

Exploring Filipino Junior High School Teachers' Perspectives on the Baybayin Ancient Writing System: A Case Study in Bulacan

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ABSTRACT

This qualitative case study explores the perceptions of Filipino Junior High School Teachers in Bulacan on the Baybayin writing system. The study employs purposive sampling and data was gathered through interviews conducted. Thematic analysis is applied to examine interview transcripts and observational notes. The findings show that the instructors' understanding of the significance of Baybayin in their pedagogical strategies and their willingness to improve their command of the writing system. They appreciate the cultural importance of Baybayin and its potential as a communication tool. However, due to the lack of precise criteria and its modernity, Baybayin adoption presents difficulties. The study concludes that Baybayin exhibits remarkable adaptability and potential for integration into various aspects of culture, education, and economy.

INTRODUCTION

In today's rapidly changing global landscape, the development of new concepts is crucial to maintaining competitiveness. However, amidst this pursuit, it appears that the government has inadvertently overlooked an essential aspect of Filipino heritage and original culture – Ang Baybayin, an ancient writing system (Contreras, 2020). This native writing system is highly significant as a potent marker of identity that is intricately woven into Filipino culture and its rich social fabric (Albay, 2017). Despite its historical significance, Baybayin has steadily disappeared from popular culture and school curricula in favor of the orthography introduced during the Spanish colonial era. Over time, academics and researchers have worked to shed light on the history, upkeep, and future revival of Baybayin. Notably, Comandante's (2019) work stimulated additional research into Filipino cultural heritage by offering a crucial foundation for comprehending the history of this historical writing system. Albay (2017) noted that, as instructed by the sages of the era, Baybayin was not only a medium of communication but also a crucial component in constructing household items, writing poetry, producing art, and carrying out rituals.

THEORETICAL REVIEW

In the realm of Baybayin studies, Contreras' (2020) tribute to the development of the Tagalog language through the introduction of Abakadang Rizaleo, standing as a notable contribution. Despite the substantial body of research, Baybayin remains largely unknown to many modern Filipinos, emphasizing the importance of exploring and understanding this ancient script as a vital aspect of cultural history. The current research aims to delve into the perceptions of Filipino Junior High School Teachers in Bulacan regarding the Baybayin writing system. It seeks to understand what Baybayin means to the informants and explore the reasons behind the growing interest in adopting the writing system. By doing so, the study intends to shed light on the potential significance and educational implications of reintegrating Baybayin into the modern curriculum.

To achieve these aims, the subsequent sections of this research will provide additional context on the origins and history of Baybayin. Detailed information on the participants and the methodologies employed to gather and analyze data will be presented, ensuring a comprehensive and robust study. Ethical considerations concerning the handling and sharing of data will also be discussed. The research results will be centered on the insights and perspectives of the teacher-informants, contributing to a broader understanding of how Baybayin is perceived in the educational context. These findings will be thoughtfully analyzed, offering interpretations, and acknowledging any potential limitations in the study. Ultimately, this research endeavors to highlight the cultural significance of Baybayin, recognizing its potential role in fostering a deeper appreciation of Filipino heritage among the younger generation and inspiring future efforts to preserve and promote this unique writing system. By bridging the past and present through this exploration, the researchers hope to contribute to the recognition and celebration of the enduring legacy of Baybayin within the vibrant tapestry of Philippine culture.

METHODOLOGY

A. Research Design

The qualitative case study aims to explore the perceptions of Filipino Junior High School Teachers in Bulacan on the Baybayin writing system, with a focus on understanding their perspectives and attitudes towards its significance in contemporary education. The study seeks to gain deeper insights into how these teachers perceive Baybayin, its potential relevance in the classroom, and any challenges or opportunities associated with its integration into the curriculum.

B. Participants

In the qualitative investigation, written interviews were conducted with the junior high school teacher-informants. In this study, eight interviewees who fulfill the criteria were chosen. To accomplish this, the researcher employed purposive sampling, a form of non-probability sampling in which the researcher determines the selection criteria. Barbour (2014) confirmed how purposive sampling permits the researcher's subjectivity to be "meaningful" as a stimulant to the study's direction. As was previously indicated, educators of varying ages served as sources of information. Educators between the ages of 25 and 59 participated in the study. The educators of public schools in Bocaue, Bulacan, Philippines, discussed the Baybayin script. From there, the selection procedure snowballed. When presenting or interpreting the data, the researchers did not consider the respondents' gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, age, marital status, or level of education. This research did not emphasize their years of experience in teaching.

C. Instrument and Data Gathering Procedures

As this is a case study, an interview was conducted. Due to the multiplicity of the informants, multimodal communication was used as a form of creative practice rather than speaking per se in order to give everyone adequate time to respond. In response to the pandemic, every execution was made asynchronous using technical methods. To facilitate the exchange of ideas, the researcher established an email-like system. This type of interview can be advantageous in terms of finances, efficiency, data quality, and even anonymity (Creswell, 2013). All of the questions in the study guide were reviewed and approved by 3 education experts with advanced degrees to ensure their accuracy. Participating educators were interviewed in a focus group conducted by researchers who posed leading questions and validated the results through peer debriefing. Guba and Lincoln (1994) emphasized the use of paradigm lenses, in this case, from the perspective of the 3 education experts, in the process of validating qualitative research instruments. The focus group then convened an online meeting to continue their discussion.

D. Data Analysis

Hollins (2011) have demonstrated that in-depth interview writing can elicit trustworthy qualitative data. Targeted questioning and comprehensive

data collection can also aid in the identification of emerging themes. The researcher thoroughly examined all of the data by paying close attention to the key statements made by the informants. Thematic analysis was employed to analyze the interview transcripts and observational notes. The researchers identified and coded emerging themes and patterns related to teachers' perceptions of Baybayin, its cultural significance, and potential integration into the curriculum.

E. Ethical Considerations

All participants' personal information was kept confidential in accordance with the Data Privacy Act. Participants' names, genders, and other submitted data were recorded, but no further information was disclosed beyond the participant's department, school, or institution. Focus group transcripts will be utilized for research purposes only. In order to protect the privacy of participants and their responses, the researchers followed American Psychological Association standards. All references to previously published works were properly cited.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1. Perception of Filipino Teachers in the Baybayin as Ancient Writing System

Meaning Unit	Condensed Meaning Unit	Code	Theme
"Baybayin is considered as ancient writing system of Filipinos."	Baybayin is an ancient writing system	Acculturation	Being
"The Filipinos first used Baybayin as a writing system- a native way."			
"Baybayin was the first alphabet of the Filipino as part of the rich culture of its people which provided an avenue towards better communication before the colonization of Spaniards."	Baybayin is part of the Filipino culture		
"Baybayin is an ancient writing system of our culture which is recognized by the society."			
"I admit that even it is part of the culture, I don't have enough knowledge about it."	Sense of insufficient knowledge in using Baybayin	Yearning	
"There are some rules in Baybayin that confuses me."			
"During elementary, I have learned that it was Alibata and not Baybayin"			
"Because of its uniqueness, it may serve as a code of communication to those who can interpret and understand its background."	Learning the usage of Baybayin	Acquisition	Bettering

“Teaching Baybayin may promote its usage and history even if we are in the modern age now.”			
“There’s a presence of ascending interest rate in this kind of writing system and it is unusual in our modern generation.”			
“Yes! It is better to carefully study or give ample attention the Baybayin that is part of our culture. The essence of this is not just to be mentioned as part of our culture but to revive the system which will be beneficial to everyone.”	Practicing the mastery of using Baybayin which they will taught to their students	Yielding	
“A huge number of teachers will have the eagerness to learn writing using Baybayin most especially if this will be the official writing system.”	Prioritizing once Baybayin become official system of writing	Novelty	Intro- specting
“If Baybayin will be the national writing system, it will be difficult at first because we need to be proficient enough to use this in order for use to be good communicators.”	Admitting that there will be challenges before being an excellent user		
“Teachers will find it way more challenging to create paperworks because of its technicalities.”			
“This will be a big challenge for us since we don’t have official and extensive rules that can serve as a guide in using Baybayin.”	Baybayin lacks standardization	Nonplus	
“This is questionable since there were just limited number of professionals who studies the Baybayin as a writing system			

Acceptance and Proficiency in Baybayin

Participants recognized the importance of exploring and considering Baybayin in their teaching practices. They viewed themselves as disciples of the academy, believing that their knowledge and proficiency in Baybayin would contribute to its preservation and stability. However, while participants showed preliminary knowledge of Baybayin as an ancient writing system, they acknowledged the need to deepen their understanding and desired to increase their expertise.

Importance of Cultural Identity and Ethos

On the one hand, each language has its own grammar, which is the foundation of correct usage. According to Almario (2016), in order to maintain the ethos and ensure its effectiveness, one must be knowledgeable or an expert in its execution. Further, according to Contreras (2020), being cognizant of nature or having a culturally rooted part of one's identity is a significant aspect of Filipino values. On the other hand, despite the informants' preliminary knowledge of Baybayin as an ancient writing system, their knowledge remains limited and insufficient, and the informants' desire to increase their knowledge is evident.

Modern Use of Baybayin

According to Kawahara (2016), limited education results in a superficial understanding of culture and history, such as the informants' knowledge of the Baybayin. Although this style of writing resembles the traditional interpretation, it attempts to keep up with the passage of time and embrace the notion of change.

The participants expressed their perspective on the reasons for the increased interest in Baybayin. It has been demonstrated that the modern use of Baybayin as a writing system is focused not only on cultural enrichment but also on its contemporary writing style, which attracts the attention of anyone who sees or reads it. Albay (2017) explained that modern times and the continuous spread of modern technology play a significant role in spreading the new manner of using Baybayin.

As part of the study, Baybayin is assumed to have a new perspective as the first subtheme when it is promoted and implemented as a national way of writing. Also, learning Baybayin in the field of education can be a bridge to a more effective written form of communication. Hollins (2011) mentioned that teaching a lesson will be effective if the teacher himself is eager to learn what he will teach and relates what he will teach to his own experience.

Challenges in Adopting Baybayin

Even if there is interest in using Baybayin, it still remains in the testing phase because there is still no specific and clear effort that can provide a better basis and structure to use it, so the subtle confusion can counteract self-interest when teachers use Baybayin. It is clear to the informants that they will face a problem when Baybayin becomes the official writing method. Contreras (2020) shared that the long-term practical benefits of language learning should be considered rather than short-term goals in order to fully see its learning. Piaget (1977) also explained that the process of cognition is important to fully acquire the knowledge learned; hence, the emergence of difficulties in teaching and learning the said script. Cognitive processes and effective teaching approaches that foster deeper understanding and connection to the material were deemed essential by the informants.

CONCLUSION

This research study yields gripping conclusion, demonstrating that Baybayin, as a writing system, exhibits remarkable adaptability and potential for integration into various cultural, educational, and economic aspects. The increasing interest in Baybayin, evidenced by the abundance varying opinions from the teacher-informants, highlights a growing desire to utilize this script as a means of communication. The study further illuminates the positive reception of Baybayin among the high school teachers in Bulacan, who express a willingness to expand their knowledge and expertise in order to effectively instruct their students in this writing system. This active involvement of educators indicates the potential for Baybayin to contribute significantly to the enrichment and preservation of native culture. Moreover, the study underscores the dynamic nature of language and its capacity to evolve and adapt to changing times. By embracing Baybayin, a traditional script, in modern contexts, it exemplifies how languages remain relevant and continue to serve as important cultural markers. However, it is essential to emphasize that while Baybayin's modernization holds promise, a strong foundation and clear guidelines are necessary to ensure its appropriate usage. Transparent modernization practices will be crucial in preventing confusion among those who choose to adopt Baybayin as their writing system. In conclusion, the research provides valuable insights into the adaptability and potential impact of Baybayin as a writing system within cultural, educational, and economic domains. The encouraging interest from educators and the recognition of language's dynamism make a compelling case for the continued exploration and incorporation of Baybayin into contemporary society. With proper guidance and respect for its heritage, Baybayin can truly thrive as a relevant and meaningful writing system in the modern world.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In light of the study's findings, it is prudent to consider further bolstering the foundation of Baybayin so that the pro-Filipino culture can be enriched, flourished, and propagated with skill. Also, with the assistance of the forthcoming initiatives, students' interest will be piqued in adopting the system of writing using Baybayin to introduce the country's culture and even its history. With the aid of the research conducted, let it serve as a guide for re-learning and researching Baybayin orthography so that everyone who uses it is aware of what should and should not be done when writing in it. It is essential to pay close attention to the standardization of Baybayin usage, particularly the use of borrowed phonemes.

ADVANCED RESEARCH

This research still has limitations so it is necessary to carry out further research on this topic.

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