19 years old and below with 51 (20.4%) reader-respondents; and finally, great grandparent age or 66 years old and above with 18 (7.2%) reader-respondents.

On Geographical Location. Only few (64 or 25.6%) of the reader-respondents were residing in the urban areas while the majority (186 or 74.4%) came from the rural areas. The findings suggest that reader-respondents from the rural areas usually resort to read community newspapers than the dailies because they can only subscribe to periodicals considering the distance of their localities.

On Occupation. Majority (170 or 68%) of them are skilled workers working as housekeepers, vendors, laundrywomen, security guards, farmers, fishermen, drivers, carpenters and the like. Only a few (55 or 22%) of them are professionals employed either in public or private agencies as education practitioners, health care providers, law enforcers. It is interesting to note, however, that twenty-five (25) or 10 percent are non-professional reader-respondents; meaning, they are students who are avid in subscribing and reading community publications.

Table 1. Profile of the respondents

	Profile	Frequency	Percentage
Municipality	Vigan City	50	20
	Bantay	50	20
	Caoayan	50	20
	San Vicente	50	20
	Sta. Catalina	50	20
	Total	250	100
Sex	Male	93	37.2
	Female	157	62.8
	Total	250	100
Age	Great Grandparent Age (66 above)	18	7.2
	Grandparent Age (40-65 years old)	76	30.4
	Parent Age (20-39 years old)	105	42
	Children Age (19 below)	51	20.4
	Total	250	100
Geographical Location	Urban	64	25.6
	Rural	186	74.4
	Total	250	100
Occupation	Skilled	170	68
	Professional	55	22
	Non-professional	25	10
	Total	250	100
Community Paper Read at Home	Bannawag	210	84
	Timek ti Amianan	122	48.8
	Tawid News and Magazine	97	38.8
	Ilocos Sur Post	74	29.6
	Total	250	100

On Community Paper Read at Home. The community paper widely read by the reader-respondents at home is Bannawag which registered at 84%. This is followed by Timek ti Amianan at 48.8%; then Tawid News and Magazine at 38.8%; finally, Ilocos Sur Post at 29.6%. This finding is not surprising since the oldest, most famous, and regularly published and circulated community paper of the Ilocanos is the Bannawag.

Table 2. Summary of mean ratings of the social roles of community journalism

Social Roles	Mean	Descriptive Rating
Information	4.03	Satisfactory
Ideological	4.02	Satisfactory
Consolidation	3.77	Satisfactory
Communication	3.95	Satisfactory
Education	3.99	Satisfactory
OVERALL	3.95	Satisfactory

Legend:

4.21 – 5.00	<i>Very Satisfactory</i>
3.41 – 4.20	<i>Satisfactory</i>
2.61 – 3.40	<i>Fair</i>
1.81 – 2.60	<i>Poor</i>
1.00 – 1.80	<i>Very Poor</i>

The table exhibits the summary of mean ratings of community journalism as an instrument for the preservation and promotion of Ilocano language and culture along its fivefold social role. As manifested in Table 2, the reader-respondents perceived information, ideological formation, consolidation and stabilization of the society, communication, and education as “Satisfactory” backed up by their mean ratings of 4.03, 4.02, 3.77, 3.95, and 3.99 respectively. Taken as a whole, these social roles of community journalism are viewed as “Satisfactory” as manifested by its overall mean of 3.95. This suggests that the reader-respondents find the community papers to be satisfactory in the performance of their social roles of promoting the uniqueness of the Ilocano language and culture.

Table 3. Correlation coefficients showing the relationship between profile of the respondents and social roles of community journalism

Profile	Social Roles				
	Information	Ideology	Consolidation	Communication	Education
Sex	-.111	.006	.021	-.165**	-.049
Age	.026	-.013	-.044	.052	.076
Geographical Location	.063	.110	.073	-.049	-.052
Occupation	-.006	.034	.076	.126**	.136**
Bannawag	.000	-.114	-.055	.086	-.019
Timek ti Amianan	.021	.170**	.047	.044	.038
Tawid	.015	.086	-.023	-.036	.046
Ilocos Sur Post	.032	.069	-.004	.018	.072

*Significant at .05 probability level

**Significant at .01 probability level

The table exhibits the correlation coefficients on the relationship between the personal attributes of the respondents and the social roles of the reader-respondents. As shown on the table, occupation of the reader-respondents is significantly related with communication and education at .01 probability level. This means that the social roles of community journalism as a means of communication and of education are highly significant with the occupation of the reader-respondents. This implies that professionals tend to be well-informed about governmental issues and more educated in the preservation and promotion of the Ilocano language and culture through reading community papers. This finding could be attributed to the claim of Meyer (1995) as stated in the study of Barrientos (2004) that public journalism should lead journalists to get the community’s attention on important issues and discuss with them issues that affect their lives deeply and extensively.

It is also reflected in the table that there exists a significant relationship between the sex of the reader-respondents and the social role of community journalism as a means of communication at .05 probability level. This suggests that females subscribe and read local newspapers for communication purposes. Through reading locally published news items, females tend to share a lot of interesting topics in their daily interactions with others as a manifestation of their sociable and outspoken nature. This finding conforms with the results of the study of Torricer (2009) that significant relationship exists between the speaking ability of the students and their sex and exposure to radio programs in Ilocos.

It can be gleaned further that "Timek ti Amianan", which is the oldest community newspaper in Metro Vigan, is significantly related with ideology at .05 probability level. This means that "Timek ti Amianan" is a best reading material that helps in the formation of Ilocano ideologies or cultural consciousness. This further implies that in the process of ideological formation, the Ilocano language and culture, which is the most precious heritage of the Ilocanos would be preserved, enriched and rejuvenated. The result of this study can be attributed to the claim of Zang (1997) as cited by Barrientos (2004) that community building is a vital possible role for the press. This further validates the claim of Meyer (1995) in Barrientos (2004) that public journalism is all about a desire to rebuild a community's sense of itself.

Table 4. Result of ANOVA on the significant difference of community journalism's social roles in ilocano language and culture preservation

Social Roles	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig
INFORMATION					
Between Groups	1.725	4	.431	2.972	.020
Within Groups	35.541	245	.145		
Total	37.265	249			
IDEOLOGY					
Between Groups	4.212	4	1.053	7.104	.000
Within Groups	36.314	245	.148		
Total	40.526	249			

CONSOLIDATION					
Between Groups	1.926	4	.482	2.883	.023
Within Groups	40.913	245	.167		
Total	42.840	249			
COMMUNICATION					
Between Groups	1.268	4	.317	2.480	.045
Within Groups	31.326	245	.128		
Total	32.594	249			
EDUCATION					
Between Groups	1.235	4	.309	1.490	.206
Within Groups	50.781	245	.207		
Total	52.016	249			

The above table displays the Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) of the perceptions of the reader-respondents on the extent of effectiveness of community newspapers along the indicated social roles as an instrument in promoting the uniqueness of Ilocano language and culture.

Along Information. The null hypothesis that there are no significant differences between and among the perceptions of the reader-respondents as to the effectiveness of community papers as means of information is rejected (F-value = 2.972, F-prob = .020). This means that the perceptions of the reader-respondents are significantly different when compared according to municipalities. To determine which pair of groups of reader-respondents are significantly different, the Scheffe' Multiple Comparison test was used. Results of the test are shown in Table 5.

Table 5. Scheffe' test results on the effectiveness of community journalism in terms of information

	Vigan City	Bantay	Caoayan	San Vicente	Sta. Catalina
Vigan City	-	.982*	.098	.995*	.301*
Bantay		-	.319*	1.000*	.648*
Caoayan			-	.236*	.986*
San Vicente				-	.541*
Sta. Catalina					-

*Significant at .05 probability level

**Significant at .01 probability level

The perceptions of the reader-respondents on the effectiveness of community journalism as an instrument of Ilocano language and culture preservation along information have significant difference. The table further unveils that only the pair of Vigan City and Caoayan was not significantly different.

Along Ideology. The above table proves that the perceptions of the reader-respondents are significantly different with an F-value of 7.104 and F-probability of .000 which is significant at .01 level. Therefore, the null hypothesis that there is no significant difference between and among the perceptions of the reader-respondents as to the effectiveness of community papers as means of ideological formation is rejected. To determine which pair of groups of respondents are significantly different, the Scheffe' Multiple Comparison test was used. Result of the test are shown in Table 6.

Table 6. Scheffe' test results on the effectiveness of community journalism in terms of ideological formation

	Vigan City	Bantay	Caoayan	San Vicente	Sta. Catalina
Vigan City	-	.978*	.941	.010	.999*
Bantay		-	1.000*	.001	.996*
Caoayan			-	.000	.983*
San Vicente				-	.004
Sta. Catalina					-

*Significant at .05 probability level

**Significant at .01 probability level

Scheffe' test results on the mean differences on the perceptions of the five groups (Vigan City, Bantay, Caoayan, San Vicente, and Sta. Catalina) on the extent of effectiveness of the community papers as means of ideological formation are shown on Table 6. This category displayed previously that the reader-respondents' perceptions are significantly different. The table further shows that the pairs of reader-respondents who have varied perceptions are as follows: Vigan City and Bantay, Vigan City and Sta. Catalina, Bantay and Caoayan, Bantay and Sta. Catalina, and Caoayan and Sta Catalina.

Along Consolidation. The table disclosed that the null hypothesis is rejected as proven by its F-value of 2.883 and F-probability of .023 which is significant at .05 level. To determine which pair of groups of reader-respondents are significantly different, the Scheffe Multiple Comparison test was utilized. Result of the test is presented in Table 7.

Table 7. Scheffe’ test results on the effectiveness of community journalism in terms of consolidation and stabilization of the society

	Vigan City	Bantay	Caoayan	San Vicente	Sta. Catalina
Vigan City	-	.191*	.550*	.069	.118*
Bantay		-	.969*	.993*	1.000*
Caoayan			-	.827*	.916*
San Vicente				-	1.000*
Sta. Catalina					-

*Significant at .05 probability level

**Significant at .01 probability level

Further test was made and it indicated that only the pair of Vigan City and San Vicente was not significantly different. This implies that this pair has assessed the community papers’ effectiveness similarly along ideological formation. Furthermore, the result of the test indicates that the rest of the pairs have different assertions as to this social role of community journalism.

Along Communication. The perceptions of the reader-respondents are significantly different with an F-value of 2.480 and F-probability of .045 which is significant at .05 level. Therefore, the null hypothesis that there is no significant difference between and among the perceptions of the reader-respondents as to the effectiveness of community papers as means of ideological formation is rejected. To determine which pair of groups of respondents are significantly different, the Scheffe’ Multiple Comparison test was used. Results of the test are shown in Table 8.

Table 8. Scheffe' test results on the effectiveness of community journalism in terms of communication

	Vigan City	Bantay	Caoayan	San Vicente	Sta. Catalina
Vigan City	-	1.000*	.658*	.255	.290*
Bantay		-	.744*	.327*	.367*
Caoayan			-	.965*	.977*
San Vicente				-	1.000*
Sta. Catalina					-

**Significant at .05 probability level*

***Significant at .01 probability level*

Further test has been made and it indicated that only the pair of Vigan City and San Vicente was not significantly different. This implies that this pair has assessed the community papers' effectiveness similarly along communication. Furthermore, the result of the test indicates that the rest of the pairs have different assertions as to this social role of community journalism.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the findings of the study, the following conclusions were drawn:

1. Majority of the respondents are female; a great number of them belong to the parent age or 20-39 years old; majority resides in the rural areas; most of them are skilled workers; and many of them widely read Bannawag and Timek ti Amianan.
2. There exists significant relationships between the personal attributes of the respondents and the social roles of community journalism.
3. Significant differences in the responses between and among the reader-respondents exist when grouped according to municipalities.
4. Community newspapers performed satisfactorily these social roles: information, ideological, consolidation, communication and education.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the foregoing conclusions, the following recommendations are hereby forwarded:

1. Parents should encourage their children to read local newspapers and other forms of community journalism to rejuvenate Ilocano language and culture.
2. Similar studies should be undertaken to include other variables not mentioned in the study.

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