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# Literatures of Western Visayas: Collection and Categorization

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**Abstract.** This collaborative qualitative study of the Filipino Department, West Visayas State University, Iloilo Philippines, aimed to collect and categorize local/indigenous literatures of Western Visayas (Region VI). This study was based on Oral Tradition and was made possible through interviews with the informants from different provinces in Western Visayas. The researchers utilized compiled Panayanon literatures from the colleges and universities of the region as well as those downloaded from the internet. Guide questions, cassette and mobile phone recorders, digital cameras and tablets were used as instrument. The result showed that Western Visayas has a very rich local/indigenous literature that reflect the culture and traditions of its people. Literatures collected were categorized according to genre as follows: *bulong*, *hurubaton*, *huding*, and other short verses; folk songs, *daigon* and *dayaw*; passion and praises; and, *lowa*, riddles and short stories. Themes derived from these literatures were: thanksgiving, courtship and marriage, occupation and way of life, social problems, calamities, heroism, environmental consciousness, praises to muses and to the Virgin Mary, passion of Christ, plants and animals, places, foods and many others. Furthermore, people from Western Visayas were very creative, imaginative and intelligent to write and compose these literatures.

## 1. Introduction

Region VI-Western Visayas has a very rich literature. It is commonly known as Panayanon or Hiligaynon Literatures [4] consisting all forms of literatures from the Island of Panay (Iloilo, Antique, Capiz, Aklan) and even from the Islands of Guimaras and Negros Occidental. Collection of local and regional literatures shows literary appreciation made by creative imagination and intelligence of the ancestors and even of generations influenced by Western and other foreign cultures. Through Hiligaynon language which is the lingua franca of the region, Panayanon preserved its strong sense of identity and valued their own cultural heritage.

This research is also an initiative to collect local literatures written in Hiligaynon/ Kinaray-a, to make widely known the literature of Western Visayas written in Hiligaynon/kinaray-a in response to Dep ED



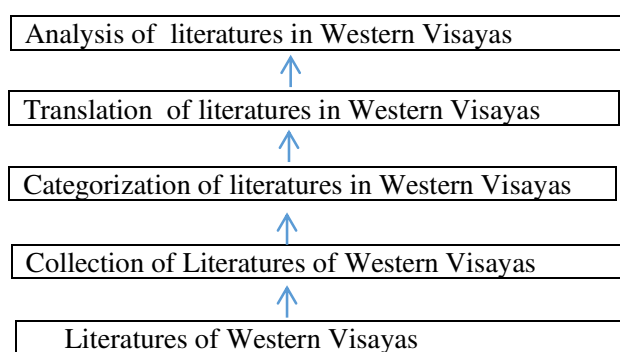
Order 74 s. 2009 also known as Mother Tongue – Based Multilingual Education or first language as part of the K-12 Curriculum. The conceptualization also of this study is based from the provision of teaching of the regional literatures as stated in the CHED order # 59 s. 1996, emphasizing that Literatura 101 (Lit 101), should be taught as a basic subject in the tertiary level.

This study aimed to collect and to categorize local literatures of Western Visayas. Specifically, this study sought to answer the following questions:

1. What are the local literatures of Western Visayas?
2. How these literatures are being categorized?

This study uses the Oral Tradition Theory. It is based on verbal expression of people's knowledge of the society and transmitted through oral tradition. Message is also expressed through speech or songs (sayings, proverbs, poems, ballads, rituals and the like).

Paradigm of the study.



**Figure 1.** *Literatures of Western visayas: collection and categorization*

Western Visayas situated in Central Philippines composed of six provinces that has its own literature even before the Spaniards came in the country. Many Hiligaynon literatures were not written and handed down orally from one generation to another generation. Example of these Hiligaynon literature were the following: verses that were used in curing the sick, protection for safety and guidance, folksongs, ballads, riddles some other old stories. Until now these indigenous literatures still exist. Some folks use the Bulong, this refers to words, phrases or songs dedicated to gods and goddesses, and also to the souls that are usually spoken by babaylan/ arbularyo (faith healer). Awiting bayan (Folk Songs) are something that are indigenous to a culture, popularized at events and passed down mostly orally. Komposo (Ballad) are popular songs typically about love and different political and social issues in the community.

Daigon refers to Christmas carols sung during the season. Bugtong (Riddles) are questions expressed by the Hiligaynons in metaphorical language that require ingenuity and careful thinking of their solution. Loa is a short poem composed of four lines having its meter and rhyme. The recitation of a loa is participated by two groups of boys and girls who are refuting in a form of poetry. The ladies have their own "depensor" who is ready to defend any member from the group who is about to loose from the opponent. This loa is practiced by the natives in the wake of a member a family who passed away but nowadays this form of local literature were just only practiced by very few local natives.

That it is important to gather and analyze literature in vernacular or native languages because it has a big contribution for the enrichment of the national literature [5]. The main source of the national literature are the local literatures. Identification of the source of a local literature is an extension towards nationalization. Furthermore, [6] added that deeper understanding and appreciation of culture can be done by studying varied literature of a certain place. Engaging the students in literature will help them learn to value local literatures that were passed down by their folks and will also develop their sense of identity.

## 2. Method

This study utilized the Qualitative research design based on Oral Tradition Theory. The researchers gathered the data through interview with the informants from the different municipalities in Western Visayas. Guide questions, /tape recorder/cellphone voice recorder and digital camera/tablet were used to gather and document the data. After gathering the local/indigenous literature the researchers categorized those literature according to its form and theme.

## 3. Results and Discussions

It was proven that Western Visayas has a very rich literature. It is still exists and being practiced by old folks. Most of these literatures were written, collected and stored in the libraries of schools and universities in the region. Some of these are collected and published by private individuals who have passion in writing local literatures.

The collected literatures are categorized according to form. These are Bulong, Hurubaton, Hururaon/ Ududayon, Hurubaton/Daragilon, Huding, Likayo, Hakol, Hangkat, Garay-garay and other old shorter verses; Ambahanon, Daigon, Komposo (Folk songs); Dayaw/ Dalit and Pasyon (verses/songs of praise); and Lowa, Paktakon/Palagatu (riddles), and Sugilanon (folk tales). The results of categorizing the local literatures into its form showed that:

The **Bulong** which is being called by the Panayanon's as Hururaon or Ududayon were composed of Himalay, Panabi-tabi, Burubugayon, Batak-dungan, Araw-aw and some other old shorter verses are usually the chants used by the folks in performing different rituals. The purpose of offering rituals is to give remedy to any member of the family who is suffering from any sickness, to throw out or release evil spirits, to give thanks for the good health and blessings received from the good spirits and to ask for protection and safety of members of the family. The Hurubaton of Western Visayas sets some standards and serves as a reminder for everyone especially the young ones to value proper decorum about good moral and right conduct. The old verses like Huding, Likayo, Hakol, Hangkat, Garay-garay reflects on the creativity and passion of the folks in writing poems and short verses.

The compiled **Ambahanon**, **Daigon**, and **Komposo** depicts the Panayanon's way of life, courtship, love for parents and even for the country. The Komposo (ballad) describes the real situation of the society and the Daigon were the Christmas carols rendered by the folks during the whole season of Christmas.

The Collection of **Dayaw** and **Pasyon** showed that there were two kinds of Dayaw. First is the Dayaw or Dalit kay Birhen Maria (Virgin Mary) and the Dayaw sa Reyna/ Musa (Muse/Queen).

Dayaw or Dalit is a song in a poetry form widely known as Flores de Mayo and celebrated during the month of May. The children offer flowers, songs of praise and thanksgiving for Mary. Some other folks also offer Dayaw as part of their devotion and love for Mary. On the other hand Dayaw sa Musa (Muse) is a long poetry rendered by a poet/composer and usually being done during the celebration of a religious fiesta in a barrio or town. The poem being rendered to the Musa/Reyna.

The Compilation of **Bugtong/ Paktakon/ Palagato** (Riddles), represents varied materials the Ilonggos used in their daily lives. It even describes the different body parts of a human, the use and value of plants and animals around them. The **Lowa** expresses the idea about love and courtship; victory and defeat; admiration and even discrimination as well.

Almost of the legends gathered narrates on how a certain town, barrio or province derive its name. Some legends describe the origin of plants, animals and things.

#### 4. Conclusion

Rich and varied Hiligaynon literatures manifested different beliefs, traditions, customs, everyday life, human relationships and occupation of the Western Visayan people. Collected literatures had something to do with the different aspects of Panayanons' way of life. It is also concluded that the people of Western Visayas had the gift of writing.

#### 5. Recommendation

It was recommended that the rich and varied compiled literature should be published to promote Western Visayans creativity in writing and to preserve those manuscripts for the next generation. The compiled local and indigenous literature be used as an instructional material in teachings subjects using the Mother Tongue and in teaching Filipino and Literature subjects in secondary and tertiary level.

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