

pISSN: 1906 - 6406 The Scholar: Human Sciences
 eISSN: 2586 - 9388 The Scholar: Human Sciences
<http://www.assumptionjournal.au.edu/index.php/Scholar>

Semantics of Cardinal Directions in Benguet Cultural Practices

John Rey Osben Pelila*, Von Ameri Jugo Escobar, Jessa Mariel Bicara Pilorin, Geraldine Siagto Wakat

Received: December 17, 2023. Revised: March 6, 2024. Accepted: February 18, 2025.

Abstract

Purpose: Benguet is a province rich in cultural heritage; moreover, the significance of cardinal directions in their cultural practices should be given more attention. This study aimed to identify the cultural practices of Indigenous Peoples in Benguet that incorporated cardinal directions and revealed the meanings of the cardinal directions in these cultural practices. **Research design, data, and methodology:** A document review was used, and among the 38 documents reviewed, 20 unveiled Benguet cultural practices integrating cardinal directions. These were treated using profiling through descriptive statistics and thematic analysis. **Findings:** It was revealed that cardinal directions are mainly seen in burial practices, but other practices also used these directions in pig slaughtering, customary law, trading, weaving, and weather forecasting. Constant practice was common in the four cardinal directions; however, each also has its distinct meanings: East is associated with supernatural intervention, eternity, passage to the afterlife, and women's earthly responsibilities and afterlife authority; North signifies environmental wealth and receptivity; West is linked to discoveries and opportunities, and men's earthly responsibilities and afterlife disposition; and South means unfavorable meteorological conditions. **Conclusions:** Therefore, it is concluded that cardinal directions play a significant role in cultural practices in Benguet as they highlight a deep connection between the people's beliefs and these directional aspects of their environment, which are still applied due to their lasting cultural significance.

Keywords : Linguistics, Culture, Meaning, Language Education, Philippines

JEL Classification Code: I23, Y30, Y40, Y80, Z13

1. Introduction

Maps that have evolved from traditional paper formats to digital versions for convenience still universally rely on cardinal directions for orientation and navigation (Kim, 2021). This universal reference system became fundamental from the ancient to the present and still operates as fundamental and primal (Brown, 1983). It serves as a visual cue and orientation (Kim et al., 2015), aiding humankind's understanding of space, movement, location, especially unfamiliar places (Kim, 2021), and various activities in all societies. However, the meanings associated with these cardinal directions can vary depending on one's cultural background or individual perspective. For instance, in literature, there is the masterpiece of John Milton entitled "Paradise Lost", and Gill (2022) was able to

analyze it, and it was found that cardinal directions like East symbolizes ultimate divinity, goodness, and light; the North embodies chaos, jealousy, rebellious evil, and bitter cold; the South signifies holiness, subordinate power, and bright warmth; and the West is associated with darkness and evil. However, it must be noted that in most cultures, there is a lack of terms for cardinal points, and it is not surprising because these terminologies were originally Western influences (Brown, 1983). Also, it depends on the particular group speaking a specific language and whether they adapted these (Gary et al., 2017). For example, in the study of Bangle (2009), native Dutch use the language but still frequently use the American counterparts of these cardinal directions because it demonstrates adaptability in catering to the needs of their audience when giving directions. Among the Wardaman culture, Norris and Harney (2014) said that the natives sleep facing the east, and even in death, they are positioned to face their homeland. Therefore, places like graveyards must be oriented directly towards

1*John Rey Osben Pelila, Instructor, Department of English, College of Arts and Humanities, Benguet State University, Philippines. Email: johnpelilappt@gmail.com

2 Von Ameri Jugo Escobar, Instructor, College of Teacher Education, Abra State Institute of Sciences and Technology – Bangued Campus, Philippines. Email: vaescobar@asist.edu.ph

3 Jessa Mariel Bicara Pilorin, PhD Student, Saint Louis University, Baguio City, Philippines. Email: vaescobar@asist.edu.ph

4 Geraldine Siagto Wakat, Professor, Saint Louis University, Baguio City, Philippines. Email: vaescobar@asist.edu.ph

© Copyright: The Author(s)

This is an Open Access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution Non-Commercial License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/>) which permits unrestricted noncommercial use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited.

their homeland, facing the East. Here, it can be seen that the East held a more symbolic significance (Faričić et al., 2023).

1.1 Cardinal Directions in the Philippine Setting

In the Philippines, before the terminologies of these cardinal directions were introduced, the basis of directions people before were on anthropological perspectives like the from (1) celestial bodies and related events such as the path of the sun, (2) features related to the atmosphere including the observations of the environment and natural phenomena (e.g., the wind/monsoon systems), (3) more general directional terms, and (4) features specific to the environment which encompasses landmarks, distinction between land (e.g., mountains) and sea, and even systems of locations (Brown, 1983; Gallego, 2019; Lusekelo, 2018).

Furthermore, even in the country, the significance of the East is also emphasized in many local studies. For example, according to Agcaoili (2008), the sun (known as 'daya' or 'raya') plays an essential role in the Ilokano cosmology and cosmogony, just like in those in the capital of the Philippines. Considering the literary pieces of Jose Rizal, Bernard (1998) analyzed the poem entitled "Himno a Talisay," which was written during Rizal's exile in Dapitan and can vividly portray Rizal's deep love for his country wherein the eastern region possesses a beautiful land, and this made the tyrants processed it. Also, in his farewell poem, "Mi Ultimo Adios," written the night before his execution, Rizal expresses his desire to face the rising sun when he dies. Unfortunately, the Spanish captain forbade it. Despite being wounded by a single bullet, Rizal summons his last reserves of strength to turn towards the East, falling onto his back with his face toward the sky and the ascending sun. Accordingly, the Spanish captain then approaches Rizal and administers the fatal shot to his head (Supreme Court, 2017). Nevertheless, this act symbolizes Rizal's enduring belief in the light and hope of his country, even amid turmoil during those times. With these invariances over a wide range of circumstances from culture to culture, differences in how these are labeled and used are evident (Brown, 1983; Gary et al., 2017).

1.2 The Case of Benguet in the Cordillera Administrative Region

Benguet is one of the provinces in the Cordillera Administrative Region (CAR) in Northern Luzon, along with Mt. Province, Abra, Ifugao, Apayao, and Kalinga (Caligtan-Tran, 2022). In the southernmost part of the region, Benguet's geographical coordinates lie between 16°33' north latitude and 120°34' to 12°52' east longitude. This province is entirely landlocked, bordered by Mountain Province to the north, Pangasinan to the south, Ifugao and Nueva Vizcaya to the east, and La Union and Ilocos Sur to the west (Province of Benguet, 2020). Furthermore, the province is organized

into one congressional district, two provincial board districts, 13 municipalities, and 140 barangays (Province of Benguet, 2020). Additionally, within Benguet lies a chartered city - Baguio City. The province surrounds this city. La Trinidad is the capital town, situated north, Itogon to the east, Tuba to the south, and further west (The City Government of Baguio, 2020).

According to the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples - Cordillera Administrative Region (NCIP-CAR, 2022), five ethnolinguistic groups are officially recognized in the province of Benguet: Ibaloy, Kankanaey, Kalanguya, Karao, and Iwak. Historically, they were initially referred to as Igorots by Spanish missionaries (Caligtan-Tran, 2022; Russell, 1989). This term eventually encompassed all people in the region (Russell, 1989) until a growing movement emerged to identify them collectively as 'Cordillerans.' Furthermore, the Ibaloy and Kankanaey, two major ethnolinguistic groups, can be clearly distinguished in the said province. The Kankanaeys predominantly inhabit the northern part of Benguet, while the southern part is home to the Ibaloy (Alupias et al., 2020; Barrows, 1910; Baucas, 2003; Dangpa-Subagan, 2009). Russell (1989) argued that, in the case of the Ibaloy and Kankanaey, there are no significant cultural differences apart from their languages; however, they are still able to understand each other by using Ilokano as their lingua franca (Caligtan-Tran, 2022; MacKinlay, 1904).

In essence, despite these distinctions, the various indigenous people's groups in the Benguet province share a common and unique culture. This is evident in their a) ethnic costumes and blankets, where they use similar patterns and colors, considering these as integral parts of their identity (Alupias et al., 2020); the duplicate cultural threads can be seen in their b) traditional dances (Awat, 2011); c) their reliance on sweet potatoes as an alternative staple crop, due to its versatility and suitability for long-term storage, demonstrates their shared agricultural practices (Meldo et al., 2016); d) their consumption of edible wild fruits, as well as e) traditional food preservation methods like smoking, remains relevant in their daily lives (Chua-Barcelo, 2014; Garambas et al., 2022); f) their folktales, supported by historical and genealogical evidence, hold significant meaning for these communities (Pelila, 2020), g) their different rituals that were carried throughout generations (Baucas, 2003; Keith & Keith, 1983; Laugrand et al., 2020), and even the h) the building of museums in the province showcasing their material culture, revealing how their ancestors lived, with a particular emphasis on tools and materials used in mining and trade, which formed the economic backbone of their society (Anongos, 2015; Habana, 2001). These are just a few examples of the rich tapestry of shared cultural practices and traditions that bind these indigenous groups in Benguet.

1.3 Gap Analysis

While related literature and studies present that Benguet is a province with a rich cultural heritage, there is a dearth of studies focused on the meanings and value of cardinal directions in their cultural practices. Though the different practices are mentioned, the cardinal directions were overlooked. Therefore, this study aimed to examine documents related to the various cultural practices in Benguet, specifically focusing on their significance in cardinal directions. Notably, the following research questions were addressed: (1) Which cultural practices in Benguet incorporate the concept of cardinal directions? Furthermore, (2) what are the meanings attributed to cardinal directions within the cultural practices of Benguet?

2. Methodology

2.1 Research Design

This qualitative study employed secondary research methods, explicitly conducting a document review of text-based materials like books, theses, dissertations, documents from government agencies, and articles from reputable journals (Bhat, 2023; Morgan, 2022). Bowern (2009) outlines that document review is a structured approach that relies on pre-existing documents to systematically uncover, extract, and examine relevant information. Despite the emphasis by Morgan (2022) on the underutilization of this method in qualitative research, it proves valuable for various reasons, including mitigating specific ethical concerns associated with other qualitative techniques. Additionally, the researchers adhered to the methodological typology proposed by Raza et al. (2023) for conducting the document review, which includes considerations for research design, inclusion criteria, document search, and data analysis.

2.2 Inclusion Criteria

After initial data gathering, the researchers reviewed published and unpublished documents in the target libraries. This decision was based on the discovery that some documents, while not formally published, contained valuable information about the cultural practices in Benguet. These insights were gathered through interviews and other data from primary respondents, including the province's Indigenous Peoples/Indigenous Cultural Communities (IP/ICC) (i.e., Kankanaey, Ibaloy, Kalanguya, Iwak, and Karao). Given the scarcity of documents addressing practices associated with cardinal directions, the researchers considered publications from all available years. Besides, it cannot be asserted that publications from earlier eras on cultures are inherently superior to today or vice versa.

2.3 Search of Documents

The document search focused on the cultural practices of different Indigenous Peoples/Indigenous Cultural Communities (IP/ICC) in Benguet, particularly those related to 'cardinal directions.' It is worth noting that the English terms for these cardinal directions, such as north, east, west, and south, were not traditionally used by the local population. As a result, the researchers considered alternative terminologies like sun/sunrise, sunset, the direction of water flow (from north to south), other representations, and the geographic location of places.

In the realm of Benguet culture, various aspects were examined, including courtship and marriage, pregnancy and birth, child-rearing practices, occupational activities (such as mining, rice cultivation, rice wine production, trade practices, weaving patterns, etc.), festivals (e.g., peshit, bendiyan, etc.), and death (Baucas, 2003; Keith & Keith, 1983), and among others. These were the cultural domains where the researchers sought to identify concepts related to cardinal directions.

Thus, Table 1 shows that four libraries were taken into consideration for this research: the Benguet Provincial Library, the Abra Provincial Library, the Benguet State University (BSU) Library, and the Abra State Institute of Sciences and Technology (ASIST) - Bangued Central Library. The choice of these libraries was driven by the researchers seeking documents on Benguet practices, making the inclusion of the Benguet Provincial Library self-evident. As for the Abra Provincial Library, BSU Library, and ASIST-Bangued Library, the inclusion was motivated by convenience, time considerations, and collaboration. Besides, public and institutional libraries often house published documents, especially those requested by visitors and the academic community and those donated by private and government agencies and organizations with linkages to the institution. For example, research journals in print and Cordilleran books were found at institutional libraries.

Additionally, JSTOR and The Cordillera Review were included in the research process. JSTOR indexes journals, including Philippine journals, and archives over a thousand leading academic journals across the humanities, social sciences, and sciences (University of the Philippines Open University, 2018). On the other hand, The Cordillera Review is an open-access, internationally refereed journal of the University of the Philippines Baguio, published through its research division, the Cordillera Studies Center. Although not indexed, The Cordillera Review boasts a rich collection of research focused on the Cordillera Region and Northern Luzon. Furthermore, it has an internationally recognized editorial team committed to developing studies on indigenous culture and society. Additionally, other online databases, such as JSTOR, ResearchGate, and Springer

Nature, were considered, as they are accessible, and some documents about cardinal directions were mentioned in Benguet culture.

Table 1: Distribution of No. of Documents Screened for Review

Library/ Database	No. of Documents	Percentage
Benguet Provincial Library	5	25%
Benguet State University Library	2	10%
Abra Provincial Library	2	10%
ASIST Bangued Central Library	6	30%
Online Database		
-JSTOR	2	10%
-ResearchGate	1	5%
-Springer Nature	1	5%
-The Cordillera Review	1	5%
Total	20	100%

During the process, the researchers discovered that not all aspects of Benguet culture were associated with cardinal directions. Based on this observation, the researchers decided to apply a principle from the field of archaeology, where not all target sites are equally likely to be identified (McCoy, 2020), so there is a need to identify 'hotspots' (Cui et al., 2021) - areas more likely to yield essential artifacts or features. In a similar vein, after a comprehensive review or data mining of literature, the researchers determined that only specific aspects of culture were heavily linked with cardinal directions like a) death practices, b) slaughtering of pigs, c) trading, d) weaving, and even in e) customary law.

2.4 Data Analysis

The researchers conducted profiling using descriptive statistics of the cultural practices in Benguet associated with cardinal directions in addressing the first research question. On the other hand, they employed thematic analysis following the guidelines of Clarke and Braun (2013) to address the second set of questions, which focused on the different meanings associated with these cardinal directions. After becoming familiar with the data regarding the meanings attributed to cardinal directions within the cultural practices, the researchers identified codes and aggregated them to form themes. Finally, an analysis was conducted based on the identified themes.

3. Findings

3.1 Cultural Practices in Benguet with the Concept of Cardinal Directions

Out of the 20 documents reviewed by the researchers, Table 2 shows that, in all of the identified cultures in Benguet, documents on death practices ($f=11$; 55%) had the highest number, followed by documents about trading ($f=4$; 20%), while others had one document each ($f=1$; 5%).

Table 2: Profile of the Documents Reviewed in the Present Study

	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Number of Documents Reviewed		
Death	11	55%
Weather Forecasting	1	5%
Customary Law	1	5%
Weaving	1	5%
Trade	4	20%
Slaughtering of Pigs	1	5%
Both death and slaughtering of pigs	1	5%
Total	20	100%
Type of Document		
Dissertation	3	15%
Thesis	1	5%
Journal Article	4	20%
Unpublished document	2	10%
Book	4	20%
Book Chapters	6	30%
Total	20	100%
Ethnolinguistic		
Ibaloy	15	75%
Kankanaey	2	10%
Karao	1	5%
Both Kankanaey and Ibaloy	2	10%
Total	20	100%

Regarding the type of document, most of them are book chapters ($f=6$; 30%), followed by journal articles and books ($f=4$, 20%; $f=4$, 20%), a dissertation ($f=3$; 15%), unpublished documents from NCIP-CAR ($f=2$; 10%), and a master's thesis ($f=1$; 5%). Concerning ethnolinguistic groups, many documents cover Ibaloy cultural practices ($f=15$; 75%), followed by Kankanaey and both of the said ethnolinguistic groups ($f=2$, 10%; $f=2$, 10%), and Karao ($f=1$, 5%).

Unfortunately, documents were found for other ethnolinguistic groups in Benguet, such as the Iwak and Kalanguya, but their practices did not mention cardinal directions. These two groups were excluded from the review, as no relevant documents were found. As observed, all five ethnolinguistic groups in the province have cultural practices related to prepositions. However, this forms a limitation of the study, as these practices are not explicitly among the cardinal directions under focus.

3.2 Meaning of Cardinal Directions in the Identified Cultural Practices in Benguet

Based on the thematic analysis conducted, the following were the meanings of cardinal directions in Benguet cultural practices: (1) East means (1.1.) supernatural intervention, (1.2.) eternity, (1.3.) constant practice, (1.4.) passage to the afterlife, and (1.5.) women's responsibility while (2) North means (2.1.) eco-rich, (2.2.) vulnerability, and (2.3.) constant practice. (3) West means (3.1.) discovery and opportunities, (3.2.) men's responsibility and (3.3.) constant practice. On the other hand, (4) South means (4.1.) unfavorable meteorological conditions and (4.2.) constant practice.

The meanings of these cardinal directions were extracted from the following Benguet cultural practices: the meaning (1.1.) of supernatural intervention was found in pig slaughtering, customary law, and death practices, while (1.2.) eternity, (1.3.) constant practice, (1.4.) passage to the afterlife, and (1.5.) women's responsibility were all found in death practices. Additionally, (2.1.) eco-rich and (2.2.) vulnerability were found in trade practices, while (2.3.) constant practice was found in death practices. Furthermore, (3.1.) discoveries and opportunities were found in weaving and trade practices, while (3.2.) men's responsibility and (3.3.) constant practice were found in death practices. Lastly, (4.1.) unfavorable meteorological conditions were found in weather forecasting practices, while (4.2.) constant practice was found in death practices.

The (1) East (1.1.) symbolizes supernatural powers, divine entities, deities, or even Kavuniyan (God) that directly or indirectly engage with or influence the natural world. According to Ibalays, favorable outcomes result when these divine entities or deities are appeased, while negative repercussions may ensue if they are not pleased. Invoking them involves facing east, making offerings such as pigs, and following specific rituals. This cardinal direction is considered omniscient, witnessing individuals' character, actions, and lives. Similarly, among the Kankanaeys, the East is the direction where one can express profound love and respect for the land's first inhabitants (ancestors). It signifies an appreciation for their invaluable contributions to the area, and any acts of offering or rituals performed by facing the east demonstrate great respect for them (Garambas et al., 2022; Laugrand et al., 2020; Prill-Brett, 2017; Sacla, 1987). Aside from that, (1.2.) facing the East is believed to usher in good luck, enduring companionship, and the promise of renewal in the afterlife (Atos, 1987; Baucas, 2003; Camte-Bahni, 2017; NCIP-CAR, 2017). Also, (1.3.) the East holds a steadfast place in the burial practices of the Ibalays. The orientation of the deceased during both the wake and the final internment toward this cardinal direction remains consistent throughout the years. In a similar vein, the positioning of the tomb towards the East is constant among the Kankanaeys

because it indicates that as the dead will wake up, it always faces the rising sun (Afable, 1975; Baucas, 2003; Camte-Bahni, 2018; Laugrand et al., 2020; NCIP-CAR, 2017). (1.4) The direction is the path to the afterlife, creating a boundary between the deceased and the living. As a person departs from the material world, they enter the realm of the dead. The body must be positioned facing east to facilitate the soul's journey to the afterlife (Afable, 1975; Rivera, 1989). Another exciting meaning of the East is that (1.5.) it symbolizes the earthly duties of women at home and their authority in the afterlife (Afable, 1975; Celino, 1990).

The (2) North (2.1.) is a treasure trove of nature's wealth. It is deemed sacred, with fewer human activities, as it is guarded by nature spirits (Fry, 1982). (2.2.) Captivated by the natural beauty of the North, however, it was less resistant to foreign entries and was taken advantage of (Delos Reyes & Delos Reyes, 1986; Hamada-Pawid, 2017). (2.3.) The North holds a steadfast place in the burial practices of the Ibalays. The orientation of both male and female heads towards this cardinal direction during internment stems from the belief that the North is the origin of water, the source of life. This symbolizes the notion that even after death, the departed will journey freely, akin to the flow of a river. This practice remains unchanged throughout the years (Camte-Bahni, 2018; NCIP-CAR, 2017).

The (3) West (3.1.) played a significant role in initiating the loom-weaving industry in Benguet. Alongside exchanging manufactured goods and cattle, the people of Benguet, embracing new opportunities and discoveries, chose to trade or barter their gold with those in the west (Delos Reyes, 2017; Hamada-Pawid, 2017). Another meaning of the cardinal direction is that (3.2.) it symbolizes men's earthly responsibilities, mainly as it reflects how men spent a lifetime tending to livestock. Therefore, positioning a deceased man towards the West represents guiding him to a prosperous afterlife, as wealthy people often travel West (Afable, 1975; Celino, 1990). (3.3.) The West holds a longstanding belief and tradition in the burial practices of the Ibalays. The consistent positioning of the head of a deceased female towards this cardinal direction during the wake has remained unchanged throughout the years. The West is also significant among the indigenous peoples (IP) groups in Benguet, such as the Kankanaey and Karao. This importance is strictly observed during internment, where the deceased's head must be positioned in the West. As the spirit of the deceased awakens, it is greeted by the rising sun. Among the Kankanaeys, this act symbolizes the deceased being welcomed by their ancestors. This practice is closely tied to the arrangement of the tomb, which faces the East. Among the Kankanaey and Karao, the coffin's entry follows a specific orientation, with the head entering first, signifying that the feet should be positioned at the entrance side of the tomb (Afable, 1975; Atos, 1987; NCIP-CAR, 2017).

The (4) South (4.1.) is symbolically associated with the lingering presence of a storm. It implies that even if the storm may have initially passed or weakened, there is an enduring sense of caution or the potential for its resurgence (Aroco, 2017). (4.2.) The cardinal direction holds a steadfast place in the burial practices of the Ibaloy. The orientation of the deceased male's head toward this cardinal direction during the wake remains consistent throughout the years (Camte-Bahni, 2018).

4. Discussion

Based on Table 2 summarizing and profiling the reviewed documents related to Benguet cultural practices, it is evident that most cardinal directions are dominantly associated with death practices, particularly in the location of the tomb and the position of the deceased. Furthermore, the variations in these practices depend on what ethnolinguistic groups are referred to.

Moreover, most documents are about the Ibaloy, with fewer documents available for other ethnolinguistic groups in Benguet. This suggests that Ibaloy practices are more extensively documented in writings than others, such as the Kankanaeys, even though they are a major ethnolinguistic group in the province. However, it is essential to note that the search for documents was limited to the province of Benguet, covering only the Southern Kankanaeys and excluding the Northern Kankanaeys, who inhabit the southern and western Mt. Province. Additionally, those called Applays in Mt. Province are technically Kankanaeys and share similar practices with the Kankanaey, as mentioned earlier. Therefore, while the Southern Kankanaeys have fewer documented practices than other Kankanaeys, it reflects the study's limited scope, which focused solely on the province of Benguet.

Regarding other ethnolinguistic groups, there seems to be a scarcity of materials, including unpublished records or studies, especially in the Benguet Provincial Library, which is expected to be the central repository for documents related to these groups. Unfortunately, this shortage is observed not only in published but also in unpublished materials. Additionally, it is noteworthy that no document specifically addresses cardinal directions; instead, these directions are embedded in the texts. In other words, these directions are keenly observed when they are the focus of study but may not receive attention in regular readings.

As the meanings of the cardinal directions in the cultural practices of Benguet, the positioning of the coffin during the wake and internment, including the direction in which the head of the deceased must point, as well as the orientation of the tomb to the cardinal directions, depends on the cultural practices of a specific indigenous community in Benguet

(NCIP-CAR, 2017). Reviews indicate that all these cardinal directions are observed in both wake and internment.

From the outset, the wake (also known as 'siling' or 'aremag' among the Ibaloy) is observed from the moment the person dies, and the body must be prepared before being placed in the coffin, up to the final preparations before burial or internment. Two documents mention the need to position the body towards the East. (1.3.) In the study by Laugrand et al. (2020), it was mentioned that the 'dead body has to point towards the east' (Laugrand et al., 2020). However, (1.3; 4.2.) in the study by Camte-Bahni (2018), it was mentioned that among the Southern Ibaloy (e.g., Loakan), the casket of the deceased is positioned towards the East if it is a female. In other words, the head of the female deceased is oriented East, so the body faces West. In connection to Anacin's (2008) findings, it was observed that during the execution of a deceased individual in a chair, the corpse is positioned to face the setting sun in the West. Although the author did not specify the gender, the research conducted by Laugrand et al. in 2020 suggests that this practice is typically reserved for females. This corroboration is said because, for male deceased individuals, the orientation must be South-North, with the head pointing south and the body facing north (Laugrand et al., 2020). While there is no explanation given for these constant practices regarding why the body's head should point to the East if it is female and South if it is male, Laugrand et al. (2020) said that these are followed because it has been the practice, especially since funerary rites practiced by the forefathers are considered futile if the prohibitions are not followed. This is true among other ethnolinguistic groups in Benguet, but the positioning of the dead during the wake, whether male or female, is not observed.

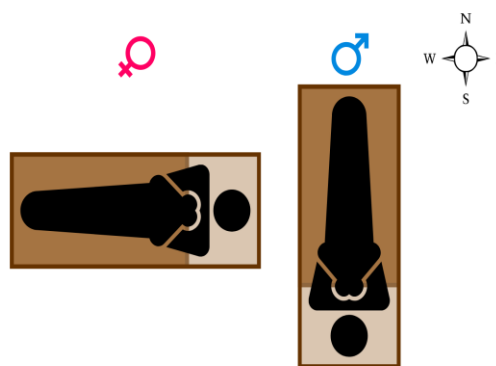


Figure 1: Positioning of the Dead Male and Female among the Southern Ibaloy During Wakes

In terms of internment, the positioning of the dead in all cardinal directions among different ethnolinguistic groups, especially among the Ibaloy, Kankanaey, and Karao. (2.3.) For the Southern Ibaloy (Camte-Bahni, 2018; NCIP-CAR,

2017), they position the heads of males and females towards the North. The orientation of both male and female heads towards this cardinal direction during internment stems from the belief that the North is the origin of water, the source of life. This symbolizes the notion that even after death, the departed will journey freely, akin to the flow of a river.

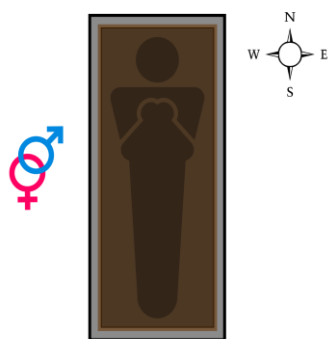


Figure 2: Positioning of the Dead Male and Female among the Southern Ibaloy during Internment

In contrast, (1.3; 3.3.) among the Kankanaey (NCIP-CAR, 2017) and Karao (Atos, 1987), the cardinal directions of East and West are constantly observed in both the positioning of the body and the tomb. The tomb's entrance is consistently positioned facing the East so that as the dead awakes, they always face the rising sun. This implies that the part of the coffin where the head is positioned will enter first inside the tomb's entrance, pointing towards the West. This is strictly followed, and the feet must not go first when putting the deceased inside the coffin because as the spirit awakens, they will directly face the rising sun. Besides, the notion is that it is not the head that will walk but the feet. Interestingly, there are Ibaloy groups wherein they will lay their deceased facing the East where the sun rises, implying that the head is pointed in the West, in the belief that traveling will be easier since Mt. Pulag, the destination of all the dead, is located in the East (Rivera, 1989).

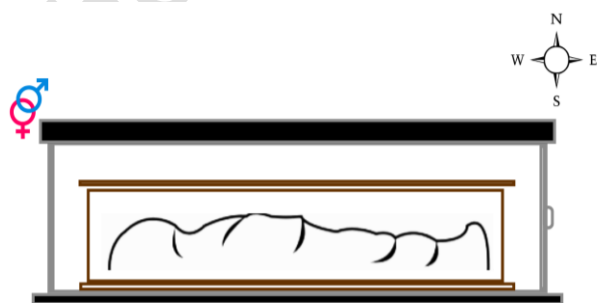


Figure 3: Positioning of a Tomb Facing the East wherein Inside is a Coffin where the Head of the Dead is Positioned in the West

Overall, facing East is (1.2.) believed to usher in good luck (Atos, 1987; Baucas, 2003), enduring companionship (Camte-Bahni, 2017), and the promise of renewal in the afterlife (NCIP-CAR, 2017). Also, this cardinal direction is (1.1.) connected to supernatural intervention, wherein the East symbolizes supernatural powers, divine entities, deities, or even Kavuniyan or Kabunyan (God) that directly or indirectly engage with or influence the natural world (Laugrand et al., 2020; Prill-Brett, 2017; Sacla, 1987). According to the Ibaloy group, favorable outcomes result when these divine entities or deities are appeased, while negative repercussions may ensue if they are not pleased (Garambas et al., 2022). Among the Kankanaey group, the East is the direction where one can express profound love and respect for the land's first inhabitants (ancestors). It signifies an appreciation for their invaluable contributions to the area, and any acts of offering or rituals performed by facing the east demonstrate great respect for them (NCIP-CAR, 2017). Looking at how these ethnolinguistic groups regard the East, it can be said that it serves as (1.4.) a path to the afterlife, creating a boundary between the deceased and the living (Afable, 1975). As described, as a person departs from the material world, they enter the realm of the dead. So, there is a vital role of those who are left by the deceased, and that is to facilitate the soul's journey to the afterlife (Rivera, 1989) by positioning the dead facing East – a place where the dead can live for eternity.

However, there is an interesting case among those Ibaloy groups surrounding Mt. Pulag, where the position of the dead must face the said mountain. For instance, Rivera (1989) said that some will lay their deceased facing the East where the sun rises, implying that the head is pointed in the West, in the belief that traveling will be easier since Mt. Pulag, the destination of all the dead, is in the East. In the study of Camte-Bahni (2017), some will position the deceased facing North, which means that the head is pointed in the South, and for the same reason, this is where Mt. Pulag is situated.

Furthermore, there is a distinct practice by the Ibaloy wherein the deceased's head will be tilted to see which cardinal direction. If it is a woman, the head will be tilted to the East, which portrays that (1.5.) looking in this direction means that she will remember her earthly duties at home when she was alive (Celino, 1990). This is believed so that in the afterlife, she will become the authority at home in the afterlife (Afable, 1975). In connection to Mt. Pulag, Afable (1975) said that this is done to get the deceased woman's soul to travel, reach their destination, and be welcomed into Mt. Pulag's spiritual realm. On the other hand, the head of the deceased man is tilted facing the West, and it (3.2.) symbolizes how men spent a lifetime tending to livestock (Celino, 1990). Therefore, positioning a deceased man towards the West represents guiding him to a prosperous

afterlife, as wealthy people often travel West (Afable, 1975).

However, there is still a limitation to this study since the tilting of the head is not specified if this is practiced when the time that the dead person is being put in a sitting position or during the current practice wherein the dead body is being laid down; because usually, the practice is that upon laying down the body, it must be straight, and even the head must face straight and not tilted. There is also a concern about the tilting being done since, based on the reviews of documents, the positioning of cardinal directions is observed during wakes and internment. However, if the head tilting is done upon the body is put on the coffin, cardinal direction appears to be also observed in the pre-burial practice.

In the documentaries of Ibaloy beliefs, traditions, and culture, (1.1.) slaughtering animals, particularly pigs, is performed in twenty out of thirty-nine rites (Moss, 2006). Due to the availability in the locality, observation of tradition, and preference for its meat, pigs are butchered as a sacrifice to different gods. The pig's head must point east, while the front body must face the host's house entrance (Garambas et al., 2022). The animal's position to the east during slaughter indicates respect for the sun, the giver of blessings (Baucas, 2003; Garambas et al., 2022; Moss, 2006; White, 2009). The Ibaloy believe that the sun has God's power and is God himself (Sacla, 1987). Aside from that, it is believed that the sun is home to the Supreme Gods known as Kabunyan and Mongosochong. The sun is also vital in the customary law of the Ibaloy, specifically in their trial by ordeal that is observed in cases with no witnesses and lack of evidence. In the trial by ordeal, the suspect must call the sun (in the east) before the trial begins since it is the only witness to his/her crime or innocence and, more importantly, to seek his help so that he/she will be proven innocent. Although this customary law is no longer performed and was later replaced by the Lupong Tagapamayapa, their trial by ordeal shows that when humans are reluctant to give judgment, a sign from supernatural bodies is sought (Prill-Brett, 2017). This is the case in the four kinds of ordeal that Prill-Brett (2017) identified: Bagto, Gaga or Bakal ni Bakas, Soweng or Subuk, and Teteg or Kilat. In these ordeals, the suspect/s most likely face east, as they call the sun, before the trial. This also shows that the early justice system of the Ibaloy needed supernatural intervention to determine the guilt or innocence of the accused.

Benguet, located in Northern Luzon (2.1.), has been appealing even in the early years due to its springs, highland tropical climate contributing to the land's abundant agricultural industry, and surrounding provinces producing agricultural products. Furthermore, it was a place for recuperation for the Spanish soldiers and a health resort for foreigners, merchants from Manila and Iloilo, and some Spaniards. The North is rich in natural resources (Fry, 1982). (2.2.) The northern land was brimming with nature's

affluence; mining and agriculture were the Benguet people's primary livelihood sources. However, the desire for conquest in the north was driven by tales of their abundant gold mines. Although early but brief attempts were at exploring the Antamok-Balatok indigenous mining areas, the Benguet Ibaloy have shown their persistence and resolve against foreign control. Nevertheless, cattle, coffee, and tobacco entry demonstrated the Ibaloy people's embrace of change according to their conditions. The north of Benguet was less resistant to Spanish influence. Hence, foreigners easily entered it, which also caused the mining industry to grow (Hamada-Pawid, 2017). Back then, southern Benguet practiced tunnel mining, while northern Benguet practiced open-pit mining (Delos Reyes & Delos Reyes, 1986).

Aside from this, Benguet had (3.1.) early trade practices with the western lowlands, bartering their gold, woodland treasures, and cattle for the essential offerings of salt, rice, fine threads, and sturdy draft animals. The West was a favorable trading location (Hamada-Pawid, 2017; Tapang, 2017). Furthermore, the West also played a vital role in introducing loom weaving to Igorot girls. In Delos Reyes's (2017) historical study on the origins of formal education among the Ibaloy of Benguet, she mentioned that it was a difficult negotiation to compromise one's customs and traditions for Western values. However, it was financial liberation for Agatha, a former student and teacher at Bua School. By persuading the local leader, her father-in-law, and her husband that she could secure abundant food and wealth if permitted to go back to weaving, she was able to break through the custom of working in the fields for many hours a day, earning 35 pesos for a year, granting her the freedom and happiness to improve her family's support beyond previous levels. The value of the loom weaving industry started when looms were imported from the West, and an Ilokano teacher from the western lowlands was invited to educate Igorot girls. This education and enculturation in Bua School greatly influenced the culture in the province, such that early designs and hues in weaving drew inspiration from the style of the West (Delos Reyes, 2017). Benguet's early trading and weaving practices have shown that the West has led the people and society of Benguet to discoveries and opportunities.

Lastly, (4.1.) in the indigenous systems and practices of the Ibaloy originating from the narratives of elderly Ibaloy individuals in Kabayan, Benguet, Ibaloy have a system of predicting the weather. Their weather forecasting system relies on factors such as wind direction and the color and movement of clouds to determine if rain will persist. For instance, a change in wind direction or the presence of orange clouds indicates impending rain. Similarly, during a typhoon, clouds moving from north to south signify that the typhoon is not yet finished (Aroco, 2017).

5. Conclusion

The use of cardinal directions in Benguet cultural practices is mainly found in their death or burial practices. However, other practices use cardinal directions, like pig slaughtering, customary law, trade, weaving, and weather forecasting. In terms of meanings, the East is a direction usually associated with supernatural intervention, eternity, passage to the afterlife, women's earthly responsibilities and afterlife authority, and constant and sometimes unexplained tradition; the North is a direction associated with environmental wealth, receptivity, and constant tradition, the West is a direction commonly associated with discoveries and opportunities, men's earthly duties and afterlife disposition, and constant tradition, the South is a direction usually associated with unfavorable meteorological condition and constant tradition. Hence, it can be concluded that cardinal directions play a significant role in the cultural practices of Benguet, holding both spiritual and practical significance. This highlights a deep connection between the people's beliefs and these directional aspects of their environment, which are still applied due to their lasting cultural significance.

However, to develop a holistic understanding of cardinal directions in the Cordillera region, exploring the meanings associated with these directions in cultural practices in other provinces, including Abra, Apayao, Kalinga, Ifugao, and Mountain Province, is essential. While a document review gathers information on these cardinal directions, conducting in-depth studies involving interviews, observations, and other methods is recommended. This approach will better capture the current practices, considering that cultural dynamics evolve.

In addition to the sun, other celestial bodies and natural phenomena such as the moon, wind, and various times of the day, including morning and night, hold significance in Benguet (and Cordilleran) cultural activities. Thus, research in these areas is warranted.

References

- Afable, P. O. (1975). Mortuary ritual among the Ibaluy. *Asian Folklore Studies*, 34(2), 103. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1177628>
- Agcaoili, A. (2008). *The Ilokano language: History, culture and structure: from language to philosophy (last part)*. <https://tawidnewsmag.com/the-ilokano-language-history-culture-and-structure-from-language-to-philosophy-last-part/>
- Alupias, E. B., Gayao, B. T., Meldoz, D. T., & Sagpa-ey, J. S. (2020). Kinds, Uses, and Implications of Woven Ethnic Materials of The Benguet People. *Benguet State University Research Journal*, 64(1), 36-54.
- Anacin, C. G. (2008). *To the Ibaloi spirits we "play": A descriptive and socio-cultural analysis of Ibaloi death ritual, music and performance with emphasis on the symbolic context and representation* [Master's thesis]. University of the Philippines Baguio.
- Anongos, S. F. (2015). Artifacts speak: Diversions of Benguet material culture. *Benguet State University Research Journal*, 73, 19-31.
- Aroco, A. (2017). Ibaloy knowledge through oral tradition. In Fong, J. (Ed.), *CHIVA A Reader on Ibaloy History and Culture* (pp. 159-166). Cordillera Studies Center.
- Atos, M. D. (1987). *The culture of the Karao tribe* [Doctoral dissertation]. University of Baguio.
- Awas, F. (2011). Secularization of the sacred: "Bendian" through the passage of time. *Benguet State University Research Journal*, 66, 43-74.
- Bangle, K. (2009). *Cultural differences in wayfinding directions* [Bachelor's thesis, Universiteit Twente].
- Barrows, D. P. (1910). The Negrito and Allied types in the Philippines. *American Anthropologist*, 12(3), 358-376. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/659895>
- Baucas, B. L. (2003). *Traditional beliefs and cultural practices in Benguet* (1st ed.). New Baguio Offset Press.
- Bernard, M. A. (1998). The trial of Rizal. *Philippine Studies*, 46(1), 46-72. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/42633622>
- Bhat, A. (2023). *Exploratory research: Types & characteristics*. QuestionPro. https://www.questionpro.com/blog/exploratory-research/#Types_and_methodologies_of_Exploratory_research
- Bowern, G. A. (2009). Document analysis as a qualitative research method. *Qualitative Research Journal*, 9(2), 27-40. <http://dx.doi.org/10.3316/QRJ0902027>
- Brown, C. H. (1983). Where do cardinal direction terms come from?. *Anthropological Linguistics*, 25(2), 121-161. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/30027665>
- Caligtan-Tran, M. (2022). Et isgeng takos nan sagradoy luta ay naey (let us tread mindfully and live forever on this sacred soil). *Alon: Journal for Filipinx American and Diasporic Studies*, 2(3), 350-356. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/48722253>
- Camte-Bahni, R. (2018). Rituals of passage in ibaloy death rituals and practices. *Journal of Philippine Culture and Society*, 8(2), 21-41.
- Camte-Bahni, R. (2017). Ibaloy beliefs and values in healing and death practices. In J. Fong (Ed.), *CHIVA A Reader on Ibaloy History and Culture* (pp. 139-157). Cordillera Studies Center.
- Celino, S. M. (1990). *Death and burial rituals and other practices and belief in the Cordilleras* [Doctoral Dissertation]. University of Baguio.
- Chua-Barcelo, R. T. (2014). Ethno-botanical survey of edible wild fruits in Benguet, Cordillera administrative region, the Philippines. *Asian Pacific journal of tropical biomedicine*, 4(1), 525-538. <https://doi.org/10.12980/APJTB.4.201414B36>
- Clarke, V., & Braun, V. (2013). Teaching thematic analysis: Overcoming challenges and developing strategies for effective learning. *The Psychologist*, 26(2), 120-123.
- Cui, J., Liu, Y., Sun, J., Hu, D., & He, H. (2021). G-STC-M Spatio-temporal analysis method for archaeological sites. *ISPRS International Journal of Geo-Information*, 10(5), 312. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijgi10050312>

- Dangpa-Subagan, C. (2009). *Kankanaey of Benguet*. National Commission for Culture and the Arts.
- Delos Reyes, A., & Delos Reyes, A. (1986). *Igorot a people who daily touch the earth and the sky*. Cordillera Schools Group.
- Delos Reyes, C. A. (2017). Mrs. Kelly and the education of the Ibaloy at the Bua School in Benguet, Northern Philippines, 1901-1940. In J. Fong (Ed.), *CHIVA A Reader on Ibaloy History and Culture* (pp. 35-63). Cordillera Studies Center.
- Faričić, J., Kljajić, I., Mirošević, L., & Mlinarić, D. (2023). Symbolism of compass roses on early modern nautical charts of the Adriatic Sea. *KN - Journal of Cartography and Geographic Information*, 73, 19-37. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s42489-022-00129-z>
- Fry, H. (1982). *A history of the mountain province*. New Day Publishers.
- Gallego, M. K. S. (2019). Directional systems in Philippine languages. *Oceanic Linguistics*, 57(1), 53-100.
- Garambas, C. D., Luna, M. B. Z., & Chua, C. T. (2022). Time-honored praxis in preparing smoked meat delicacy (kinuday) of the Ibaloy indigenous people in Benguet, Philippines. *Journal of Ethnic Foods*, 9(21), 1-15. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s42779-022-00135-6>
- Gary, A., Lum, J., Poulton, T., & Schlossberg, J. (2017). what in the world is north? translating cardinal directions across languages, cultures and environments. *A Journal of Media and Culture*, 20(6), 1-7. <https://doi.org/10.5204/mcj.1276>
- Gill, M. (2022). Milton's cardinal directions symbolism in paradise lost. *The Oswald Review: An International Journal of Undergraduate Research and Criticism in the Discipline of English*, 24(4), 25-48. <https://scholarcommons.sc.edu/tor/vol24/iss1/4>
- Habana, O. M. (2001). Gold mining in Benguet. *Philippine Studies*, 49(1), 3-41. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/42634434>
- Hamada-Pawid, Z. (2017). A people's history of Benguet: the urgency of remembrance and reconstruction. In J. Fong (Ed.), *CHIVA A Reader on Ibaloy History and Culture* (pp. 1-6). Cordillera Studies Center.
- Keith, G. P., & Keith, E. B. (1983). *A glimpse of Benguet: Culture and artifacts*. Hilltop Printing Press.
- Kim, M., Morimoto, K., & Kuwahara, N. (2015). Study on understandability and design elements of cardinal directions. *J-Stage*, 4(1), 13-20.
- Kim, S. (2021). Where is north?: Directionality in precolonial and colonial land surveys in Korea, 1897-1918. *Sungkyun Journal of East Asian Studies*, 21(1), 105-122. <https://doi.org/10.1215/15982661-8873955>
- Laugrand, F., Laugrand, A., Tamang, J., & Magapin, G. (2020). Exchanges with the sead. *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde*, 176(4), 475-503. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.2307/26944935>
- Lusekelo, A. (2018). Terms for cardinal directions in Eastern Bantu languages. *Journal of Humanities*, 26, 49-71.
- MacKinlay, W. E. W. (1904). Some minor languages of Luzon. *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, 25, 170-174. <https://doi.org/10.2307/592557>
- McCoy, M. D. (2020). The site problem: A critical review of the site concept in archaeology in the digital age. *Journal of Field Archaeology*, 45(1), 18-26. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00934690.2020.1713283>
- Meldoz, D. T., Gayao, B. T., & Backian, G. S. (2016). Sweetpotato cultivars grown by ethnolinguistic groups in northern Philippines. *Benguet State University Research Journal*, 76, 13-31.
- Morgan, H. (2022). Conducting a qualitative document analysis. *The Qualitative Report*, 27(1), 64-77. <https://doi.org/10.46743/2160-3715/2022.5044>
- Moss C. R. (2006). *Nabaloi law and ritual*. University of California Publications.
- National Commission on Indigenous Peoples - Cordillera Administrative Region. (2022). *Indigenous peoples (IP) groups per municipality/province*.
- National Commission on Indigenous Peoples - Cordillera Administrative Region. (2017). *Documentation of the customary practices on birth, marriage, and death of the Kankana-ey in Buguias, Benguet, Philippines*. Benguet Provincial Library.
- NCIP-CAR. (2017). NCIP-CAR, CIPC prepare for IP Month. <https://mirror.pia.gov.ph/news/2022/08/30/ncip-car-cipc-prepare-for-ip-month>
- Norris, R. P., & Harney, B. Y. (2014). Songlines and navigation in Wardaman and other Australian aboriginal cultures. *Journal of Astronomical History and Heritage*, 17(2), 141-148. <https://doi.org/10.48550/arXiv.1404.2361>
- Pelila, J. R. O. (2020). Benguet folktales: Bases for tracing family bloodline? *International Journal of Linguistics, Literature and Translation*, 3(4), 1-17. <https://doi.org/10.32996/ijllt.2020.3.4.1>
- Prill-Brett, J. (2017). Tradition and change in Ibaloy customary law. In J. Fong, (Ed.), *CHIVA A Reader on Ibaloy History and Culture* (pp. 91-124). Cordillera Studies Center.
- Province of Benguet. (2020). *Discover Benguet*. https://benguet.gov.ph/v4/?page_id=523#:~:text=Benguet%20was%20established%20as%20a,government%20was%20in%20Tue%2C%20Tublay
- Raza, A., Fatima, G., & Nayab, D. E. (2023). Community learning centres in Afghanistan and Mongolia: A document review. *Journal of Development and Social Sciences*, 4(3), 855-864. [http://dx.doi.org/10.47205/jdss.2023\(4-III\)78](http://dx.doi.org/10.47205/jdss.2023(4-III)78)
- Rivera, E. G. (1989). *The rituals of the Ibaloy: Their implications to education 1988-1999* [Master's Thesis]. Baguio Central University..
- Russell, S. D. (1989). The grand cañao: Ethnic and ritual dilemmas in an upland Philippine tourist festival. *Asian Folklore Studies*, 48(2), 247. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1177920>
- Sacla, W. (1987). *Treasury of beliefs and home rituals of Benguet*. BCF printing Press.
- Supreme Court. (2017). *G.R. No. 213948: Knights of Rizal vs. DMCI Homes, Inc., DMCI Project Developers, Inc., City of Manila, National Commission for Culture and the Arts, National Historical Commission of the Philippines*, 2017. https://lawphil.net/judjuris/juri2017/apr2017/gr_213948_2017.html
- Tapang, B. (2017). Face/off: reflections of the Ibaloy in historical texts. In J. Fong (Ed.), *CHIVA A Reader on Ibaloy History and Culture* (pp. 7-33). Cordillera Studies Center.
- The City Government of Baguio. (2020). *About Baguio city [Official Website]*. <https://www.baguio.gov.ph/about-baguio-city>

University of the Philippines Open University. (2018). *Online subscriptions*. <https://library.upou.edu.ph/online-subscriptions/>

White, R. (2009). *Ibaloy of Benguet*. National Commission for Culture and the Arts.