Introduction

This book, *Intermediate Ilokano: An Integrated Language and Culture Reading Text*, consists of twelve lessons. Each lesson has nine major components: Reading, Story, Vocabulary Study, Questions for Discussion, Grammar Notes, Writing Practice, Fluency Practice, Cultural Activities, and Culture Notes. It utilizes integrated eclectic and proactive approaches to language teaching and learning, where students actively participate in the process. The lessons include a variety of activities that challenge students to delve deeper into the story for a better understanding of what they are reading and studying.

An extensive amount of exercises in each lesson provides teachers with multiple options that accommodate their teaching styles. Most of the exercises promote collaborative and cooperative interaction between and among students. The theatre approach to learning which is widely used in the lessons, easily lends itself to group work, where each participant has an obligation to contribute. Drama also provides an effective and exciting communicative venue for oral and written activities which allow a change from the usual language exercises. Vocabulary, grammatical, communicative, and cultural exercises are interwoven to allow cross-pollination of the different linguistic and cultural skills.

This book is written for adult learners who have completed one year of Ilokano at the college level. It is also intended as a rich resource for teachers who are in constant search for dynamic activities in the classroom. The extensive grammar notes and linguistic data available in the book are useful to scholars involved in the study of the Ilokano language.

The purpose of this text is not to teach students how to read, since we can assume that at this level, they already have advanced reading competencies. The main thrust of this book is to increase reading comprehension and develop the different linguistic skills in Ilokano, which will ultimately lead to communicative proficiency. The stories and their corollary activities are created specifically for that purpose.

The repetition of vocabulary and the practice of structures in as many natural contexts and combinations as possible are deliberately infused in the lessons, so that the building of sight vocabulary and structures can take place. Teachers and students may find the extensiveness of the material overwhelming. However, the teacher need not cover all of the exercises in each section. S/he, as well as the students, can choose and decide which ones are relevant and useful for the language needs of each of the members of the class. They
are there also for students who, on their own, want to engage in a more intensive study of the language.

**Reading**
The Pre-Reading section discusses traditional and modern cultural practices and values, and tackles issues affecting the lives of Filipinos in the Philippines and abroad. Students are presented with questions that make it possible for them to bring in some background knowledge and experiences in preparation for the reading selections. Discussions may be done in English, but students should be encouraged to use the target language in order to provide them with the opportunity for more listening and speaking practice. Code switching in Ilokano and English may be allowed in order to foster a dynamic exchange on the topics.

To create student interest in this section, the teacher may introduce the lesson by showing some pictures, charts, or articles that are relevant to the story. Students may also be assigned to find such materials to present in class, individually or in groups.

The Reading Tasks section directly relates to the story. A variety of reading strategies are employed to enable students to get into the details of the story for mastery of content and development of their conversation and storytelling skills in Ilokano. The purpose of this section is to guide students to the story, hence, it is important that they study this section very well, and do the tasks indicated before class. Once the tasks are accomplished, comprehension of the material will come more easily, because students will have read the story in detail more than once.

Some of the lessons have detailed questions about the story. Students should study these questions beforehand to give them an idea of what the story is about. It is one way of being introduced to the story.

**Story**
At the center of each lesson is a story. The book consists of twelve original short stories ranging from two to five pages at graduated levels of difficulty. The stories mirror day-to-day life in the Philippines. Detailed illustrations depicting scenes in the readings accompany the selections to give the students a general idea about what to expect in them.
The first four selections are folktale types which provide simple, repetitive language that is characteristic of this genre, and which is suitable for language learning. It incorporates language that students can easily remember and use in their conversations. One significant element in this type of reading is the convenient inclusion of cultural values and social oriented issues that students can address based on their personal experiences, perceptions, and attitudes.

The following eight stories deal with topics depicting cultural conflicts, catastrophic events, and immigration. To make the readings interesting, deliberate effort is made to lace them with subtle humor.

The stories are filled with numbered illustrations, that are aligned with the corresponding texts. These pictures are intended to guide the students in their reading, as well as create interest in the story. They can also be used in a variety of exercises.

An interpretative reading of the story to the students can be an exciting and entertaining listening and comprehension activity. Apart from hearing the pronunciation of words and rhythm of the language, students are engaged in the unfolding of the story. The teacher can create excitement by stopping at certain points and asking students to predict what happens next. This way, natural and meaningful communicative interaction takes place. Students can also take notes while the reading is going on, listening for answers to questions that are previously assigned, or those that are presented in the Reading Task section. Unison reading with the teacher could also be a way for students to hear the correct pronunciation of the words and the melody of the language. This technique brings together the listening and reading events. At the same time, the students can be ready at any time to answer the teacher's or other students' random questions. Of course, by this time, students should already be familiar with the story, since they have listened to a taped reading of it at the language laboratory, and have performed the exercises in the Reading Tasks section. At the language laboratory, learning can be effectively reinforced by the simultaneous reading of the text and listening to the recording of the story.

**Vocabulary Study**

The vocabulary exercises are organized around the story. They focus on frequently-used words, phrases, everyday expressions, and idioms. Students must look for contextual clues to gain a general understanding of their meaning. For practice, many exercises require the use of the vocabulary in appropriate contexts. Students should be advised at
the initial reading to ignore unfamiliar words. It is not important to focus on individual words at this point. What is important in the beginning is to just get the gist of the story, and identify the main ideas. Through subsequent readings, students may begin extracting essential details for comprehension, vocabulary study, and other exercises.

To maximize the learning of vocabulary and the story, several strategies may be employed. For example, students may first identify sight words, cognates, borrowed words, and those that students recognize by association, context, or from experience, as well as those that they have encountered in previous lessons. The teacher can ask students to find words that look similar to their own language and guess their meaning. For unfamiliar words, they can try to figure out what they mean from their use in the story. Contextual information and the linguistic environment should provide a clue. The ability to extract the root word and identify affixes may also help in the discovery process. If in spite of all these strategies the student still finds problems, then s/he can consult the Glossary at the end of the book, but only as a last resort.

After completing the above exercises, it would help to have the students read the story again or listen to the recording of it at the language laboratory. By this time, the story should be fully understood and the students are ready for class discussion in Ilokano.

Questions for Discussion
Questions in this section are based on the story. The purpose of these questions is not simply for learners to increase their speaking proficiency, but also to test and improve their comprehension and analytical skills. A few of the questions may be a repetition from the Reading Tasks, but as we know, repetition is an effective tool in learning a language, and it is useful to have students repeat answers they may have given previously. In fact, because students may not structure their answers in the same way the second time around, they will have an opportunity to show creativity in their responses. Every effort should be made to conduct the discussions in Ilokano.

Grammar Notes
The grammar points are culled from the story. The grammatical explanations are extensive and incisive to help the learners understand the intricacies of important aspects of Ilokano grammar. Much of the analysis aims to anticipate questions that students frequently have when studying the language. Fine distinctions and nuances between similar grammatical and semantic functions are clarified with detailed analyses and contextualized examples. Grammatical exercises
immediately follow the descriptions for each grammar point to make it convenient for students to refer back to the grammatical explanations. An asterisk (*) signals ungrammaticality.

Learning styles differ from student to student. Some may learn a language better without any explanation of the grammar, while others have a need to analyze and understand the grammatical structures to facilitate their learning. In general, compared to children, adult learners are more inclined to want to understand and analyze the grammar of a language throughout the learning process. This is why extensive grammatical explanations are provided in the book. These descriptions explain grammar points that students may be curious about, and want to study further for their own use. The teacher, however, may not be compelled to teach all of them. S/he can select and prioritize them according to what s/he perceives the students need to learn first.

It is vital that students be thoroughly familiar with the affixes of Ilokano words, as they provide additional semantic dimensions to the root word. Once mastery of the affixes is gained, it becomes considerably easier to identify the meanings of the derived words.

Nominative and genitive pronouns in Ilokano are normally affixed to the preceding word, and it can be confusing sometimes when they look like markers or part of the stem. For this reason, these affixes are italicized in this book, to make it easier for students to identify them.

Writing Practice
The writing exercises complement the other sections in the book, and are written and organized to reinforce the study of vocabulary, grammar, and sentence structure. Some activities are also designed to relate to the theme of the story and to the outside world. This section precedes Fluency Practice, because writing forces the mind to select appropriate vocabulary and construct sentences in familiar contexts that can help prepare for the speaking event. All prior preparations lead to the convergence of skills that help students avoid grappling with what to say and how to say it in the target language.

Fluency Practice
Activities to increase speaking proficiency in this section are designed to maximize student interaction and communication. An eclectic array of games and other communicative activities depicting daily situations brings into the classroom contemporary life’s events and experiences that students can easily relate to and portray in their role-plays.
Cultural Activities
This section is a good literary venue for studying Filipino values and culture. Traditional sayings, riddles, and songs, pepper the lessons in order to provide the students and the teacher with a wide variety of practice in speaking, writing, translation, and cultural analysis. Repetitive instructions are aimed to enable students to master the structures that they can apply to other contextual situations. Illustrations accompany the riddles to give the student an authentic image of the object being described. The illustrations accompanying the songs relate to the themes of the songs.

Culture Notes
The culture notes explain concepts that have to do with Filipino values and cultural practices. Certain aspects of the culture presented in the stories are elaborated in this section to give the student a better understanding of the Filipino thought processes and way of life. This section can be followed up with simulated cultural situations or case studies that students can use for debate, role-play, or cultural discussion.

Glossary
The *Glossary* at the end of the text contains all the basic Ilokano words, expressions, and some affixes that are used throughout the lessons, including those that are in the exercises. Root words comprise the main entries, followed by different derivations of the root. Root words that cannot be used in meaningful sentences are not translated. Those that are translated usually function as nouns. Highlighted letters indicate placement of stress.

Songs
The book has an accompanying recording of the songs, some of which are from the Ilocos Region. There are also Tagalog folk melodies with Ilokano lyrics. This section also includes original songs composed by the author specifically for teaching certain grammatical points.