

IMPACT OF LEARNING BAYBAYIN TO FILIPINO CULTURE

by:

Perlie S. Gomez

Teacher I, Lamao National High School

The pre-Hispanic Filipino writing system known as Baybayin was widely used across the islands before the advent of the Spaniards. The Filipino word baybay, which means "to spell," is where the phrase "Baybayin" comes from. It was initially recorded by Spanish missionaries in the 16th century. Yet, it is believed to have been in use far earlier. Baybayin was mostly used for official records and particular correspondence. It was also used as a forerunner sign for tabernacle rites and observances, as well as for commerce. Many antique documents have been preserved, some of which include up to 4,000 characters written entirely in Baybayin.

Baybayin is now deeply involved in cultural work. The two most common applications are tattoos and calligraphy. Contemporary artists have also begun to use Baybayin as a cultural medium at work. A number of current poets and authors, like Nick Joaquin, Lualhati Bautista, Raul Sunico, and Fernando Zobel de Ayala, have written a whole literary in the Baybayin script. Despite these efforts to resuscitate Baybayin usage in the modern day, it has recently become less popular. This was mostly due to colonialism and the extensive use of the Latin Alphabet after Spanish annexation of the Philippines (Solon, 2022). Filipinos may have lost

interest in conserving Baybayin knowledge because they believe it is only necessary for preserving pre-colonial culture.

As an Evolving Language

In contrast to the "as pronounced" method and the "ancient method," which uses the characters exactly as they are, Baybayin Buhayin president and co-founder Jose Jaime Enage said they are now using a dinaglat or truncate technique that employs a "vowel killer" to make the transliterations more understandable. According to Baybayin Buhayin's brand design specialist and the person who designed the Baybayin fountain that was used on the revolving signs, in order to be revived, the writing system must adapt to the demands of the people, as all languages do. "One of the most crucial elements of bringing a dead language back to life is the audacious endeavor to create new words and phrases while building on the foundation of the previous language," he said in an interview with government officials (Tiangco, 2020).

As a Subject in School

Linguists contend that the revival of Baybayin would benefit a country struggling to understand its social history and is an opportunity to honor indigenous heritage. Building our own jotting system is a significant accomplishment, said Leo Emmanuel Castro, executive director of the cultural group Sanghabi. "English is obviously sexist, whereas our language is

gender-neutral, with no gender in professions or pronouns," he said. This might improve the quality of writing skills of the students if taught.

Learning how to write Baybayin is a fantastic way to delve into the past while also learning a new skill. Writing Baybayin can be challenging since it differs so much from the English ABCs that we have learned and become accustomed to from the Spaniards, but it offers us knowledge of how our forefathers communicated by utilizing their own letters. Penmanship exercise can be paired with learning to write the script at the same time. Penmanship abilities can be enhanced by practicing writing in Baybayin characters with delicate lines.

References:

Domeglio, M. A. (2019, September 17). Reliving The Past: Why You Should Start Learning Baybayin. Retrieved from Sagisag PH:
<https://sagisag.com/article/612/History/reliving-the-past-why-you-should-start-learningbaybayin#:~:text=Baybayin%20is%20an%20exemplary%20paradigm,look%20back%20at%20our%20roots.>

Solon, K. G. (2022, August 22). How Baybayin's Legacy Lives On. Retrieved from <https://hapihumanist.org/humanism/baybayin-legacy/#:~:text=Baybayin%20was%20primarily%20used%20for,as%20many%20as%204%2C000%20characters.>

The National. (2019, July). The revival of Baybayin – an ancient Philippines script ripped up by colonisation. Retrieved from <https://www.thenationalnews.com/arts-culture/music/the-revival-of-baybayin-an-ancient-philippines-script-ripped-up-by-colonisation1.892860#:~:text=Advocates%20say%20reviving%20Baybayin%20will,only%20became%20independent%20in%201946.>

Tiangco, M. K. (2020, September 6). Who's afraid of Baybayin? Experts weigh in on the pre-colonial Filipino writing system. Retrieved from Manila Bulletin:
<https://mb.com.ph/2020/09/06/whos-afraid-of-baybayin-experts-weigh-in-on-the-pre-colonial-filipino-writing-system/>