

## The Ethnohistory of the Karao (I-karao) of the Southern Cordillera, Northern Luzon<sup>1</sup>

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### ABSTRACT

Discussions on ethnolinguistic groups in Benguet province usually focus on the two major ones, the Ibaloy and the Kankanaey. This is true in the disciplines of anthropology, linguistics, and history. There is scant attention given to the “other” minority groups asserting their own distinct cultural identity in Benguet. This essay explores the identity and history of one of these “other” groups, the Karao, using oral tradition, Spanish ecclesiastical and government reports, and contemporary ethnographic and linguistic research reports. The essay situates the Karao into the geographic, linguistic, and historical landscape of the southern Cordillera and pursues the reasons why Karao should not be subsumed under Ibaloy. The essay also narrates and explains their origin, *edafoan na Ikarao*. The essay further locates the names Panuyyupuy and Ipanuyyupuy (Puyyupuy), an extinct village and Karao’s claimed progenitor respectively, in historical documents of the 17th to 20th century. Finally, I argue that the ethnographic and linguistic works helped in the development of Karao as a distinct ethnolinguistic identity separate from the Ibaloy. The passage of the Indigenous Peoples’ Right Acts of 1997 also gave more agency to the Karao people in protecting their ancestral rights and cultural traditions and promoting their contemporary identity.

**Keywords:** Southern Cordillera, Edafoan na Ikarao, Panuyyupuy, Karao, Culture and Language

### Introduction

Whenever one begins discussing ethnolinguistic groups<sup>2</sup> in Benguet province, the discussions cannot help but focus on the two major ones, the Ibaloy and the Kankanaey.<sup>3</sup> This holds true in the disciplines of anthropology, linguistics, and history (Ballard 1970, 1974, 1977, 1989; Bello 1972; Huey 1961; Moss 1924; Moss & Kroeber 1919; Picpican

2003; Prill-Brett 1992, 2009; Sacla 1987; Sheerer 1901, 1905, 1931; Wilson 1933, 1955). There is but scant attention given to the “other” minor ethnolinguistic groups asserting their own distinct cultural group identity in Cordillera studies at present. Among them are the Kalanguya (Kalangotan/Kallahan), the Karao (I-karao), the I-uwak (I’wak), Mandek-ey, and the Bago (Kataguan).<sup>4</sup> What is unfortunate about the status of these groups is that they are subsumed under the two dominant ethnolinguistic groups with whom they share territories and cultural heritages.



Figure 1. Ethnolinguistic Map of Benguet Province. (Lewis 1991)

Hence, this essay is an attempt to explore the identity and history of one of these “other” ethnolinguistic groups located in Benguet, the Karao, utilizing oral traditions, primary and secondary written sources which include ecclesiastical and government reports, contemporary ethnographic and linguistic researches. The essay situates Karao in the geographic, linguistic, and historical landscape of the southern part of the Cordillera, followed by an explanation that they are not Ibaloy based on recent ethnographic writings. Then this essay narrates and explains Karao’s oral tradition (*edafoan na Ikarao*) and attempts to locate the non-extant terms *Panuyyupuy* and *Ipanuyyupuy* (*Ipuuyyupuy*), a village and one of the group’s claimed ancestors, in historical records written from the 17th to 20th century.

Finally, I argue that the pioneer ethnographic and linguistic works helped in the development of Karao identity as a separate collective group from Ibaloy identity. This was reinforced, later on, by the Indigenous Peoples' Right Acts of 1997 which gave more agency to the Karao people in maintaining their cultural traditions, asserting their rights, and promoting their thriving collective identity.

### **Southern Cordillera: Geographic, Historical, and Linguistic Landscape**

The southern Cordillera region offers interesting space for ethnohistorical studies of small, dispersed groups which emerged in the late 20th century. The region is characterized by its diverse topography and climate, complex responses to Spanish and American colonial subjugation, and linguistic plurality of inhabitants.

As a geographic region, the southern Cordillera consists of the mountainous areas of the north and southeastern Benguet and southern part of Ifugao, together with adjacent valleys and plains of northern Pangasinan and upstream Cagayan valley settlements which comprised the old Spanish missions of Ituy (see Lewis 1992). In Felix Keesing's ethnographic work, the region is part of the upper Cagayan area which "comprises the southern half of Isabela Province, together with the province of Nueva Vizcaya." It is also the home of important rivers—the Magat river which waters the Cagayan valley region and the Agno River which waters the southwestern side of the Cordillera (Keesing 1963, 267; Afable 1989, 35–36). Apart from these large bodies of waters are the small tributaries (the Galiano, Naguilian, Amburayan, Agno, Santa Cruz, and Matunod rivers) where scattered settlements are found. Historically, this region witnessed various pockets of rebellion from new converts (*semi-infieles*) and resistances from the small tribes of *Ygorottes* who were described as *infieles* and *salvajes*. However, most of these rebellions and resistances were unsuccessful because they were eventually suppressed by the Spanish and Filipino forces deployed in the region. Moreover, it is of interest to note that this region had seen obstinate and defeated tribal groups who went up to the mountain fringes looking for refuge and protection.

These varying geographic and historical conditions have resulted in the linguistic plurality of the region. The region is the ancestral homeland of people who communicate in Ibaloy, Kalanguya (or Kallahan), I-uwak, Ikarao, and Kankanaey languages (Afable 2004, 1). It is important to highlight here that the geographic region should not be conflated with "Southern Cordillera." The "Southern Cordillera," or simply SC, is an important concept coined by Lawrence Reid to refer to a family of languages composed of the Ibaloy, the Karao,

and other dialects subsumed under the name Kallahan (Antipolo, Amduntug, Kayapa, and I-uwak), Ilongot, and Pangasinan (Reid 1979, 259 in Afable 1989, 75). The first three languages and their dialectal varieties are spoken within the southern Cordillera, while the last two languages (Ilongot and Pangasinan) are the only languages which are spoken outside the region. Aside from the SC languages, it is important to mention here that even other non-SC languages like Isinay, Iloko, Kankanaey, Tagalog, and English should be recognized for they are part of the Karao's linguistic knowledge and practice. Importantly, although there exists a diversity of languages in the region, there is a high degree of interaction among speakers of other languages that resulted in widespread bilingualism and multilingualism of almost all the groups both in the past and at present. This is true in the case of Karao where it is common for a Karao-speaker to be proficient in Bokod Ibaloy, Kalanguya, Iloko, Tagalog, and English (see Afable 1989; 2003).

### **Karao are not Ibaloy**

At present, Karao is officially recognized by the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP) as an ethnolinguistic group and Indigenous People group whose communities are concentrated in the barangays of Karao and Ekip in Bokod, in the eastern part of Benguet province (NCIP 2018). The Karao-speakers are found in seven small dispersed sitios namely Ticop, Piley, Sahod (Chanum), Pigingang, Coral, Bosoc, and Ekip (Chanco 1980; Atos 1982; Brainard 2003). Their ancestral domain rests on a rugged terrain and valley through which the Bokod river flows. In recent years, there are also a significant number of Karao who migrated to and settled in other cities like Baguio and La Trinidad for educational and employment opportunities (Brainard 2003).

In a few ethnographic works, the Karao people are often subsumed under Ibaloy and their language considered an Ibaloy dialect (Peralta 2000; NCAA 2015). This mistake is committed because of the following reasons: a) their territories, barangays Karao and Ekip, are within the considered ancestral domains of the Ibaloy people (Chanco 1980, 1; Atos 1982); b) given their geographic location, there is also a high percentage of intermarriages between the Karao and the Ibaloy people of the Agno valley in the past (Afable 2004) and at present; and c) because there are huge lexical similarities and intelligibility among the two languages (Kamp 1992; Himes 1998).

Even though such is the case, the NCIP and the Komisyon sa Wikang Filipino (2021), a Philippines government agency whose mandate is to promote Filipino languages, classified Karao as a distinct cultural group and language respectively. Ethnologue, an

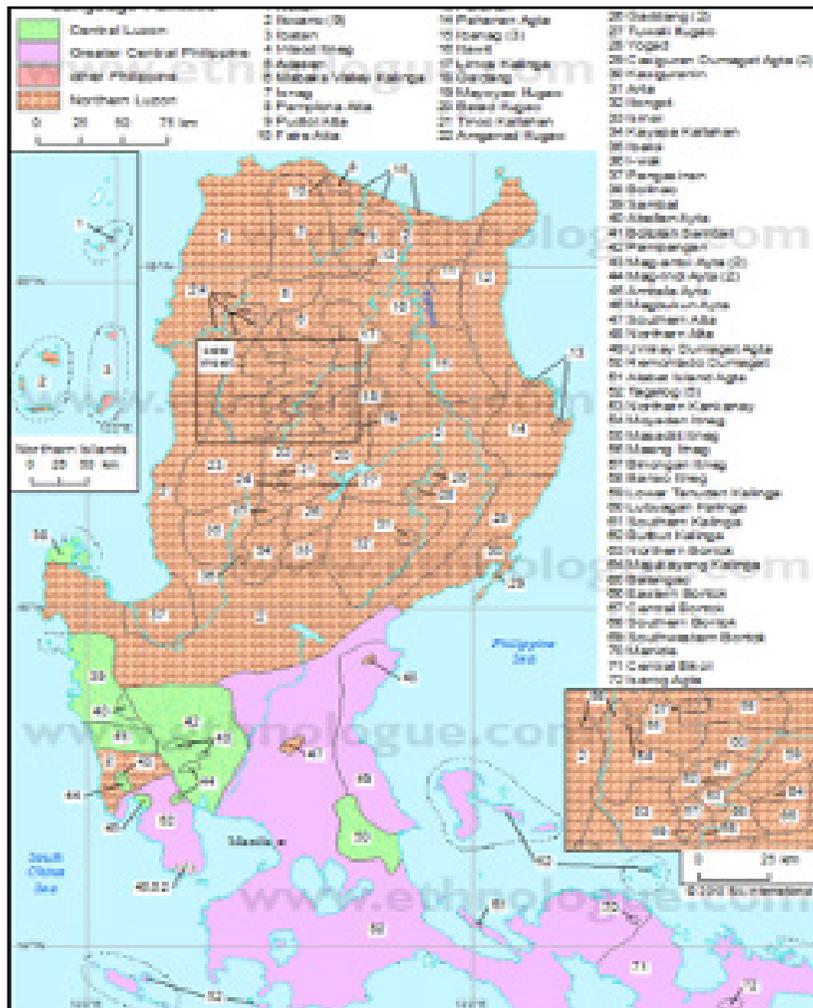


Figure 2. Distribution of Northern Luzon languages (Ethnologue 2016)

international language organization, listed Karao as a separate language. The linguistic maps produced by this organization clearly demonstrate that Karao language is unique from the Ibaloy.

It is interesting to note that there are Karao lexicons which are the same with Ibaloy's but have opposite and/or different meanings. For instance, the Karao term for "there is none" is *nagwara* while its short form *guwara* means "there is" in Ibaloy. The Karao term for the male reproductive organ (*tintin*) refers to the female reproductive organ to the Ibaloy. This is the same case for the female reproductive organ (*buto*) that refers to the male reproductive organs in Ibaloy. The cleaning of rice plants is called *karwakaw* by the Ibaloy while it is *wakwak* in Karao language (Atos 1982, 3–4). Moreover, the term *ekpil*

in Karao means "to put on the armpit" while in Ibaloy it means "to throw away." These lexical items are part of the collective jokes being used by the Karao people, until now, to differentiate themselves from the Ibaloy.

Aside from lexical difference, the Karao language has unique phonemic inventories and a complex phonology (see Brainard 1994b): *ch*, a voiced palatal affricate;<sup>5</sup> *gw*, a labialized semivowel, and *th*, a voiceless dental fricative. These three phonemes can be seen in word-initial and syllable-initial but never in syllable-final and word-final positions: *cha-ngas* (communal effort); *gwalgwaldik* (banana blossom); and *motheg* (mucus). However, these unique phonemes, *ch*, *gw*, except *th*, change in form when they undergo verb affixations. They alternate with the phonemes *r* and *w* respectively. For instance, *chinel* (confident) becomes *marinel* and *chamag* (news) becomes *maremag* (always spreading news) if the affix *ma-* is added to the root word. In addition, the phoneme *gw* which can be seen in many lexicons of Karao becomes *w* in many occasions without changing the meaning of the word like *gwara* (there is) becomes *wara*, *gwaya* (free) becomes *waya*, and *gwasay* (ax) becomes *wasay* and many more.

The Karao believe that they are not Ibaloy in terms of cultural traditions and genealogical consideration apart from language. They have salient cultural institutions that are not found in Ibaloy communities. One is the *chengngeng na baley* (ancestral house) which serves both as the center of different family rituals and celebrations (*chilos*) and family graveyards (*do-ongan*). They also have *abu-nan* (community center), akin to the *dap-ay* of the Bontok, where esteemed male elders gather for decision-making and perform important rituals. They also have *amangan* (public dormitory) which is like the Bontok's *ulog* and Ifugao's *akhamang* where there are separate quarters for *badbado* (bachelors) and *marikit* (bachelorettes) (Chanco 1980; Atos 1982; Brainard 2003).

Added to these cultural institutions, the Karao also perform distinctive rituals like *indotho-an*. This ritual is not accompanied by *bunong* (invocation) because the preparation and sharing of meals are considered as the *bunong* (Chanco 1980; Atos 1980). Other rituals performed annually are the *alegwas* (post-harvest and pre-planting of agricultural field), *babeng* (feast of merit), *ipituy* (post-harvest ritual observed only by families with *Ipituy* origin), *i-uwak* (healing ritual performed by families with I-uwak origin), *kecheng na payew* (post-rice planting ritual), and *pekkel* (fertility and harvest ritual).

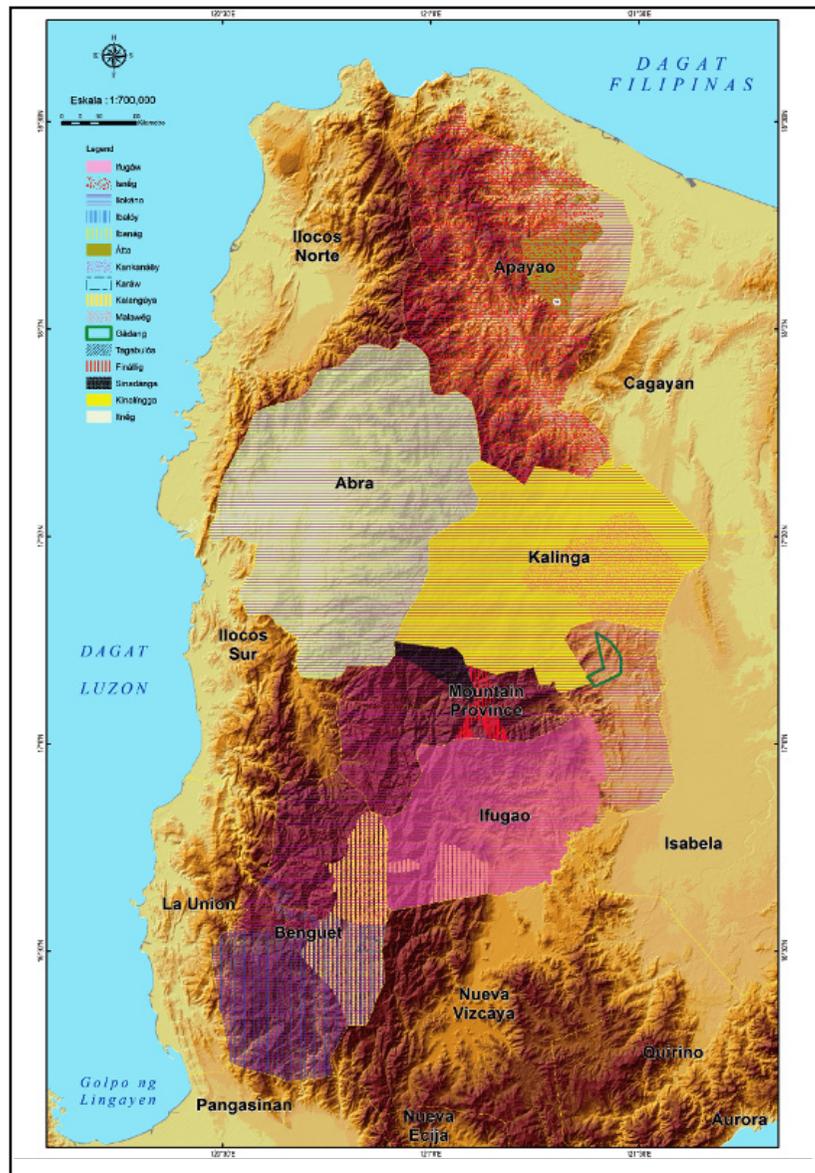


Figure 3. The Linguistic Map of Cordillera Administrative Region (KWF 2020).

### Edafoan na Ikarao (The Origin of the Karao)

It is claimed by almost all the *umili* of Karao that their ancestors originated from an *ili* (village) located somewhere in eastern Bontoc. In a compilation titled *Karao Text*, linguist Brainard recorded the local stories of the Karao. There were two versions of the origin story as



Figure 4. The A-awa and I-ina of Karao community in the 1950s. (Photo taken by late Mayor Henry Kamora of Kabayan, 1955)

narrated by two elders in the community: *Awa* John Beray and *Ina* Juanito Padon (Brainard 2003). According to them, these stories were passed on to them by respected men and women elders (*'yangka-apos a a-awa tan i-ina*) of the *ili* when they were children. The first version, as narrated by *Awa* Beray, claimed that the original homeland of their ancestors was a place called Karao, believed to be in the present-day eastern Bontoc. According to the story, their ancestors were living a peaceful life until a deadly epidemic (*banay a sahit*) hit their community, eventually spreading rapidly to every corner and killing many of their kinsmen (*umili*). Fearing that all of them would suffer the same fate, the survivors left the village and looked for another place to settle. It was believed that their ancestors moved downstream to Diyang where they developed the lands, constructed terraces, and exploited its available resources. From Diyang, they passed through the old village of Kirang and eventually reached the Uwak.<sup>6</sup> Because of the resources found in Uwak, some members stayed in the area while others headed to other directions. There were some groups who kept walking downstream (*gwariy bisak a impesa-pesaw*) while there were others who kept moving northward until they reached the mountains of Bokod in the eastern side of Benguet (*insedo-sedong cha kono mowan ali et ili riy Bokot*) (Beray in Brainard 2003, 7–20).

Juanita Padon's version of the origin of the Karao is quite similar with Beray's but with slight variations in details. *Ina* Padon, a Karao woman elder, recounted that the *'yangka-apos a a-awa tan iina* in the community referred to a village in Bontoc named Palingao (Brainard 2003). Like Karao village in the previous version, this village is

believed to have been located somewhere in eastern Bontoc. An interesting description of the village was the abundance of banana trees. Based on the story, a strong lightning and thunder struck down and destroyed these banana trees (*kejow na balat*) but the thatched-built houses nearby were spared from being burned. After what happened, their ancestors abandoned the village and encouraged their *umili* to look for another place to settle. According to Ina Padon, their ancestors continued their wanderings in the forest until they reached the village of Tinek where these people temporarily settled. While there, it is told that they built terraces and practiced head-taking activities for their communal rituals. Some of them continued to walk in the wilderness and passed through a village called Teboy, then transiently settled in Alang where they constructed terraces. Interestingly, there were also stories by their elders that their ancestors would frequently visit nearby lowland villages like Bambang purposely to trade highland products with lowland commodities like salt and clay pot for food preservation and sewing implements for clothing and adornment. It is believed that this trading engagement was stopped because the people of Bambang got fed up with these ancestors' activities. The people of Bambang threatened them with guns and bullets. Trembling with anxiety and fear, they returned to the mountains and stayed there permanently (Brainard 2003, 21–31).

These two accounts were also supplemented by a story of an unnamed hunter<sup>7</sup> (*ma-nop*) who accidentally discovered the location of the present-day Karao village while hunting with his dog. The story started when the *ma-nop's* dog was running after a deer (*makgwaw*) in the forest. In their search for the location of the *makgwaw*, the *ma-nop* reached the top of a mountain where he saw a continuous water supply from the river and the abundance of resources. The *ma-nop* thought of bringing his *umili* to that place. To ensure that the newly found place was suitable for inhabitation, the *ma-nop* left a piece of meat on a big rock and made an invocation to *Kabunyan*. He prayed that if the meat would remain untouched and no animal would eat it after a month, he would call on his people to settle in the area. A month had passed and the *ma-nop* returned to the place. To his surprise, the meat was still on the boulder untouched. He traveled back to his people and brought them the good news. After several days, his people relocated with him to that place (Atos 1982; Brainard 2003).

The origin stories abovementioned provide us glimpse about Karao people. Importantly, they generate three important information that are helpful to understand their distant past: 1) it shows some important factors of migration from their ancestral homeland to their new territories; b) it enumerates the route movement they embarked on in the past; and c) it offers a glimpse of their ancestors' old lifeways and economic livelihood. While it is true that these stories did not

offer an accurate timeline for their ancestors' migration to their arrival in Karao, this concern could be eased to a certain extent by visiting Karao's genealogies. In many instances, the *mambunung* recited chants and incantations to immortalize all the remembered ancestral names that are culturally and historically relevant to them. These genealogies assisted the historian in dating the Karao distant past to a certain extent. Interestingly, Marvin Atos recorded a *bowway* that enumerates Karao ancestors (Atos 1982). Many chants and incantations include names like *Puypuy* and *Ipanuypuy* who were described as the ancestors, source of Ikarao customs, and members of a bigger clan.

The ancestors on both sides  
Give the big, big blessings  
Because they performed in Karao.  
At the foundation house.  
And that everything is performed,  
The rituals that were theirs  
What Beray performed,  
Together with Kompod;  
And added by Pa-nga,  
Together with Chimaya;  
And added by Vicente,  
What Ducia performed,  
At the heavy house.  
And surely it will thrive.  
And if you'll inherit.  
The custom of **Puypuy**,  
You should keep calm.  
As brother and sister,  
And as one family,  
So that it will always be like that  
You will not separate;  
That is there will be something wrong,  
It should not be given meaning,  
From the ears of others.  
Surely, surely.  
You will disperse,  
As a big family  
Of Karao, of **Panuypuy**.  
And rarely at present;  
The family that is intact.

*Ya apon nan binangi  
I-akan yoy abalag  
Abalag a bindeshion  
Tep binangon red Karao  
I ni po-on ni baley;  
Et na ala ngon amen;  
Amen a binangon nen  
I penalbo nan Beray  
Sikara nan Kompod;  
At tenobtoban an Pa-nga  
I si-karen Chimaya  
At tenobtoban nan Inting  
A binangon nan Ducia  
Ya ambal-at a baley;  
A talagan on nay-nay;  
Kamon ngon tawiran yo;  
I ogalin I **Puypuy**  
Ay manlololop kayo,  
Si-kayon san-aagi  
Siyay saman ni olay;  
Ag kayo mansisiyan;  
Ta kamon ni waray palso.  
Ay ag ngo maologan;  
A ni ngela ni ka-et;  
Man talaga ni talaga;  
Ay mansisiyan kayo,  
Dakal a san delikob  
Ikarao, **Ipanuypuy**,  
Et olay toy wara neman  
Sikaran san delikob.*

## Panuypuy in Spanish Records

Apart from being cited in various chants and incantation by *mambunung* elders, the name Panuypuy also appeared in the earliest records of the Spanish exploration of the upper Cagayan valley, specifically in Gaspar de San Agustin's *Conquista* and Juan Miguel de la Vega's *Expedition to the Province of Tuy*. From these documents, Governors Gomez and Luis Perez Dasmarinas directed the Spanish troops with the help of Don Dionisio Capolong to embark on a series of expeditions across the Caraballo and the entire Cagayan River valley. Don Capolong, who already travelled in the region and had established connections with the people, reported that they had collected "tributes in the form of gold jewelry from dozens of villages without the loss of a single life on either side" (Scott 1974, 12). This knowledge of gold mines and the desire to locate them paved the way to organize more ecclesiastical and military expeditions in the Ituy region.



Figure 5. Northern Luzon in 1625 (Scott 1974: 8)

Moreover, an important description of the region was: "broad tree shaded valleys, abounded in carabao and deer, and produced bountiful crops of sugarcane; rice was grown both in mountainside

swiddens and in irrigated fields; and little children ran around naked with gold necklaces around their necks while their parents covered their arms up to the elbow with gold bracelets" (Scott 1974, 12). Dela Vega recorded that these well-fashioned jewelries came from neighboring settlements Panuypuy, *Balacbac*, and *Bila*. Although no longer extant in contemporary records, Panuypuy settlement is located somewhere between the Awa and Matunu rivers of present-day Kayapa municipality. As shown in the Cacho map, the settlement is adjacent to the southern part of the Cordillera.

In 1755, Fr. Cristobal Rodriguez made notable observations about Panuypuy and its nearby settlements. He noticed that Panuypuy had "some 600 persons with a well-ordered community with a civil enough government" (De Salazar 195 in Scott 1974, 84). Apart from its demographic features, Fr. Rodriguez recorded that it had a "tribunal where the old men gathered to conduct their business without younger men, much less the women, daring to open their mouths, and from which nightly curfew was sounded" (Scott 1974, 84). He further observed that the bachelors slept away from their parents when they were between the ages of seven and fourteen until they were ready for marriage (Scott 1974, 84). These communal centers and quarters are probably the *abu-nan* and *amangan*, two salient cultural institutions of the modern-day Karao. The *abu-nan* is a place where elderly men gather to perform rituals, settle conflicts and disputes among the members, and make resolutions for the community. The *amangan* which served as a communal dormitory allows young members to socialize with each other.

## Who were the Ipanuypuy?

The Ipanuypuy intensely defied the pacification and conversion efforts of the Spaniards in the Ituy region. In fact, the Ipanuypuy, like the Ipituy, Ilongots, and Igorot tribes, were responsible for "slaying Spanish religious officials and lowland Christians" (Sierra 1745 in *Sacra Philippiniana* 1978, 393). In many missionary reports, they were also notorious for raiding and subjugating Christianized towns and helping some newly converted people to flee to the mountains.

In a letter dated 1740, Fr. Juan Omaza reported that the Ipanuypuy intimidated and attacked newly Christianized settlements. He wrote that the Isinay people who were relocated adjacent to their settlement had experienced their cruelty. He described what happened like this: "the pagans (referring to Isinay) have become dogs. Panuypuy gave us sudden terror and have kept the inhabitants in constant watch" (Ormaza 1740 in Ferrando & Fonseca 1870-1871, 391). In another record by Fr. Luis Pedro Sierra, he wrote that "the Isinays were timid people, and these fierce marauders (referring to Ipanuypuy) kept

them in abject submission to their tyranny—killing them or snaring their cattle, demanding from them contributions of their produce, and even human beings whom they would enslave and then eventually offered in sacrifice to their false gods” (Sierra 1745 in *Philippiana Sacra* 1978, 359).

Due to the continuous hostility of the Ipanuypuy and other tribes in the Ituy region, Dominican missionaries started to be afraid for their lives and the conceivable catastrophe it would cause to many Christianized settlements. Their fear led them to request for security from the administrators of Pangasinan and Cagayan respectively. The Pangasinan support came in the “form of ill-fitted troop of lowlanders with little military experience and no taste for battle” (Scott 1974, 85). The troop even underestimated the strength of the Ipanuypuy. As a result, they returned to Pangasinan with no success. After this failure, Don Jose Ignacio de Arzadun requested for an urgent reinforcement from Cagayan where 270 came to retaliate and suppress the hostile *infiels*. This contingent from Cagayan were known to have the same strength and spirit as these *Igorottes* had. As they reached the stronghold of the Ipanuypuy, they used “their firepower, valor, and tactical skill combined with Panuypuy ignorance of firearms to inflict the bloodiest defeat ever suffered in Igorot history” (Scott 1974, 85). This encounter, according to Malumbres, resulted in casualties of 276 Ipanuypuy along with another 130 lives from other small tribes (Malumbres 1918, 28). Their settlements “were totally burned, setting fire to the fields at the same time, and throwing down the very wall in which they had so confided” (Ferrando & Fonseca 1870–1871, 409). Many survivors fled to Pingkian, Kayapa, and other mountainous areas. With the failure of Panuypuy to defend their territories, the Spanish troops targeted the *Ipituy*, another hostile tribe in the Ituy areas. After a series of military expeditions deployed in the area, the *Ipituy* tribe were defeated too and fled to the more interior mountains, same as the Panuypuy (Malumbres 1918, 33). More comprehensive details of these encounters were witnessed and documented by Vicente de Salazar in his *Relacion de la Conquista de Ituy por la tropa de Cagayanes de Ano de 1748*.<sup>8</sup> These defeats of the Ipanuypuy and *Ipituy* resulted in their dispersal in various parts of western Kayapa and to a relatively peaceful condition in the Ituy mission areas.

### Ipanuypuy and other Tribes as Runaway Groups

Ipanuypuy and other smaller tribes made their withdrawal into the adjacent valleys and mountains. There were groups who reached and settled in the mountains of Benguet. An account which was narrated by Sagudo Kindaw, an Ibaloy from Bokod, and Ernesto Nateng, a Japanese war veteran, confirmed this. According to Bokod Ibaloy,

when the Ipanuypuy arrived in the present-day Poblacion area, they asked permission from the elders of the village if they could live with them in their land. The elders gathered and consulted the members of the council on what actions to do with the newly arrived immigrants. Their consensus was not to allow them to stay in the area but instead they told them to relocate to a place near the foothills of Mt. Pulag. According to Kindaw and Nateng, this decision by the Ibaloy elders was a strategy to protect their *ili* and *umili* from attacks of *busol* (enemies) coming from that distant region.<sup>9</sup> Folk historical account confirm this because whenever the old folks of Bokod would visit Karao, they would advise their *kailiyan* and remark in the Ibaloy language: *Karakayo man-aaabos tep ita ali'y bosol, isaho shakejo la* (Do not ever go there [Karao] alone because there are enemies there, they're going to kidnap you). This statement is often made by older Bokod Ibaloy for their children to refrain from wandering alone in the area because it was dominated by *busol* who lived on the other side of the mountains.

### 'Karaw who are Ipanuypuy'

After defeating the hostile *Igorottes* and bringing relative stability in the region, Spanish missionaries continued evangelizing and reaching out to the people of the valley and adjacent mountains. One of the most important missionary records about the *Panuypuy*-Karao connections was written by Fr. Lorenzo Fondevila (1872). Fr. Fondevila was appointed as a missionary in Bambang where his principal duty was to convert the *Igorottes*. Faithful to his calling, he traveled to three neighboring towns of adjacent mountains (Ambayek, Bojot and Karaw). The detailed observation from his experiences living in the area has contributed to an understanding about the settlements and the ethnic population living there. The account on Karao's population was derived from the letter of Fr. Lorenzo Fondevila which was dated January 18, 1834. Fr. Arbea enumerated new places in the adjacent mountains where they could start new missions. Fr. Fondevila, in his letter, mentioned Panuypuy twice. He said that these people were regular visitors of Lojot settlement. These Ipanuypuys, together with other tribal groups, received a message from the missionary that requested them to go down from the mountains to engage in trade. Fr. Fondevila stated that he “had intended to go on to the Ipanuypuys, but was prevented by the season of the year, the terrain, the fact that it was almost Septuagesima...and especially the ruggedness of the mountains, so he decided to send a message to Panuypuy and other towns for some leaders to come down and confer with him...” (Scott 1975, 6). Before he embarked on his journey into the rugged terrains, he mentioned the tribal people who came down from the mountain to visit him and the churches in the lowlands.

[Fr. Fondevila] already knew more than half of the men from the three towns [Ambayek, Bojot, and Karaw] because they had often come down here to Bambang and many came to the convent and on some occasions, he had taken their side in disputes with some Christians in town. He also knew some from Bojot, and more those from **Karaw, who are Ipanuypuy**, and he had made friends with their chieftains, that Alegam name above in another place. (Scott 1975, 17; emphasis added)

As Fr. Fondevila continued to go further, he and his group reached Kabanglasan, which was four hours away from Bambang, following the water course of Awa river. In their journey, they met the chieftains of Beais and other villages named Kolangan and Sanaoy, whose subordinates were friendly to the Spanish missionaries and lowland Christians. With the company of men from these villages, about an hour beyond 'Bojot' (presumably Bokod) they reached Ambayek settlement, which was described as simple and peaceful as Bojot. After spending several nights in the area, the priest finally reached the village of Karaw. This was the first mention of "Karaw" in the Spanish sources. It would be reasonable to suppose that the people there were not yet aware of their ethnic identity as Karao people. Presumably, they considered themselves as a group who originated from Ipanuypuy and other migrant tribes.

Interestingly, Fr. Fondevila continued to describe the lifestyle of the people of Karaw. He observed that they had carried almost all their properties off to the remote part of the mountains to hide, leaving only the camote sweet potato (*dokto*) and gabi taro (*agwa*) in their fields since they could not take these. Another important observation is that the Karaw were engaged in trade with the lowlanders and would return to the mountains with chickens, pigs, Chinese jars (*tibores*), and many other essential commodities acquired from the lowlands (Scott 1975). Another remarkable thing to highlight in Fr. Fondevila's description of the people's language: "the people of Karaw understand Isinay and speak it better than the people of Bambang and they also speak Pangasinan; but it is to be noted that **they have their own particular tongue, and their pronunciation seems like Chinese, and their intonation is noticeable when they speak**" (Scott 1975, 17; emphasis added). At present, the younger generation of Karao do not know how to speak Isinay because of the low interactions with the Isinay speakers. As the journey ended, they recorded the number of families living in the three villages. Fr. Fondevila concluded that "in this valley where he was there are only the said towns, which are on the height of the mountains, are the towns of Ambayek, which has 80 houses, then Bojot which has 90 houses and then Karaw which has 80 houses or more" (Scott 1975, 17). These are the only instances where Panuypuy-Karao was mentioned.

In the early phase of the American period, the establishment of the Bureau of Non-Christian Tribes (BNCT) resulted in the reorganization of many tribal groups in the Cordillera highlands. The anthropological and ethnographic reports conducted by the surveyors did not classify Karao as an ethnic group. Despite their dispersal, the Ipanuypuy including their place Panuypuy, remained extant as the name of a tribal group on a list prepared by David Barrows. This list was adopted by Worcester from the works of Austrian ethnologist Ferdinand Blumentritt who studied and categorized the Philippine tribal groups. In fact, the Worcester and then later Barrows documents located Panuypuy in the western portion of Nueva Vizcaya and Isabela (Worcester 1906, 792). To my surprise, the Panuypuy tribe were also subsumed under the Mayoyao group.

In the early 1900s, David Barrows, first chief of the Bureau of Ethnology, made sojourns within the vicinity of southern Cordillera. He described the social condition "between Benguet and Kiangan" to be populated with natives who were "wild, troublesome, or *busul*" (Barrows 1956, 229–30). As he travelled far across the Kayapa area, Barrows and his team reached a village "farther south and back of Bokod" named as "Carao" (Barrows 1956, 245). "Carao," as described by Barrow, was a "first class barrio, close to Bokod." From this statement, I guess that Karao was not administratively part of Bokod because they referred to the barrio as "close to Bokod." Barrows described the inhabitants as "some friendly and some hostile, **who are not Nabaloi Igorot**" (Barrows 1956, 245; emphasis added). These descriptions further claimed that they were not Ibaloy. Another interesting description on their language and culture is that: "[t]he people there **speak a language different from that of Bokod and have other peculiarities**. They make peculiar basketry, and all men wear leg bands.<sup>10</sup> They differ physically in having more body hair and thinner cheeks" (Barrows 1956, 245; emphasis added). Despite mention of the Carao people in Barrow's fieldnotes, it is reasonable to assume that Worcester did not consider them as a distinct and separate group since his intention was a reduction in the number of non-Christian tribes enumerated previously by Ferdinand Blumentritt and Jesuit missionaries such as Angel Perez.

The censuses conducted by the American government did not have a separate category for Carao people "who are not Nabaloi Igorot." In the Benguet provincial census in 1909, it showed that Bokod town was populated by Ibaloy-speaking people and "others," a category presumably composed of the small population of migrant Ipanuypuy or Carao people. The absence of the Karao or Ipanuypuy in censuses and other official documents may have been the result of conflating and subsuming them with the Ibaloy. It could be because American administrators were not inclined to have a long list of

ethnic labels and thus, they simplified the ethnological inventory as best they could (Resurrecion 1999).

### Claerhoudt, Chanco, and Atos on Karao's Cultural Traditions

In the early 1970s, Karao village had undergone significant political, economic, and cultural developments.<sup>11</sup> As decided unanimously by the local administrators, the small barangay of Karao was divided into two separate entities, the Karao and Ekip, for administrative and economic development purposes. The former retained the sitios of Ticop, Piliy, Chanum (Sahod), Esop, Coral, and Busok where the majority population were Karao-speakers while the latter comprised the sitios of Pethal, Pedday, Gwitheg, Ekip Proper, Chontog, Naswak, and Poodan where the *umili* speak both Karao and Kalanguya as their first languages.

Similarly, this period saw the emerging interest of individuals and organizations to conduct research in the Karao village. One Belgian missionary who immersed and worked extensively in documenting the ritual tradition of the eastern Benguet people which include the Karao was Fr. Alfonso Claerhoudt, CICM. Fr. Claerhoudt received his ecclesiastical appointment as a local missionary in the eastern part of Benguet which covers the area of Bokod, Kabayan, and Pampang. What is interesting about this Belgian priest was that he lived in the area for about 24 years, and he learned how to speak Ibaloy and the "other" languages in the area.

His stay and interaction with the people of eastern Benguet resulted in his book titled *The Songs of a People: Igorot Customs in Eastern Benguet* (1963) in which he provided a detailed description of the local beliefs, folklores, and day-to-day events of the people including the Karao. Figuratively, Fr. Claerhoudt sang the song of the people as he exclaimed: "their joy at the birth of the child or at a bountiful harvest, their sorrow and grief in the face of sickness and death, their hardy labor in the muddy camote fields, in their rivers and forests" (Claerhoudt 1967, 1). An important portion of his ethnographic work were the peculiar feast and rituals observed only by the Karao, such as *kosdey* and *pekkel* (rituals for the fertility of the land), *alegwas* (ritual for obtaining a bountiful harvest), *ngilin* (for marriage), *gwiles* and *palis* (rituals to drive away sickness) and most importantly, *pechit* (well-off family-sponsored feast). He learned these from the *mambunung*, including "the meaning of the prayers, incantations, and rites they performed at the kanyaws" (Claerhoudt 1967, 1). His interaction with the people and ritual shamans made him a credible person to write about the eastern people's culture and traditions. Apart from rituals and feasts, Fr. Claerhoudt learned from the Karaw people their origins based on oral accounts narrated by their ancestors. In the first part of

the book, he recorded that: "[t]he greatest village of the Karaw country is Tekob, northeast, a little higher than Tekob lies Bussuk, and on the other side of the river rise the huts of Paday, Tchanum, and Pigingan. Higher than Pigingan is Padok, but it is hidden by evergreen forests in the depths of a ravine" (Claerhoudt 1967, 22). Based on the people's oral tradition, he was convinced that the Karao could never be Ibaloy because the Karao had a different origin; their ancestors were from a place behind the ridge of the *Kadasan* mountains called *Panuypuy*. Although this is the case, Karao people learned to live in "peace and safety from their enemies and preserved their own *Igwaan* language and their own customs" (Claerhoudt 1967, 22).

Seven years later, the late anthropologist Robert Fox who was conducting a research project in Poblacion, Bokod accidentally reached the village of Karao (Chanco 1980, 3). In Fox's short visit to the village, he learned that Karao people deserved to be given special attention because its cultural traditions and language are quite different from the majority Ibaloy. To do this, Fox formed a research team who would focus on their cultural traditions by looking into their elaborate ceremonies, rituals, and cultural institutions. Five years later, a team composed of researchers and students from UP and Brent was formed to start an ethnographic fieldwork in the community. Martha Carmel Chanco, a graduate student of Anthropology, was tasked to carry out this project. Staying there for almost one year, she conducted extensive study on the feasts and rituals of the Karao. Her transient residence in Karao, with the help of the locals, had resulted in the accomplishment of her dissertation. Two of her significant findings were the importance of Karao cultural organizations and their significance in the maintenance of familial solidarity and ethnic unity among the Karao. Similar to other ethnolinguistic groups in the Cordillera, there exists a social unit known as the ancestral house organization which consists of several families that come to the same *sengeg na baliy* (ancestral house) where they conduct the *chilos* (communal ritual) and other related rituals (Chanco 1980).

Two years after Chanco's dissertation on Karao's feast and rituals, an Ibaloy doctorate student named Marvin Atos from Kabayan, Benguet, conducted an ethnographic research on the culture of the Karao tribe. Atos' dissertation gathered substantial amount of data from conducting personal interviews with *a-ama tan i-ina* like Dalmacio 'Dalmase' Bayen,<sup>12</sup> Marcelino Kindao Beray,<sup>13</sup> Domingo Pacya,<sup>14</sup> Juliano 'Achebao' Balngis,<sup>15</sup> Juanita Sakate Padon, Zenaida 'Chapety' Bangsao, John O. Beray, Chayao Cabangdi, and Vicente 'Inting' Pedro. Aside from the *umili* of Karao, he also sought insights and stories from elders in the neighboring communities of Poblacion and Daklan, such as Donato Ignacio, Louis W. Angel, and Baltazar Fernando. Chanco interviewed these same people for her research.

### The Summer Institute of Linguistics and Sherri Brainard on Karao Language

Aside from these three important ethnographic works, linguists and language experts played a crucial role in highlighting the Karao distinctiveness by conducting sociolinguistics, language documentation, and Scripture translation. The Summer Institute of Linguistics (SIL) deserves important attention here. A recognized international language organization, SIL has undoubtedly contributed to documenting and studying Cordilleran languages like the Karao language. The organization through its missionaries and linguistic corpus has become instrumental in the “crystallization” and development of a distinct Karao “identity.”

From 1973 to 1986, SIL deployed three important trips to conduct sociolinguistic surveys<sup>16</sup> and collect lexical items using the 200-word Swadesh list. But the main objective was to assess if Karao people needed a Scripture translation of the New Testament, or the Ibaloy-translated Scriptures was enough for them to use since most of the younger Karao people are bilingual with Ibaloy. The conclusion of a 1973 survey suggested that Karao people do not need a separate translation project because the people could perfectly understand the Ibaloy translation. The 1973 survey was followed by another survey in 1986.

Roger Kamp and his family were sent to Karao village to re-validate the conclusions made by the 1973 survey. As a sociolinguist, Kamp assessed the understandability of the Ibaloy language among the Karao. In his findings gathered from interviews and focused group discussions, the results were as follows: there were approximately 75% lexical similarities in both Karao and Ibaloy. He added that, phonologically speaking, there were observable minor differences in the inventory of phonemes. Kamp looked at the inventories of pronouns and deictics in which he observed that both languages have almost the same words. Even the morphological verb systems and case markings were very close to each other. Lastly, the grammatical similarities of the two languages significantly outweighed the minor differences. From these results, Kamp concluded that Karao could be considered as a dialect of Ibaloy because of its high lexical, phonological, and grammatical likeness with the Ibaloy (Kamp 1992, 33–45). On the one hand, however, Kamp could not dismiss the fact that although these two languages have almost similar linguistic features, the Karao-speaking people would still assert their distinction by highlighting the minor differences found in their language. These minor differences were reinforced later on by the research of another linguist who has been assigned as missionary-translator in the village.

In 1986, Sherri Brainard, a missionary linguist, was assigned to Karao to do linguistic works which are necessary to start the translation of the New Testament in Karao. As a member of the Summer Institute of Linguistics, her first assignment was in Upper Tanudan, Kalinga. However, her stay in Tanudan did not prosper due to feuds among the ethnic groups there. As a result, she was transferred to another village which happened to be Karao. While staying in Karao, she was assisted by the members of the Beray family who have been very helpful in her translation endeavors. In Brainard’s recollection, it was the late Pedro Beray and other Karao elders who assisted her in understanding the complexities of Karao lexical, phonological, and grammatical systems. In fact, Pedro Beray was also the first Karao local who helped her in drafting the book of Mark which became the first book to be translated in Karao. She also received help from other men and women elders who accompanied her: Norma Antonio, Domingo Bankey, and Mary Quedy (Sherri Brainard’s personal communication, 2021). Throughout her stay in the community and interactions with Karao people, Sherri Brainard is claimed by the Karao resident to be more proficient on deep Karao words (*ebajag a esel*) than they are (Brainard’s personal communication, 2021).

As a trained linguist, Brainard scrutinized the features of language in her article entitled *Phonemics and Morphophonemics of Karao*. The succeeding books on the Karao language were *The Phonology of Karao, Philippines* (Brainard 1994a) and *Voice and Ergativity in Karao* (Brainard 1994b), *Why the ‘focused np’ is not the subject in Philippine languages: evidence from Karao* (Brainard, 1996), and *Ergativity and Grammatical Relations in Karao* (Brainard 1997). All of this research was focused on the study of the Karao language under the discipline of linguistics. In her linguistics works, Brainard highlighted several important features of the language as opposed to the Bokod variant Ibaloy (see Brainard 1989, 1994, 1994, 1997). In most of her writings, she claimed that the “Karao language has the most complex morphophonemic system” which meant that the language has a wide inventory of affixes that could be attached to root words and whenever there are changes in affixes, words will have new meanings (Brainard’s personal communication, 2021). Aside from that, she emphasized that the language has unique phonemic sounds in its inventories which include the /*ch*/, a voiceless palatal affricate; /*gw*/, a labialized semi-vowel; and /*th*/ voiceless interdental fricative which only appear in word-initial and syllable initial but never in word-final position. In more complex morphophonemic changes that happened with verb affixation, these three phonemes alternate with phonemes /*r*/, /*w*/, and /*t*/. She highlights that the phoneme /*ch*/ which is evident everywhere in Karao words is one “of remarkable features” in the language, which defines their cultural and linguistic identity.

The succeeding progress of research in Karao was sustained by another linguist named Ronald Himes when he investigated the Proto-Southern Cordilleran languages, which was believed to be the ancestral language of the languages in the Southern Cordillera. From a historical linguistics perspective, Himes noted that the Karao language had “a long period of independent development” (Himes 1998, 150). This interesting proposition thereby addressed and confirmed the assertion that Karao is linguistically different from Ibaloy. He also indicated in his research that there were large numbers of lexical innovations in Karao which are unique to the language (KAR). He called these the Proto-Karaw (Pre-KAR) lexicon which could have been shared with some languages of the Central Cordilleran language family like Isinay and Ifugao (Himes 1998, 150–51).<sup>17</sup>

### Conclusion

This essay has taken substantial time in investigating the historical development of Karao identity from the early Spanish period to the contemporary period. Unlike the major ethnolinguistic groups in Benguet, however, that evolved from an administrative and political framework in the early American period, the late emergence of “Karao identity” in the 1980s was a result of a convergence of factors. This is based on the group’s collective idea of imagined homeland (somewhere in eastern Bontoc) contained in their origin story (edafoan na Ikarao), cultural traditions, and language. Although viewed by many as subtle and minor cultural differences, Karao people took advantage of the aforementioned objective cultural markers to distinguish themselves from the dominant Ibaloy-speaking people in the southern Cordillera. Furthermore, as demonstrated earlier, it could be argued that ethnographic and linguistic works done by the non-members of the community were unquestionably instrumental in emphasizing their cultural and linguistic distinctions however small and subtle these are.

At present, the development of Karao identity largely benefits from the provisions of IPRA 1997 because the law offers them a legal basis for maintaining their distinct cultural identity and asserting their indigenous rights. This was evident in an incident which happened in late February of 2015. There was an organized consultation between a government agency and Karao locals concerning a spelling issue which was conducted at the Karao Elementary School. In compliance with the DepEd’s Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education (MTB-MLE), the primary educational institution in Karao was assigned to draw up an orthography to be used to teach the children from kindergarten to Grade 3. One of the controversial recommendations advised by Komisyon sa Wikang Filipino was to harmonize the orthography with

the so-called “Philippine national orthography.” This government agency specifically proposed two changes in the Karao words starting with /ch/ and words ending with /ao/.

Upon learning this, the Karao residents obviously did not take the proposition lightly as they believe this will have a great impact on their collective identity as an ethnolinguistic group and an Indigenous people. Atty. Penelope Beray-De Ausen, an I-karao lawyer, wrote a petition to reject the printed educational materials and to reconsider the proposal. This petition circulated in the Karao’s private group in a social media named *Ikarao* (<https://www.facebook.com/karao.people/>). The private social media group has become a space for them to notify their fellow Karao people wherever they are about this alleged violation of their indigenous rights as an Indigenous People group and to initiate a proactive to protect their language.<sup>18</sup> Later on, this staunch opposition to the proposed orthography resulted to not only a good result, but a stronger and more empowered indigenous people group. One can see that as the Karao’s indigenous rights are protected under IPRA law, they are continuously asserting their collective rights to protect their unique language and cultural traditions as objective cultural markers of their small but thriving cultural identity.

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### Notes

1. This essay was written while I was living and doing community work in barangay Karao and Ekip (January 2012–March 2016). I wish to express my gratitude for the generous hospitality given by the Karao people, especially the Ano, Beray, Bolide, Chaong, Mayomis, Sanoy, and Suaking families. Importantly, I dedicate this work to the late Lola Luisa Epi and Lola Estrella Sanoy who had been my constant friends and mentors in understanding the history of the Karao and learning their complicated language. *Banay a salamat kod chiyachaan jowak nunta gwaraak paylang cha Karao. Nemnemnemen ko kayo na olay. Sapay koma siged kayod tan kad-an jo niman. Eg ko kayo dingdingdingan!*

2. I decided to employ the term “ethnolinguistic group” to refer to present-day Karao people and all other cultural group identities mentioned here. This concept calls attention to the culturally and linguistically defined discreteness of each group, as this is also historically created upon interaction with members of other groups. I subscribe to Joshua Fishman’s reflection that: [al]though language has been equated with the totality of ethnicity, it has, in certain historical, regional, and disciplinary contexts, been accorded priority within that totality (Fishman 1999, 4).
3. During the advent of American occupation in the central Cordillera, American administrators and ethnographers divided the mountain populations into seven major groups for efficient administration. It is believed that the conceptualization of the major ethnic groupings was primarily based on linguistics consideration. For instance, in the case of Benguet, Claude Moss (1920) insisted that the linguistic groups named Kankana-ey (or Kankanay) and Nabaloi (or Ibaloi) deserved separate ethnic status even though they are culturally similar (Lewis 1991, 12).
4. I considered them as “minorities” because a) these groups have smaller population compared to the major ones; b) they occupy smaller and often remote territories; and c) their relatively recent recognition of the anthropologist, linguists, and government agencies.
5. Although the phoneme /ch/ also occurs in Kabayan and Atok Ibaloy. Its counterpart is /sh/ in western Ibaloy varieties (Atok, Baguio, Itogon, La Trinidad, Kapangan, Tuba, Tublay, and Sablan.) But Karao’s pronunciation of the affricate *ch* is a bit more forceful than in Kabayan Ibaloy, according to Sherri Brainard and Karao-speakers.
6. Afable (1989) remarked that Uwak (or Bay-angan) was a place located on the small tributary of Agno near Ambayek settlement. Until now, the I-uwak people of Pampang, Kayapa, and Domolpos claimed that this region is where their ancestors came from.
7. In another version, the name of the hunter is *Taba-ao* who is believed to have come from a village in Kabayan. It was *Taba-ao*’s regular hunting expedition that accidentally brought him to the village of Karao. He later met his spouse in the Karao area.
8. Vicente de Salazar writes, “the said Auditor ordered that the Province of Cagayan should come to the rescue with all speed. Some 400 Christians with Filipino arms gathered, and although they could see that a horde of Igorot had come down from the

- mountains to give battle, they continued the march till they engaged them, and for the space of two hours subjected them to fire from some muskets which the Christians carried, and drove them off with the death of many among whom was the chief of the Panipuyes called Sopac. Then they marched in and destroyed seven towns, one of which was composed of 60 houses all of pine boards, set along a neat street, with the whole town surrounded by a sort of wall of stones three or four feet high and a foot or two thick” (Salgado 2002, 234–35).
9. This is a story posted on a social media: *Say istorya nen Lolo Sagudo Kindao edafod Bokot tan si Lolo Ernesto Nateng, one of the last World War II veterans ja ebay-an shi Bohot, idi unsabi kono iraja Ikarao shima Bohot nunta bakwit, ekipahasha kuno ira ni elders ni Ibaloi shiman ja man settle ire’d man. Kowan kuno ni Ibaloi elders iy, ‘Te, owen kaybangel kayod ta pisjohong shita angshajan ni shontog.’ Isunga gayam impansettle sha ire’d ma present day Karao tep shiman i shalan ali ni busol, jet sikara’y nambalin guardians niman shalan nuntan ingkato niman.* (The story of Lolo Sagudo Kindao from Bokod and Lolo Ernesto Nateng, one of the last veterans of World War II from Bokod, when the Karao reached their place in Bokod when they migrated, they asked permission from the Ibaloy elders that they would allow them to settle there. One of the elders said ‘Yes, you can stay somewhere in the foothills of the mountain.’ The reason why the Ibaloy asked them to settle there is because it is where the enemies come from. They would protect our people from now on.)
  10. Karao people calls this piece of black cloth *baniy*. It is usually tied to the left lower legs to prevent snakes from biting the person. At present, *baniy* is only worn during ceremonial events to give an impression of a healthier child which is something worn. In the story *Niyana eg kedathan na oleg i Ikarao*, Brainard recorded that Karao ancestors in the past co-existed with snakes and this is the reason why it was believed that snakes do not bite the Karao.
  11. The leaders and residents of Pedday and Ekip filed a petition dated July 13, 1968 requesting that Ekip be made into a distinct barangay. The mother barangay Karao did not have any opposition. Acting on the merit of the said petition, the Municipal Council of Bokod, under Resolution no. 14, 14 February 1969, favorably endorsed the establishment of Ekip as a separate barangay from Karao. After deliberating on the merit of the petition and its subsequent endorsement, the Provincial Board of Benguet, pursuant to Republic Act no. 3890 also known as the Revised Barrio Chapter, under Resolution No. 841 dated 22 September 1969, unanimously

approved the petition. This resulted in the reduction of the number of sitios that compose the Barangay of Karao (Chanco 1980, 5).

12. He was 88 years old in 1980. He lived in sitio Piley and he was a descendant of *Kamontiles*, the first notable *mambunung* in the community. According to Atos (1982), he was from a *baknang* family who had been regularly hosting *babeng*, one of the most expensive *cañao*. Although he did not finish primary education, *Awa* Dalmace was considered as one of the authorities on Karao history, customs, and communal and traditional family practices. He also served in various capacities in government and socio-civic organizations.
13. She was more than 70 years old in 1980 and a native of Ticop when she was interviewed by Atos. Like *Awa* Dalmace, she was one of the recognized authorities on the traditional family practices and customs of the Karao. Like *Awa* Dalmase, *Ina Marcelina's* family has been regularly sponsoring the *babeng*. According to Atos (1982), she also shared some of her *ba-diw* and confirmed that the origin of the ancestors of the Karao have been used as shield from the head-hunting tribes by the people of Poblacion and Daklan.
14. He was 74 years old in 1980 and a native of sitio *Chanum* (now *Sahod*). He was a descendant of an I-uwak grandfather and Ipuypuy grandmother. He was the president of the Catholic Action Unit in Karao and performed *bangil* (eulogy) and *ba-diw*.
15. He was 61 in 1980 and from sitio Piley. He was a *mambunung* who was knowledgeable on the ancestry of Karao and their customary tradition.
16. To determine the intelligibility between the two languages, Kamp employed the following tests: a) sociolinguistic test to determine language use and attitudes towards Karao and Ibaloy; b) a self-score test as part of the questionnaire where they would estimate their own ability in the languages that they claim to know; c) a self-test questionnaire similar to the one that Stephen Quackenbush (1986) used in an *Agutaynen* survey; d) an interview conducted by two testers and scored by a third from a tape to determine the subject's proficiency according to the FSI labels; e) A second method of scoring interview based upon weighted factors; and f) three tape tests: one in Karao for screening purposes, a second in Ibaloy with Karao questions, and a third more complex one in Ibaloy with questions also in Ibaloy (1992).
17. The lexicons listed by Himes include the following: *abu-nan* 'meeting place'; *abusi* 'ant'; *ahow* 'yes'; *agsil* 'to play'; *akgwat* 'to

stand'; *alebong* 'thigh'; *adudon* 'dragonfly'; *asangaw* 'mosquito'; *ayaw* 'to float'; *echil* 'to delouse'; *ka-angos* 'sad, lonely'; *eting* 'dead'; *olig* 'to lie down'; *otikel* 'small'; *banay* 'big'; *betik* 'to go home'; *borik* /*boric*/ 'stem, esp. of taro'; *bolan* /*bolan*/ 'sky'; *bolingnes* 'headcold, fever'; *bosakan* 'east'; *chiwa, cha* 'to, at'; *maritem* 'sharp'; *onkara-kara* 'rough'; *kespo* 'short (person)'; *kaloy* 'mud'; *ka-jat* 'shallow'; *kedpang* 'short (object)'; *kedso* 'pestle'; *kepil* 'to throw away'; *ketno* 'to cut off'; *kikihan* 'armpit'; *kofiting* 'narrow'; *kosang* 'charcoal'; *depang* 'red'; *dingman* 'to forget'; *dokbong* 'arrow'; *adongbay* 'weak'; *moling* 'clean'; *motheg* 'nose'; *nonong* 'pimple'; *ngaarwes* 'bad'; *engithian* 'dirty'; *pasingsing* 'star'; *pintok* 'abaca'; *pi-tat* 'frog'; *sakdong* 'earthquake'; *asepsep* 'low'; *se-jow* 'thirst'; *talo* 'to bury (dead)'; *tatabaw* 'butterfly'; *taytay* 'tongue'; *tekding* 'ankle'; *temi* 'mouth'; *tonton* 'to push'; *tongkarol* 'tall, high'; *ja-pi* 'to winnow'; *jo-kow* 'to sleep'; *jo-gwek* 'to sleep' (Himes 1998, 166–68). Aside from these exclusively unique lexicons, Himes listed several lexical innovations that [Karao] probably share with or borrow from Central Cordilleran languages. According to Himes, these lexical items, however, do not provide convincing evidence of an inclusive relationship with the Bontok language (Himes 1998, 150). This includes the words: *ofa* (KAR) 'to get hungry' could be from the word *upa* (Ifugao) which means 'to crave something to eat'; *kalongkong* (KAR) 'throat' could be from *galonggong* (Isinay) 'throat'; *abu-nan* (KAR) 'meeting place' which could be from the word *abon* (Bon) which means 'to group together for a meal, everyone bringing something to be cooked'; *opoh* (KAR) 'to rub' from *upes* (Ifugao); *engithian* (KAR); *ngiti* (Kankanaey) 'black, dirty'; *pinggwi* (KAR) from the word *pingwi* (Ifugao) which means 'to turn around'; *sipok* (KAR); *sipu* (Isinay), *sipuk* (Kankanaey) 'to blow'; *sokday* (KAR); *suklay* (Ifugao, Batad) 'to turn upside down'; *tokkong* (KAR) 'to sit' (Bontoc) *tukgin* which means 'to sit beside, to guard' *tukgon* (Ifugao) "to squat, hunker."

18. The petition letter was posted in their private Facebook group:

R.A 8371, otherwise known as the Indigenous People's Rights Act (IPRA) of 1997 provides among others that we, the indigenous peoples have the Right to Social Justice and Human Rights; *Right to Cultural Integrity; and the Right to determine our own priorities and development at our own pace.*

In furtherance, We, the people of Karao, Bokod, Benguet petition the Komisyon sa Wikang Filipino (KWF), the Department of Education (DEPED) and all those involved in the preparation and editing of the Karao Orthography NOT to change the way we spell our Karao words and that any changes should be presented to us for our approval.

We are proud of our language. We are the speakers and end-users of our own language. The Karao language is distinct and unique. We want to preserve the uniqueness of our language. To change how our words are spelled just to follow the “Filipino” way of spelling would certainly bring big changes in our language to the effect that it will no longer be the original Karao language. Specifically, words like “chalan”, “chigo” and many more have always been spelled by us with a “CH”, not “TS” because we pronounce it with a plain “CH”, not “TS”.

Such change in the spelling will surely make it difficult for us to read and pronounce the words correctly. Thus, we protest item no. 5.3 which is:

5.3. Say TSts kët sa-key ingig to.

Ingës toy:  
tsëggwa  
tsël-tsëlñi  
tsëpdas  
tsiwan  
tsuntog

Item No. 5.3 should be edited, and the TS changed to CH.

We want to call your attention to Item 15 of the Karao Orthography which provides: “Nat mayparit i pëmudod uno pëngtsom na dintëg a naiyosal na ëtsom a ësël say magëno tan nam-ay i panturo tan pëngatsal na ësël. (Maaaring dagdagan o hihiram ng mga alituntunin, pamamahala at gawi ng mga lengguwahe upang mapadali at mapadali ang pagkatuto sariling wika)”. This plainly means that for ease, we can use borrowed alphabets and use other rules of other languages for easy learning. This particular rule (Item NO. 15) should be applied in the Karao language.

We also strongly protest whatever plans to change the spelling of our barangay’s name from “KARAO” to “KARAW”. Since time immemorial, our barangay’s name has been spelled as KARAO. Our official and scholastic records indicate KARAO as our birth place, not KARAW. Our school is named as KARAO ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, not KARAW ELEMENTARY SCHOOL. In our barangay seal, KARAO is written, not KARAW. The simple change in one letter will create legal problems and confusion in our transactions.

Again, we strongly demand that “CH” will not be changed to “TS” and ‘KARAO’ not to be changed to ‘KARAW’. As your program claims that it is culture-sensitive, we urge you

to consider and heed our petition. We love our birthplace, we love our language. We have been known because of our unique language and culture. Our language is our identity, our individual personality which we want to be passed on from generation to generation of the Karao Tribe. It belongs uniquely to us. Any change that will make it different from what we have been known would be trampling on our identity. We want our language to stay as it is until the future generation of the Ikaraos. We will not allow the use of any Orthography that is not suited to the ways of the Ikaraos (Petition in Ikarao 2015).

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