

Unravelling culture, traditions, and beliefs from folktales in a province basis for the development of English instructional resources to enhance language comprehension

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Abstract: Pasil, Kalinga has been known with its rich culture, traditions and belief. Considering this and the gaps in curriculum contextualization found among other indigenous groups, there is a need to analyze folktales existing in the community to consider the learners' identity, local experience and their context. Hence, to identify and understand the different themes regarding culture, traditions and belief of Pasil, this qualitative research explored nine folktales shared by the local community through the available resource book approved by the Department of Education – Division of Kalinga through content analysis. The results revealed that Pasil's folktales highlight a deep connection to nature, valor and bravery, triumph and victory, and reverence for tribal leaders. Traditions of familial bonds, marriage, and blood lineage were shown, alongside themes of tribal conflict. Additionally, the folktales reflect beliefs in a higher being coexisting with humans and a deep respect for spirits, indicating the community's spiritual worldview.

Keywords: Pasil, Kalinga, curriculum contextualization, content analysis, culture, tradition, belief

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INTRODUCTION

Folktales are defined by Dahal and Bhatta (2021) as short but imaginative narratives which commonly utilize animals as characters to impart wisdom and values that are being passed down to the readers from one generation after another. The Philippines has been known to have rich cultures, traditions, and beliefs; hence, it has its own account of folktales. One good way to determine and understand culture and values is through folk literature as they are great resources for having an overview of what makes up the social, ethical and other important factors that mold a certain group of people's identities (Baggay & Quilang, 2023). According to Sugue (2022), pre-colonial folk literatures of the Philippines commonly revolve around songs, rituals, and dance. Nature and human phenomena are the usual topic of the myths, tales and stories. Moreover, most of these are still being practiced among ethnic and indigenous groups in the country (Sugue, 2022). Eslit (2023) also concluded that Philippine folktales contribute to the preservation of cultural heritage and the results of the themes and patterns analyzed among the set of popular folktales from the Philippines were aligned with how these folktales shape Filipino culture and identity. Specifically, folktales such as "*Legend of Maria Makiling*", "*The Legend of Bernardo Carpio*", "*The Legend of Lam-Ang*", "*The Legend of the Sarimanok*", and "*The Legend of Maria Sinukuan*" highlight themes in connection to importance of environment, resilience and determination, bravery and heroism, creativity and appreciation of Filipino culture, respect for elders, hospitality, and hard work. (Eslit, 2023).

According to the United Nations Development Program as per the study of Sugue (2022), there are 110 ethnolinguistic groups in the Philippines wherein 30% of it came from the Cordillera Administrative Region (CAR) where most of the cultures and traditions are still being practiced compared to the rest of the Filipinos. The CAR is also deemed to have a rich ancient culture. Their way of living in the region existed even before the colonization of Spaniards. (*History: Department of agriculture - cordillera administrative region*, n.d.) The province of Kalinga is one of the provinces belonging to CAR. It is a land-locked region and has Tabuk City as its capital. Moreover, different, and numerous tribes exist in the province. (Patra, 2004)

Several folktales coming from different areas of Kalinga were also studied with regards to their themes using content analysis. Baggay and his colleagues (2017) documented folktales among two specific tribes in Pinukpuk, Kalinga namely Cal-owan and Limos tribes. Based on the study they conducted, short stories, legends, songs, and riddles were the four literary types that were found among Cal-owan whereas three literary types namely short stories, legends, and riddles were found. Furthermore, most of the stories have themes regarding heroes, origin of places, and uses for special occasions and rituals, while some aim to entertain children. (Baggay & Quilang, 2023)

One of the communities comprising Kalinga is Pasil. Alimondo and her colleagues (2021) described the ethnic origin of the people of Pasil. According to them, Pasil is composed of different aboriginal tribes originating from Gannipisan and Onoy tribes from the north, Binodngans called Ta-ao from Ilocos Region, and Bannagan from Ibanag Region. There are also several existing tales in Pasil alone such as the Legend of Galdang, Legend of Pugong, and Legend of Malucsad among others. However, there are still little studies regarding the folktales of Pasil specifically.

The current English curriculum, the Language Arts and Multiliteracies Curriculum (LAMC) covers learning competencies for 12 years compared to the previous 10 years and advanced English subjects are covered more in senior high school and they are covered as core subjects. Saysi and his colleagues (2023) studied the utilization of LAMC in Agusan del Sur in Mindanao. The study revealed that there are several gaps in enhancing language literacy and one of them is curriculum contextualization wherein educational processes by using culture sensitive and locally grounded pedagogies must be used to deepen the learners' understanding. Furthermore, curriculum contextualization was also described as the process of ensuring that the curriculum content and instructional strategies consider the identity, local experience and context of the learners.

Considering the rich diversity of tribes inhabiting Pasil, Kalinga and the gaps in curriculum contextualization found among other groups in the country, there is a need to determine and analyze the folktales existing in the different areas to further determine how culture, traditions, and beliefs of each area in the said region differ. In fact, the Department of Education (DepEd) has released multiple orders regarding policies on implementation as well as guidelines which oversee this proposition. One of which was the DepEd Order No. 010 Series of 2024 entitled "*Policy Guidelines on the Implementation of the MATATAG Curriculum*" which aims to link content of curriculum to the local experiences. With this, learning will be more effective. Giving significance to the unique cultures in K to 12 curricula is an essential key inclusive learning.

Moreover, the use of a specific method to analyze such folktales in the way that it considers the context of each folktale is necessary as it enhances curriculum contextualization ensuring a smooth execution of activities as instructed by the current curriculum. Hence, this study aims to explore culture, traditions, and beliefs of local people of Pasil, Kalinga through content analysis of the existing folktales in the community and the known knowledge from the elders of the

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community with regards to it and to develop an English instrumental resource to enhance language comprehension.

Problem Statement

Generally, this study aims to explore culture, traditions, and beliefs of local people of Kalinga through content analysis of the existing folktales in the community.

Specifically, this study seeks answers to the following questions:

1. What are the folktales existing among the locals of Pasil, Kalinga?
2. What are the themes that can be seen in the folktales of people of Pasil, Kalinga in terms of their culture, traditions, and beliefs?
3. What are the cultures, traditions, and beliefs of the locals of Pasil, Kalinga as reflected in their literature?

METHODOLOGY

Research design

This qualitative study utilized content analysis to further understand the culture of Pasil. This research method aims to indirectly obtain beliefs, values, attitudes and thoughts from sources such as visual, written or oral materials. (Bengtsson, 2016) Moreover, it is utilized to determine and give a systematic analysis of fixed communication that is driven by theory. (Seuring et. al., 2012). It is also content- sensitive and thus can analyze different data sets. (Kyngas et. al., 2020) With this, specific concepts and themes can be derived from similar data that can be found from the sources or materials. This inductive content analysis will utilize Bengtsson's (2016) method which will apply coding to the materials after analysis to be placed under common themes observed.

Respondents of the study

A total of nine (9) legends served as the data for the study which utilized content analysis method. As part of ensuring the validity and accuracy of the data in line with the objectives of the study, the following criteria was set in selecting folktales subjected for analysis: (a) Originated from Pasil, Kalinga.

Data Gathering Instruments

Published literary pieces from the "*A Resource Book on Indigenous Knowledge, System and Practices (IKSPs)*" written by Joyce Alimondo, Eileen Guyang and Perceus Limto were used. Criteria were set to ensure its validity and were tested using concluded aspects important for data validity of secondary resources as described by Tripathy (2013). This includes (a) data collection, (b) accuracy, (c) period of data collection, (d) purpose for which it was collected and the (e). content of the data.

Data Gathering Procedure

The data was obtained from the resource book entitled, "*A Resource Book on Indigenous Knowledge, System and Practices (IKSPs)*" written by Joyce Alimondo, Eileen Guyang and Perceus Limto. The said resource book was validated and approved by the Schools Division of Kalinga and by the community of Pasil, Kalinga as this served as the learning resource project of the Learning Resource Management and Development Unit, Curriculum Implementation Division,

Schools Division Kalinga and was drafted in response to the implementation of the K to 12 Curriculum. It was published on at September 2021, Schools Division of Kalinga, Pasil District, Kalinga. A permission to use the resource book was obtained and a certification from the main author was acquired to use the data. The resource book was read and analyzed and was subjected for data analysis, specifically, content analysis. Upon conducting the analysis, the research focus and objectives were defined and legends are then selected based on their origin. Data was prepared by transcribing oral legends and developing a coding framework to identify key themes, symbols, and cultural values. Researchers then reviewed the legends to identify recurring themes.

Data Analysis Procedure

All data obtained from the original resource book was subjected for analysis alongside the data that was transcribed obtained from the interview. Content analysis described by Bengtsson (2016) was utilized which comprising of main sequential stages namely decontextualization, recontextualization, categorization and compilation which can be carried out or structured as manifest analysis or latent analysis which analyzes what has been said in the context for the former and what intended to been said by the latter. The inductive content analysis as described by Bengtsson (2016) was utilized.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The legends of Pasil, Kalinga, as documented by Alimondo et al. (2019), encapsulate the rich cultural heritage, traditions, and belief systems of the Kalinga people. Through nine legends—such as The Legend of Bagtayan, Kabunyan, Guina-ang, and Balatoc—recurring themes such as a deep reverence for nature, valor, family, tribal unity, and spirituality emerge as central to the community's identity.

A distinct cultural theme is the community's intimate connection to nature. Legends consistently depict a lifestyle rooted in hunting, farming, and sustainable land practices like *kaingin*. This aligns with Eslit's (2023) view of Philippine folktales as emphasizing environmental harmony, and further supported by studies on the ethnobotanical use of local flora (Tondo et al., 2015) and the ecological significance of crops and terrain-specific vegetation (Galinato et al., 2017; Maches, 2023). These practices not only ensured survival but reinforced the spiritual and economic bond with the land.

Equally important is the cultural emphasis on bravery and heroism. Stories such as The Legend of Bagtayan and Balatoc underscore the warrior ethos of the Kalinga, where acts of headhunting and territorial defense symbolize honor. However, even within this warrior culture, the desire for peace and reconciliation is evident. This is exemplified by the cultural practice of *bodong* or peace pact, a traditional system of conflict resolution that reflects the tribe's dedication to peaceful coexistence (Evangelista, 2004; Haldemann, 2014).

The legends also highlight the central role of elders, or *pangat*, as wise leaders whose decisions guide marriage, conflict resolution, and cultural preservation. Their influence is not only respected but absolute, serving as the living bridge between the community's present and its ancestral wisdom (Naganag, 2019). This underscores the tribe's social cohesion and collective decision-making processes.

Spiritual beliefs deeply permeate the Kalinga worldview. The Legend of Kabunyan illustrates a belief in a god who dwells among the people, reflecting a spiritual cosmology akin to

Christian narratives. Moreover, stories like *The Legend of Ableg* suggest that spirits inhabit elements of the natural world—trees, rivers, and rocks—affirming a belief in the interconnection of the material and spiritual realms (Onoe, 2011; Shedden, 2013).

Family ties, marriage customs, and bloodline significance are portrayed as foundational elements of social structure, shaping identity, alliances, and survival. Marriage is shown not merely as a union of two individuals, but as an act requiring familial and tribal consensus, emphasizing community harmony over individual preference.

Finally, tribal conflict and its resolution form a recurring motif in the legends, reflecting historical realities of intertribal relations. Yet, the stories also show the Kalinga people's capacity for diplomacy and compromise, with legends such as *Calaguan* illustrating how land exchanges were used to end disputes and restore peace.

Altogether, the documented folktales of Pasil serve not only as literary treasures but as cultural archives that offer insight into the Kalinga people's values—bravery, kinship, reverence for nature, spiritual awareness, and community harmony. These themes are not only relevant to cultural preservation but can be effectively contextualized in educational curricula to deepen cultural understanding and identity among future generations.

CONCLUSION

Different legends across Pasil, Kalinga was analyzed through content analysis which focused on the derivation of different code units and emerging themes of the actual content of the literary pieces. Different cultures, traditions and beliefs were observed in the legends although most of the legends highlighted the culture of the people of Pasil being able to establish a community which rely heavily on their environment. The abundance of natural resources serves as the main factor for choosing their permanent homes as this would provide their needs for day-to-day living. Moreover, the values of people such as bravery, giving high significance to tribal leaders and parents, the culture of marriage and preserving their blood line were also noted. The issues in their society were also reflected through the tribal conflicts or war. Their belief on spirits and a higher being was also reflected in the few legends.

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