Philippine kinship terminology: Understanding its structure through the lens of historical linguistics

In the Philippine society, the kinship structure has been constantly identified as the primary socialization. The structure starts within the nuclear family, which includes the father and mother and the unmarried children—both biological offspring and/or adoptees. Furthermore, the primacy of traditional family and kinship structure is seen to be important in terms of history, language, and ethnography—particularly in the Philippines. This paper focuses on the culture-specific kinship categories and conceptual organization of genealogical relations on the major Austronesian languages in the Philippines, which includes Bikol, Cebuano, Hiligaynon, Ilokano, Kapampangan, Pangasinan, and Tagalog. Specifically, this study attempts to: (1) describe and classify the kinship system of the selected Austronesian languages in the Philippines; (2) demonstrate and reconstruct the Proto-Philippine kinship system; and (3) identify the lexical innovations in terms of language contact and change toward certain kin. The study confirms a variety of known cross-linguistic tendencies and illustrates how languages and the society interrelate over time. As culture drifts or evolves, it generates more heterogeneous societies—to which specific evolutionary lines may split or adapt to more diverse kinds of situations. This phenomenon entangles the changes and creations of status terms, which are historically and socially dependent leading to the present system of kinship in Philippine languages.

***This paper will take the form of either a talk or a poster presentation.