

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN UNDERSTANDING OF INDIGENOUS ARTS, LEVEL OF LITERACY, AND LINGUISTIC COMPETENCE OF STUDENTS

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to determine the relationship between understanding of indigenous arts, literacy levels, and linguistic competence of students at Bukidnon State University. It was conducted using a descriptive-correlational research design to measure the level of understanding of indigenous arts based on knowledge, appreciation, and participation, and to examine whether this understanding has a significant relationship with literacy and linguistic competence in the Filipino language. The study involved 200 students enrolled in IS 102: Language and Culture in a Peaceful Society, selected through purposive sampling. Data were collected using a validated questionnaire and analyzed through mean, standard deviation, and Pearson Product-Moment Correlation (r). The results revealed that the students demonstrated high levels of understanding of indigenous arts, high literacy levels, and high linguistic competence. A strong positive relationship was also found between understanding of indigenous arts and literacy, as well as between understanding of arts and linguistic competence. These findings suggest that indigenous arts serve as a vital tool in fostering literacy and linguistic competence, as they embody cultural experiences, symbols, and Filipino-centered values. Accordingly, the study recommends broader integration of indigenous arts into language instruction as a step toward heritage-based education and strengthening national identity.

Keyword: indigenous arts, literacy, linguistic competence, Filipino culture, language and identity

1. INTRODUCTION

Over time, the attitudes and values of young people toward global culture have expanded, often at the expense of a deep connection with their own culture and language. In the context of the Philippines, indigenous arts and traditions are not merely forms of aesthetic expression; they also serve as bridges to language, identity, and appreciation of indigenous experiences. According to the Commission on the Filipino Language (KWF), the theme of Buwan ng Wika 2022 was “Filipino and Indigenous Languages: Tools for Discovery and Creation,” highlighting the mission to develop and revitalize indigenous languages and arts as part of the national identity (KWF, 2022).

It is undeniable that language and art work hand in hand in fostering creative thinking and communication. Language serves as a medium for understanding, while art provides the context or “text” through which culture and experience are expressed. In this regard, the concept of

“understanding of indigenous arts” serves as a central variable in this study, as it may either enhance or hinder students’ literacy and linguistic competence. In studies on education and culture, the integration of language and culture is considered crucial for deepening literacy and communicative abilities (Jocson, 2015).

Across many regions in the country, there is a noticeable decline in interest in indigenous arts and languages, coinciding with the rising influence of cultural and digital globalization. Consequently, it is necessary to examine how students’ understanding of indigenous arts relates to their literacy levels and linguistic competence. As one study notes, “language and culture are closely interconnected, such that language and culture are inseparable” (Santos et al., 2009, cited in Santos et al., 2023).

This suggests that the deeper the appreciation and understanding of culture and art, the more effective the use and development of language as a tool for communication and learning may be.

Literacy, defined as an individual's ability to read, write, comprehend, and express oneself, is a vital measure of educational success in the modern era. Likewise, linguistic competence extends beyond grammatical and lexical knowledge to include the contextualized use of language in cultural and social settings.

In line with this perspective, this study aims to determine the level of students' understanding of indigenous arts based on their knowledge of symbolism and messages, appreciation as a medium of culture and language, and participation in activities related to indigenous arts as well as their literacy in the Filipino language and linguistic competence. Furthermore, it investigates whether there is a significant relationship between understanding of indigenous arts and students' literacy and linguistic competence.

By analyzing these relationships, this research is expected to shed light on the importance of integrating indigenous arts and language in education, and serve as a reference for teachers, administrators, and scholars in planning and implementing cultural and language programs. Ultimately, it is hoped that this study will contribute to the field of research on language, culture, and education in the Philippines.

2. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

To gain a thorough understanding of the role of indigenous arts in education, it is essential to explore students' levels of knowledge and appreciation of these arts. At the same time, their literacy and linguistic competence should be examined as part of their academic development. In this context, the study seeks to answer the following specific problems:

1. What is the level of students' understanding of indigenous arts in terms of the following aspects:
 - a. Knowledge of the symbolism and messages in indigenous arts;
 - b. Appreciation of indigenous arts as a medium of culture and language;
 - c. Participation in activities related to indigenous arts?
2. What is the level of students' literacy in the Filipino language?

3. What is the level of students' linguistic competence?
4. Is there a significant relationship between students' level of understanding of indigenous arts and their literacy levels?
5. Is there a significant relationship between students' level of understanding of indigenous arts and their linguistic competence?

3. METHODOLOGY

This study employed a quantitative descriptive-correlational design aimed at determining students' level of understanding of indigenous arts and examining its relationship with their literacy and linguistic competence. According to Creswell (2014), descriptive-correlational research is used to identify relationships between two or more variables and to assess the strength and direction of these relationships (Creswell, 2014). Populasyon at Sampol

4. POPULATION AND SAMPLE

The population of the study consisted of 200 students from the College of Education at Bukidnon State University enrolled in IS 102: Language and Culture in a Peaceful Society. The sample was selected using purposive sampling, focusing on students who are actively involved in cultural activities and possess knowledge of indigenous arts. The sample size of 200 was deemed sufficient to provide reliable statistical analysis and to determine the relationship between understanding of indigenous arts and students' literacy levels and linguistic competence.

5. RESEARCH INSTRUMENT

The study utilized a systematically constructed questionnaire, developed based on previous studies by Catabu (2019), Denavi (2023), and Marina (2021), to ensure relevance and academic validity of each item. The questionnaire was designed to measure students' knowledge, appreciation, and skills regarding indigenous arts and the Filipino language.

Each item was rated using a Likert scale (1 – Strongly Disagree to 5 – Strongly Agree), allowing for systematic analysis of participants' responses. To ensure the quality and reliability of the instrument, it underwent a rigorous validation

process. For content validation, three experts in Filipino and Philippine culture reviewed and approved the questionnaire, confirming the clarity, academic appropriateness, and proper construction of each item. Pilot testing and reliability checks were conducted with 50 students prior to the main survey, and internal consistency was assessed using Cronbach's alpha.

Overall, the questionnaire was deemed appropriate, systematic, and credible, providing a reliable basis for analyzing the relationship between students' understanding of indigenous arts and their literacy levels and linguistic competence.

6. DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURE

Prior to the main study, the researcher obtained official permission from the administration of Bukidnon State University and the instructors of IS 102: Language and Culture in a Peaceful Society. This ensured that data collection complied with institutional guidelines and ethical standards. Participants were informed about the purpose of the research, the importance of their participation, and the guarantee that all responses would remain confidential and used solely for academic purposes.

After the briefing, the questionnaire was distributed to participants. Distribution could be done in person under the supervision of the researcher to ensure proper completion and provide immediate clarification if needed, or online via Google Forms in cases where physical presence was limited. After collection, the data were carefully reviewed to ensure completeness and accuracy before statistical analysis. This systematic procedure ensured that the data were reliable, valid, and suitable for examining the relationships among understanding of indigenous arts, literacy levels, and linguistic competence.

7. DATA ANALYSIS PROCEDURE

To analyze the collected data, descriptive statistics were used to determine the levels of students' understanding of indigenous arts, literacy, and linguistic competence. The analysis included mean, standard deviation, and frequency distribution, serving as a basis for describing the general condition and typical responses of participants.

Additionally, Pearson Product-Moment Correlation (r) was employed to examine whether there were significant relationships between understanding of indigenous arts and literacy levels, as well as between understanding of indigenous arts and linguistic competence. This statistical method allowed the determination of the direction and strength of relationships between variables and whether the observed correlations were statistically significant.

For result interpretation, each variable was described using the following legend: Very High, High, Moderate, Low, and Very Low (range 1–5). The strength of the correlations was interpreted based on the r -value, ranging from ± 0.00 to ± 1.00 , where higher positive or negative r -values indicate stronger relationships between variables. This systematic approach provided a clear and reliable basis for analyzing and interpreting the relationship between understanding of indigenous arts and students' literacy and linguistic competence.

8. ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The study strictly adhered to ethical standards to protect the rights and welfare of participants. First, participants were fully informed about the purpose, significance, and procedures of the study before obtaining their consent, ensuring that they understood their participation and the nature of the data they would provide.

Second, confidentiality of all collected information was maintained; data were used solely for academic purposes and were not shared with any party or institution without participants' consent.

Finally, voluntary participation was ensured, allowing participants to withdraw from the study at any time without any penalty or consequence. These measures ensured that the research was conducted with respect for the rights, dignity, and safety of all participants.

Presentation, Analysis, and Discussion of Data

Table 1. Level of Students' Understanding of Indigenous Arts

Aspect	Mean	Description	Qualitative Interpretation
a. Knowledge	4.28	Strongly Agree	Very High

e of symbolis m and messages			
b. Appreciat ion as a medium of culture and language	4.35	Strongly Agree	Very High
c. Participat ion in cultural activities	3.98	Agree	High
Overall Mean	4.2 0	Agree	High level of understand ing

Legend:

Range	Description	Qualitative Interpretation
4.21 – 5.00	Strongly Agree	Very High level of understanding of indigenous arts
3.41 – 4.20	Agree	High level of understanding of indigenous arts
2.61 – 3.40	Moderately Agree	Moderate level of understanding of indigenous arts
1.81 – 2.60	Disagree	Low level of understanding of indigenous arts
1.00 – 1.80	Strongly Disagree	Very Low level of understanding of indigenous arts

Table 1 shows that the overall mean of 4.20 indicates a high level of students' understanding of indigenous arts. The highest mean was observed in the aspect of appreciation as a medium of culture and language ($M = 4.35$, "Very High"), followed by knowledge of symbolism and messages ($M = 4.28$, "Very High"), while

participation in cultural activities received a slightly lower but still "High" score ($M = 3.98$).

The data suggest that students not only possess a deep awareness of the symbolism and meaning of indigenous arts but also hold a strong appreciation for these arts as a conduit of Filipino culture and language. The slightly lower score in participation may be attributed to limited opportunities or programs at the university that highlight cultural activities. As noted by Torres (2020), active participation in artistic activities is critical in shaping cultural awareness, yet it requires institutional support and curricular integration.

The high level of understanding reflects that students remain conscious of the role of indigenous arts as a medium of language, culture, and identity. As emphasized by Marina (2021), art serves as a tool for expressing cultural experiences and identity, which in turn shapes youth literacy. Furthermore, Nolasco (2012) highlights that understanding one's own language and arts provides a foundation for deeper literacy, as it is rooted in the construction of social and cultural meanings. From this perspective, the high mean in the aspect of appreciation as a medium of culture and language indicates that students recognize art as a liberating space for expression and learning.

Overall, the results show that students possess a broad and meaningful understanding of indigenous arts, particularly in terms of symbolism and cultural values. However, despite high awareness, there remains a need to further enhance actual participation in cultural activities to strengthen and sustain youth connection to their heritage. In line with UNESCO's (2018) perspective on heritage-based learning, integrating local arts and traditions into education is essential for enhancing both literacy and cultural identity. The data suggest that incorporating indigenous arts into the curriculum is an effective strategy not only to develop understanding of the arts but also to enrich language skills and cultural awareness in the academic context.

Table 2. Level of Students' Literacy in the Filipino Language

Aspect	Mean	Description	Qualitative Interpretation
1. Ability to read literary texts	4.25	Strongly Agree	Very High
2. Writing logical and coherent essays	4.10	Agree	High
3. Creative use of language in writing	3.95	Agree	High
4. Analyzing statements based on context	4.18	Agree	High
Overall Literacy Mean	4.12	Agree	High level of literacy

Range Description Qualitative Interpretation

4.21 – Strongly Agree	Very High level of literacy in Filipino
3.41 – Agree	High level of literacy in Filipino
2.61 – Moderately Agree	Moderate level of literacy in Filipino
1.81 – Disagree	Low level of literacy in Filipino
1.00 – Strongly Disagree	Very Low level of literacy in Filipino

Legend:

Based on Table 2, the overall mean of 4.12 indicates a high level of students' literacy in Filipino. The highest score was in the ability to read literary texts (M = 4.25, "Very High"), while writing logical and coherent essays (M = 4.10), creative use of language in writing (M = 3.95), and analyzing statements based on context (M = 4.18)

were slightly lower but still "High." This suggests that students have strong skills in reading and analysis, as well as in using language as a tool for comprehension and expression.

The high level of literacy demonstrates well-developed communicative abilities in Filipino. The results also show that students' receptive skills (reading and comprehension) are stronger than their productive skills (writing and creative language use). According to Nolasco (2012), literacy in the first language serves as the foundation for critical thinking and learning across disciplines. Similarly, Jocson (2015) emphasizes that using the local language in reading and writing enhances meaningful learning because language reflects one's own culture and experiences. Thus, the high mean in reading literary texts may reflect a strong connection to texts rooted in Filipino culture.

High literacy in Filipino indicates successful use of language as a tool for cognitive and cultural learning. As Halliday (1978) notes, language is a social semiotic a system of meaning-making grounded in human and social relations. When students engage with texts rooted in their experiences, their comprehension deepens. Furthermore, Denavi (2023) points out that literacy instruction becomes more effective when linked to local arts and culture, fostering critical reflection and creative thinking. The slightly lower mean in creative language use (M = 3.95) may suggest the need for more literary and creative writing activities to enhance the expressive dimension of literacy.

Overall, the results indicate that students possess strong cultural and linguistic literacy. Their high levels of reading, analysis, and writing demonstrate effective use of Filipino as a medium for learning and cognitive development. However, pedagogical strategies should further promote creative use of language to achieve fully transformative literacy, in line with UNESCO's (2018) view that education should foster heritage-based literacy. In this way, literacy in Filipino is not merely a technical skill but a cultural process of understanding and meaning-making that connects students to their identity, history, and culture.

Table 3. Level of Students' Linguistic Competence

Indicator	Mean	Description	Qualitative Interpretation
1. Expressing ideas in Filipino	4.32	Strongly Agree	Very High
2. Use of indigenous/regional words	3.98	Agree	High
3. Understanding culturally meaningful words	4.25	Strongly Agree	Very High
Overall Linguistic Competence Mean	4.18	Agree	High level of linguistic competence

Legend:

Range	Description	Qualitative Interpretation
4.21 – 5.00	Strongly Agree	Very High level of linguistic competence
3.41 – 4.20	Agree	High level of linguistic competence
2.61 – 3.40	Moderately Agree	Moderate level of linguistic competence
1.81 – 2.60	Disagree	Low level of linguistic competence
1.00 – 1.80	Strongly Disagree	Very Low level of linguistic competence

Table 3 shows that the overall mean of 4.18 corresponds to a high level of linguistic competence among the students. The highest scores were observed in expressing ideas in Filipino (M = 4.32, “Very High”), followed by understanding culturally meaningful words (M = 4.25, “Very High”), while the use of indigenous/regional words was slightly lower but still “High” (M = 3.98). The data indicate that students are proficient in using Filipino to express ideas and understand words in a cultural context, though there is a minor limitation in employing indigenous or regional terms.

The high level of linguistic competence reflects students’ strong capabilities in academic and cultural communication. The results suggest that students effectively use Filipino as a medium for expressing ideas and reflection, though there is a

need to further enhance the use of regional and indigenous languages. According to Nolasco (2012), students’ multilingual competence is key to deeper cultural understanding and the development of Filipino-oriented thinking. Similarly, Santos, Reyes, and Manalo (2023) emphasized that language and culture are intertwined, meaning that the development of linguistic competence also depends on cultural awareness.

The high mean in expressing ideas in Filipino may result from active use of the language in academic interactions, while the slightly lower score in using indigenous/regional words may be attributed to the dominance of the national language and English in formal school communication (Salazar, 1999). In this context, students demonstrate strong linguistic skills but may still lack inclusivity when it comes to regional languages.

The results suggest that students are capable of using Filipino as an effective tool for intellectualization and self-expression. In line with Halliday (1978), language is a social semiotic system in which meaning is created through the interaction of language and society. Therefore, students’ linguistic competence is not merely a technical skill but a manifestation of their ability to participate in cultural and social discourse. Moreover, Marina (2021) highlights that the relationship between art and language opens broader avenues of communication where language conveys both aesthetic and cultural expression. Consequently, high linguistic competence reflects not only academic proficiency but also students’ sensitivity to the cultural contexts of their communication.

Overall, the data show that students possess strong linguistic competence rooted in Filipino culture. However, the use of indigenous and regional languages should be expanded to enhance communicative inclusivity. This aligns with UNESCO’s (2018) recommendations on “linguistic and cultural diversity” as a pillar of decolonized education. Incorporating more active use of local languages in academic and cultural activities can further develop students’ linguistic competence in ways that reflect the country’s truly multilingual and multicultural identity. In this perspective, high linguistic competence demonstrates that Filipino continues to serve as a

medium for critical thinking, cultural identity, and national consciousness.

Table 4. Relationship between Understanding of Indigenous Arts and Students' Literacy Level

Variable Pair	r-value	p-value	Interpretation
Understanding of Indigenous Arts and Literacy	0.78	0.000	Strong positive relationship (statistically significant)

Table 4 shows that the r-value of 0.78 and p-value of 0.000 indicate a strong positive relationship between students' understanding of indigenous arts and their literacy levels in Filipino. This means that as students' understanding of indigenous arts increases, their literacy in Filipino also improves. The result is statistically significant ($p < 0.05$), confirming a meaningful relationship between the two variables.

This strong correlation suggests that understanding art plays a significant role in literacy development. Students who highly appreciate indigenous arts are also more engaged in linguistic and literary activities. According to Denavi (2023), art serves as a "medium for cultural literacy" because its symbols, rituals, and aesthetic elements cultivate deeper understanding of language and Filipino ways of thinking. Furthermore, Jocson (2015) emphasizes that using local language and culturally grounded practices enhances students' critical literacy by connecting cultural experience with academic learning.

The high correlation ($r = 0.78$) indicates that studying arts fosters not only aesthetic appreciation but also cognitive literacy development. In educational contexts, Torres (2020) and Marina (2021) highlight that when art is used as a tool for language instruction, students' skills in reading, writing, and interpreting culturally meaningful texts improve significantly.

This outcome can be explained through Halliday's (1978) *Language as Social Semiotic* perspective, which views language as a social system for creating meaning. In this framework, art as a

cultural text helps students understand language not merely as a system of symbols but as a medium for social experience. A strong understanding of indigenous arts opens broader avenues for interpretative thinking, contextual analysis, and cultural reflection—skills foundational to literacy (UNESCO, 2018). Students actively participating in artistic activities become more sensitive to the cultural meanings embedded in words and texts, leading to deeper cognitive and cultural literacy.

In summary, the results show that understanding indigenous arts is a crucial factor in developing literacy in Filipino. Art functions as a medium for understanding language within a cultural context, suggesting that literacy instruction should be integrated with culturally meaningful activities. This relationship aligns with the Commission on the Filipino Language's (2022) recommendation to integrate indigenous arts and language into curricula to enhance literacy grounded in Filipino culture. As UNESCO (2018) emphasizes, heritage-based education develops not only reading and writing skills but also deeper literacy characterized by cultural identity, social awareness, and national values.

Table 5. Relationship between Understanding of Indigenous Arts and Students' Linguistic Competence

Variable Pair	r-value	p-value	Interpretation
Understanding of Indigenous Arts and Linguistic Competence	0.81	0.000	Strong positive relationship (statistically significant)

Table 5 reveals that the r-value of 0.81 and p-value of 0.000 indicate a strong positive relationship between students' understanding of indigenous arts and their linguistic competence. This result is statistically significant ($p < 0.05$), meaning that as students' understanding of indigenous arts increases, so does their ability to use the Filipino language effectively for expression, comprehension, and interaction.

This strong correlation suggests that art and language are interconnected instruments of communication and personal development. Students with a deep understanding of indigenous arts also demonstrate higher linguistic competence because art provides cultural and symbolic context to language use. According to Santos, Reyes, and Manalo (2023), language and culture are intertwined, implying that language use cannot be separated from cultural forms such as art, music, and literature. Likewise, Marina (2021) emphasizes that studying art enhances students' ability to express themselves in their own language, as they learn to identify, explain, and enact symbolic forms of communication.

The high r -value (0.81) indicates that indigenous arts not only foster aesthetic understanding but also serve as a practical platform for language—a space where meaning is constructed, enriched, and communicated in socially meaningful ways. According to Halliday (1978), language is a social semiotic system; therefore, contexts such as art become vital spaces where the interaction of language, culture, and meaning is lived and experienced.

The findings suggest that students engaged in culturally rich activities become more proficient in using Filipino. Indigenous arts stimulate experiential learning, where language is not merely a subject to study but a tool for experience and identity. Denavi (2023) notes that youth participating in artistic activities develop not only aesthetic skills but also depth in discourse using their own language. Similarly, Salazar (1999) points out that the promotion of national consciousness is rooted in the sustained use of the native language in the fields of art, culture, and education.

Thus, the strong positive relationship between understanding art and linguistic competence is evidence of cognitive-cultural interaction: as students comprehend the symbols and themes of art, their skills in interpretation, explanation, and creative language use are simultaneously enhanced.

The results show that understanding indigenous arts is an effective tool for developing linguistic competence. This demonstrates that language is not merely a technical skill but a cultural practice shaped by art and society. It aligns with the Commission on the Filipino Language's (2022)

goal of promoting Filipino as a tool for creativity and cultural expression, as well as UNESCO's (2018) call to strengthen heritage-based education to enhance youth linguistic competence and cultural fluency.

The robust positive correlation ($r = 0.81$) confirms that integrating indigenous arts into language teaching not only enriches knowledge but also deepens communicative, cultural, and national awareness. These results advocate a holistic perspective of language as an art, a medium of identity, and a foundation for cultural literacy.

8. SYNTHESIS OF OVERALL RESULTS

Based on the results from the five tables, it is evident that students exhibit high levels of understanding of indigenous arts, literacy, and linguistic competence, demonstrating a strong interconnection among these aspects in their cultural and academic development.

From Table 1, students showed a high to very high level of understanding of indigenous arts ($M = 4.20$), particularly in the dimension of valuing art as a medium of culture and language. This indicates that art is recognized not only as an aesthetic expression but also as a medium for identity and language. As emphasized by Marina (2021) and Torres (2020), art is a powerful tool in shaping cultural awareness and deepening the meaning of language.

Table 2 revealed a high level of literacy in Filipino ($M = 4.12$). The data show that students are proficient in reading and analyzing literary texts and in writing logical essays. As Nolasco (2012) noted, literacy in one's mother tongue is foundational to learning and critical thinking, while the use of local languages deepens comprehension of texts with cultural dimensions (Jocson, 2015).

Meanwhile, Table 3 demonstrated that students' linguistic competence is also high ($M = 4.18$), with the strongest performance in expressing ideas in Filipino and understanding culturally significant terms. Halliday's (1978) Language as Social Semiotic theory supports this, emphasizing that language is a social system of meaning-making, constantly interacting with one's cultural environment.

Furthermore, Table 4 showed a strong positive correlation between understanding indigenous

arts and literacy ($r = 0.78, p < 0.05$). This suggests that as students deepen their understanding of art, their literacy level also increases. This relationship highlights the effectiveness of culture-based education, where language and art work together to enhance skills in reading, writing, and expression (Denavi, 2023; UNESCO, 2018).

Similarly, Table 5 revealed a strong positive relationship between understanding art and linguistic competence ($r = 0.81, p < 0.05$), confirming that art effectively mediates the development of communicative and expressive language skills. According to Santos, Reyes, and Manalo (2023), language and culture are intertwined: understanding culture enriches the use of language.

Overall, the findings indicate that understanding indigenous arts significantly influences the development of literacy and linguistic competence. Art serves not only as a supportive tool in language teaching but also as a primary conduit for cultural literacy and national identity. These findings align with the goals of the Commission on the Filipino Language (2022) and UNESCO (2018) in promoting heritage-based learning—education rooted in the language, culture, and art of the community.

Thus, this study highlights that integrating indigenous arts into language education not only fosters aesthetic appreciation but also enhances cultural literacy, communicative proficiency, and national consciousness among Filipino youth.

9. CONCLUSION

Based on the study results, a strong positive relationship was found between students' understanding of indigenous arts and their literacy levels ($r = 0.78, p < 0.05$), as well as between understanding indigenous arts and linguistic competence ($r = 0.81, p < 0.05$). This indicates that as students' understanding of indigenous arts deepens, their ability to use Filipino in reading, writing, and communication also improves.

In sum, the study confirms that indigenous arts are a vital factor in enhancing literacy and linguistic competence, serving as a medium for cultural symbols, experiences, and values that bind students' language and identity. The findings demonstrate that education rooted in art and culture not only develops aesthetic understanding

but also strengthens cognitive and communicative skills.

Theoretically, the study supports Halliday (1978) and Nolasco's (2012) views that language is a social semiotic system and literacy is grounded in culture and social experience. It also validates UNESCO's (2018) recommendation that heritage-based education effectively fosters cultural awareness and national identity among youth.

Hence, a high level of understanding of indigenous arts signifies holistic student development in cultural knowledge, literacy, and linguistic competence the foundation of meaningful, Filipino-centered education.

10. RECOMMENDATIONS

For Filipino and Education Teachers

- Integrate and expand curriculum activities based on indigenous arts, such as performances, creative writing, and analysis of local literature, as strategies for teaching language and literacy.
- Use art as a contextual platform for learning to enhance communicative competence and cultural values among students.

For School Administrators

- Encourage interdisciplinary programs linking language, arts, and Filipino culture through seminars, exhibits, and community immersion focused on local heritage.
- This will allow students to apply language meaningfully within cultural contexts.

For Students

- Actively participate in cultural activities such as Buwan ng Wika celebrations, indigenous theater performances, and creative projects to deepen understanding of their own art and language as part of Filipino identity.

For Education Policymakers

- Implement programs emphasizing heritage-based and multilingual education in line with UNESCO (2018) and the Commission on the Filipino Language (2022).

- Promote teacher training in utilizing local arts and languages as core components of instruction.

For Future Researchers

- Expand studies by comparing different regions or educational levels or conduct qualitative research to better understand students' experiences in using indigenous arts as a medium for language and literacy development.

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