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Integration of Tausug Literature in Filipino Course: The Case of Mindanao State University, Sulu

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A B S T R A C T

The non-integration of the Tausug literature in the school curriculum provides continuous degeneration of the Tausug literature in the minds and practices of the young Tausug. On the other hand, the integration of the Tausug literature in Filipino literature subjects will revive the dying culture of the Tausug. This study aimed to determine the components of the Tausug literature for integration into Filipino subjects. This study uses interpretative phenomenological analysis as its research design. Focus group discussion (FGD) was conducted to gain an in-depth understanding of social issues. Moreover, to obtain data from a purposively selected group, this FGD recruited four Tausug Filipino Professors and a Tausug Islamic studies Professor who lived in the province of Sulu as participants of the study. FGD was held in one classroom in the college of education for 2 hours, and open-ended questions were raised to elicit responses from the participants. The integration of the Tausug literature in Filipino subjects or in the educational curriculum is very relevant in the Muslim areas and in the promotion of quality education. Teaching and preserving cultural values and heritage are vital components of quality education. Therefore, this integration strengthened cultural preservation, which in turn led to increased student awareness. If the students became conscious of their cultural orientation, cultural practices became a uniting factor among the people in the community.

1. Introduction

Literature is primarily a humanistic endeavor that has relevance in a very extensive fashion. It encompasses any kind of human situation or phase of human activity by means of its own particular modes of presentation. It mirrors reality and, at the same time, transforms that reality into an ideal that man strives to achieve. The man turns to literature to seek refuge from the drabness and chaos of everyday life. It is his self-expressed and sublimation as well as his salvation through a hypothetical solution to problems that afflict humanity. Literature is offered in the university as one of the required courses, which is sometimes included as a prerequisite subject in the higher English and Filipino major courses. The inclusion of literature as a requisite subject may eventually point out its importance in university courses. The content of the Philippine literature emphasizes the historical perspective of the foreign invasion of the Philippines, short stories (*maikling kuwento*), poetry (*tula),* song (*awit*), prose (*sanaysay*), and speech (*talumpati).*[1-4]

The teaching of literature to the students will provide them update information on their culture, stories, and social changes that have been taking place in the past generations.[5,6] The need for integrating the literature of the specific society in the school curriculum is essential to improve the awareness of the students of their culture. For instance, the literature of Tausug needs to be integrated in the university curriculum in the case of the Mindanao State University-Sulu to promote the awareness,

knowledge, and practices of the young Tausug of the cultural footprints of their forefathers. Otherwise, the young Tausugs today are illiterate about their cultural heritage.

Tausug literature includes poetry and prose and narrative and non-narrative forms. The content of these forms belongs to either of two traditions: folk, which is more closely related to indigenous culture, or Islamic, which is based on the Qur'an and the Hadith (sayings) and Sunna (traditions and practices) of the prophet Muhammad (SAW). Tuban wrote that non-narrative poetry includes *tigum-tigum* or *tukud tukud* (riddles), *masa'alla* (proverbs), *daman* (poetic dialogues or advice), *pituwa* (maxims), *malikata* (word inversions), *tilik* (love spells) and *tarasul* (poems). The Tausug folk narrative includes *salsila* (ethnohistorical narratives), *kaawn kissa* (creation stories), *usulan kissa* (origin stories), and *kata-kata* (marchen*).*[7,8]

The non-integration of the Tausug literature in the school curriculum provides continuous degeneration of the Tausug literature in the minds and practices of the young Tausug.[9] On the other hand, the integration of the Tausug literature into Filipino literature subjects will revive the dying culture of the Tausug. This study aimed to determine the components of the Tausug literature for integration into Filipino subjects.

2. Methods

This study used interpretative phenomenological analysis as its research design. Focus group discussion (FGD) was conducted to gain an in-depth understanding of social issues. Moreover, to obtain data from a purposively selected group, this FGD recruited four Tausug Filipino Professors and a Tausug Islamic studies Professor who lived in the province of Sulu as participants of the study. FGD was held in one classroom in the college of education for 2 hours, and open-ended questions were raised to elicit responses from the participants. The discussion was recorded using an electronic device. Thematic analysis was utilized as the method of data analysis. This method is used for describing data and also involves interpretation in the process of selecting codes and constructing themes. The data obtained were aligned with the goals of this research study.

3. Results and Discussions

The components of Tausug Literature included in this discussion were supplemented by reading literature in the books of the Tausug Authors. Practically the components of the Tausug Literature are divided into two major categories. These categories are narrative and non-narrative. The narrative category is delivered in the form of song and poetry. The components are delivered in the form of a song like *kissa, salsila*, and *mawlud*. This song is called *lugu* and *liangkit*. *Lugu* is used either in a ritual or to entertain and used in seventh, one-hundredth, and one-thousandth-day death anniversaries, *mauludin nabi* (birth and death anniversary) of the Prophet Muhammad (*sallallahu alayhi wasallam*) and baptismal occasion of the newborn baby of the Tausug.[10] *Lugu* performed as entertainment is usually with the accompaniment of musical instruments. This *lugu* is performed during the first night of the newly married couple. This celebration is motivated by the old tradition of the Tausug called *dum jaga*. During this night, the bride and the groom are not allowed to sleep, and ironically, the *lugu* is used to entertain the first-night newlywed couple at the same time, entertain relatives and friends as guests.

Liangkit is also a song used to narrate *salsila* and *kissa*. *Liangkit* is performed with the accompaniment of *gabbang* and *viola*. This *liangkit* is performed during the night after the wedding day of the young couple. This is to entertain guests and the newlywed. The subject of *liangkit* is sometime narrates religious inspiration, like *kissa pa kamatay, salsila sin ka awn*. The subjects of this kissa are narrations about the future life in the grave, the day of judgment, the pleasure in heaven, and the punishment and displeasure in hell fire.[11] The origin of man is also a subject of *kissa* and *salsila,* which serves as motivation to do good deeds and abstain from doing bad deeds.

In the focus group discussion, the participants were asked the question, "How do you describe the following Tausug literature?". The participants did not determine the difference between *salsila* and *kissa*. They viewed these two kinds of literature as interchangeably the same. Hereby the description of Tausug literature by some participants;

"*Salsila is a narration of the beginning of the world, and legend could be salsila, i. e. the legend of mount tumantangis. It came from the word silsila (chain), transmitted from the forefathers to the new generation*" (Participant A).

"*Salsila is an ethnohistorical story or story of the past. It is a verbal narration from one generation to another, both fiction and nonfiction"* (Participant B).

The other Tausug literature is *daman*. *Daman* is an ironic narration that carries implications. The uttered words in *daman* usually need an interpretation. *Daman* is used in most cases when negotiating for marriage. It needs a high level of intelligence. It is an unusual conversation that can be understood only by the expert, the composer of *daman*. The performance of *daman* serves as entertainment also. In the olden times, *daman* was used in the courtship of the youth. In the FGD proceedings, the participant, Participant A, described *daman* as a figurative speech. It serves as a source of lessons. It has symbolic meaning. Participant B described *daman* as a narration with rhymes. Participant C described *daman* is narrated as poem (*isinasatula)*, under the expression (*kasabihan' panumping*). Participant D said *daman* has a symbolic meaning. This group of participants described that *daman* is a figurative speech that conveys lessons with rhymes like poems that give indirect meaning to avoid embarrassment. They did not discuss further the use of *daman* and its purpose.

The other Tausug literature discussed in this study is the *tarasul. Tarasul* is sometimes performed mixed with daman. *Daman i*s an ingredient of *tarasul. Tarasul* is usually composed in plain Tausug language with a direct meaning of the word. In the FGD, participant A described *tarasul* as carrying a lesson (*awn pamintangan*), and participant B said *tarasul is* sometimes used in the song (*hipoglugu*). It has rhyme but with a straight meaning. The tarasul gives memories associated with *daman (magdihil panumtum, manjari hi lamud in daman patarasul).* The participants in this FGD described *tarasul* as a poem composed of a group of words expressed in plain language but carries with it a message of feelings, expression of love, pleasing, expression of religiosity, and expression of loneliness.

Ilmu kamaasan literally means the knowledge of the forefathers. It was taught by mouth-to-mouth teaching called *muqari.* Usually, this knowledge forbids writing. When this *ilmu* is put into writing, the effect will weaken, or the blessing will be reduced. *Ilmu kamaasan* is a type of holy knowledge that cannot be taught by writing. It is the knowledge full of blessings contained in *tawhid* and the manners of cleaning oneself from the dirt after a conjugal relationship or passing urine and waste (*kasussihan*).[12]

The other literature is the *masaalla. Masaalla* is also an expression of future events. For example, *tumaud in hadji, malawa na in bukay* [Many people performed hajj, but the birds (bukay) disappear]. Idiomatically means: when people become rich, the forest is used for building homes. Eventually, the birds migrate.

Another example: *tumaud in magsasambahayang sa malowa in barakat* [More people are praying but no blessing]. Idiomatically means: The people are doing without correct knowledge and sincerity. Therefore, there is no blessing.

Another literature under discussion is the *tigumtigum. Tigumtigum* or *tukudtukud* (riddle) is a play used to entertain that measures intelligence and develops critical thinking of the players. It makes the players think deeply and analyze the subject that was described by the phrase or sentence.[10]

The other literature described in the FGD is *mawlud*. Participant A described *mawlud,* which could be referring to rituals because *mawlud* is Arabic. Participant B said *mawlud* is possibly talking about ritual of *pagpurut, pagpagunting, pagtimbang.*

Participant C said *mawlud* is celebrated with *lugu* with its different kinds. Generally, the term *mawlud* is an Arabic term that means birth, applied explicitly in the birthday of the Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu Alayhi Wasallam) called *mawludin Nabi. Mawludin Nabi* falls on the 12th day of *Rabbi-ul Awwal*. This month was noted as the month of the birthday of the Prophet. *Mawlud* became part of the tradition of the Tausug as an expression of their profound love for the prophet. Based on the description of the FGD participants, *mawlud* is a ritual for *paggunting* (baptismal), a celebration of the birthday and death anniversary (also) of the Prophet, a lullaby for the bride and groom, the death anniversary of the Muslim, connotes the performance of *lugu* based on the reading of the book called *mawlud*.

The last literature given description in this study is *adat*. *Adat,* according to participant A, is to do the usual behavior (*pagpakay sin kabyaksahan*). Therefore, it is not literature. Participant B said it is behavior (*kawipiil*). Participant A added that *adat* in Arabic is *adab*, it involves body, communication, and behavior (*anggawta iban qawlpiil*). Participant D said *adat* is culture and values, so it is part of literature. The discussion showed inconsistency in consideration of *adat* in literature. The respondents are divided when describing *adat* as part of literature, but this inconsistency may vary on the use of the word. If *adat* is considered a way of life, it can be considered part of the culture. Therefore it is literature; otherwise, if it is considered a behavioral existence at a specific point in time, it could be considered not part of literature.

The result of the FGD showed the areas of Tausug literature that needed to be integrated into teaching Filipino. According to the participants, the areas of literature that should be integrated are *salsila, kissa, daman*, all except *mowlud,* and the concept of *adat* (translating the literature and using it in teaching). The integration of Filipino subjects into the areas of literature was strongly recommended for the translation of the text. The translation from Bahasa Sug to Filipino to suit the purpose of integration is strongly recommended so that the students can be equipped with the learning of the Filipino language and at the same time learn the Tausug literature.

In the integration of *salsila* and *kissa,* the teacher in Filipino should be equipped with the resources from which the *kissa* and *salsila* originated, like for example, tape records, digital copies, and other media. It can also be gathered from the resource persons who are capable of narrating the whole *kissa* or *salsila* of the subject. Otherwise, without available sources of information, the integration will not succeed. Definitely, the resources of Tausug *kissa* and *salsila* are now scarcely found in the areas of Sulu. Therefore, there is a need to designate a committee or responsible group to research the availability of the resources of *kissa* and *salsila.*

In the FGD, it was suggested by the majority of the participants that the integration of the Tausug literature in the Filipino subject should be done on case to case bases. They said the integration should be done in the subject areas but not in the syllabus. There is a need to secure the Tausug literature resources, and this security must be in the write-up, digitally encoded, or documented in its original form. Modular teaching could be very effective in integrating the Tausug literature into learning Filipino subjects. The advantage of the module, the students can study in advance the lesson for the day. Another advantage is the continuous learning process and even the teachers are not around to facilitate the teaching-learning processes. Modular instruction is very important to be followed by the students for the success of learning. Failure to follow the instruction might be one of the causes of failure to learn the Tausug literature.

4. Conclusion

The integration of Tausug literature in Filipino subjects or in the educational curriculum is very relevant in the Muslim areas and in the promotion of quality education. The teaching and preservation of cultural values and heritage are one of the vital components of quality education. Therefore, this integration strengthened cultural preservation, which

in turn led to increased student awareness. If the students became conscious of their cultural orientation, cultural practices became a uniting factor among the people in the community.

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