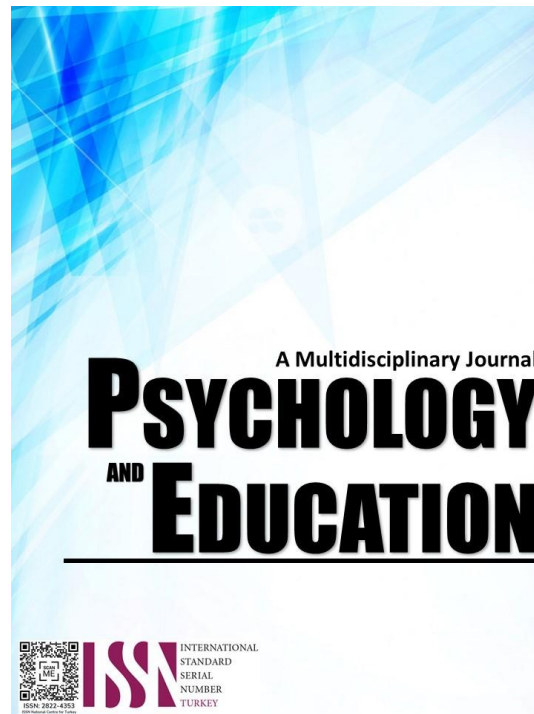


**REDISCOVERING THE LITERARY FORMS OF  
SURIGAO: A COLLECTION OF LEGENDS, RIDDLES,  
SAYINGS, SONGS AND POETRY**



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## Rediscovering the Literary Forms of Surigao: A Collection of Legends, Riddles, Sayings, Songs and Poetry

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### Abstract

Literature plays a vital role in the identity of particular groups of people because it contains their traditions, values, beliefs, and aspirations. It is also a medium through which we can study and understand the culture of that particular group of individuals. This research utilized the qualitative method in gathering the data regarding the Collection of the Literary Forms of Surigao. Findings revealed that the *Surigaonons* possess a variety of literary forms to flaunt their rich cultural heritage. Sad to say, this rich cultural heritage was gradually losing its value, respect, and identity because the present generation is focused on the influences of Western culture. Furthermore, most of the literary works of the *Surigaonon* especially the present ones were written in their own dialect. The *Surigaonon* language allowed its members to transmit culture from one generation to the other. But some changes in language shift were noted in the transition from the traditional to modern society. Some foreign words or expressions have been integrated and slowly replaced the indigenous dialect. Notably, language is the medium of literature. It is what makes literature distinct from the other.

**Keywords:** *literary forms, poetry, riddles, legends, Philippines*

### Introduction

Literature plays a vital role in the identity of particular groups of people because it contains their traditions, values, beliefs, and aspirations. It is also a medium through which we can study and understand the culture of that particular group of individuals. It gives us a better and deeper understanding of what happened in their past because literature is also believed to be a written historical record of the early days. It mirrors their everyday life as reflected in short stories, poems, songs, poetry, and other literary forms.

Similarly, Kahayon and Zulueta (2008) posit that literature is a collection of compositions that deal with life experiences. It deals with man's ideas, thoughts, and emotions. It is said that literature can be the story of man's loves, griefs, thoughts, dreams, and aspirations coached in a beautiful language.

Likewise, Tan (2001) expresses that literature is life presenting human experiences. But unlike great news, literature gives life and experiences not by telling readers what they are but also by showing them through a medium called language. This written expression of ideas, emotions, or distress provides meaning, and good literature can be understood. And so, one must know both the sound and the sense of the meaning of words that constitute the language of literature to appreciate it fully.

In addition, Enriquez (2006) unfolds that much of ancient Philippine literature was oral- consisting of

folk narratives, riddles, proverbs, sayings, songs, ritual chants, and epics. It was community bound and served its needs, from transmitting beliefs, values, ideals, customs, and mores, to entertainment. Many of these expressions still survive in our time, having been handed down orally through generations. Every ethnic group has its rich literary heritage. It has primarily been well preserved among groups and untouched by Western influence.

On the other hand, language enhanced the authenticity of ownership of a particular literary piece. Literary compositions by people in their dialect abound in every society but sometimes have been forgotten due to the lack of interest of its people. The researcher noticed a shortage or even the absence of *Surigaonon* literary forms in the regional representation of Philippine Literature. Being a *Surigaonon* inspired her to showcase a collection of *Surigaonon* Literary Forms. The researcher also wished to contribute her literary collection as material for teaching literature in classrooms.

Also, Bascara (2006) considers language the bottom line of literature. She interprets literature as something which presents well-expressed ideas or feelings, usually in symbols and metaphors in written form or oral literature that creates and recreates life in all its panoply and splendor through a symbolic presentation. Therefore, any man who reads literature will learn to contemplate himself and, in the process, can control and refine his inward experiences. He can be in touch deeply with human things.

In the 1950s and the 1960s, the Bureau of Public Schools instructed division superintendent and public school teachers to gather materials about Philippine literature. This move had attributed to the feverish efforts of the Filipino teachers at that time in compiling native Philippine materials such as folktales, folksongs, music, dances, riddles, and proverbs (Lopez, 2006). This move concerned the educational leaders of the country to strengthen Filipino interests and appreciation of their folklore. It was alarming that those whose colonial mentality dictated that only Americans or anything foreign was considered superior or the best, left the local literature in the backseat (Baltazar et al. 2001).

*Surigaonon* literature, among the other local literature, suffered from this dilemma. Private and even public schools only use literary materials written in the English language. Though there are many literary works in *Surigaonon*, there were no books or materials published in the local dialect, which gives the people an idea that local literature is inferior and uninteresting. Old folks nowadays never recall learning literary forms in their native tongue. They claimed that the medium of instruction during the American occupation was purely English (Tan, 2001). They never learned the local literature in schools but acquired it through oral transmission from their ancestors and the older generations

The clarion call for the preservation of local literature is the inspiration of the present study. This study offers part of Surigao's literary culture in legends, riddles, sayings, songs, and poetry. The researcher wishes to preserve the traditions of the early *Surigaonon* and prevent them from being forgotten by today's young generation. Also, the scarcity of published literary materials in the *Surigaonon* language has inspired the researcher to compile their native literature. Being a *Surigaonon* herself, she knew that many of these literary forms exist, but only a few have been documented or published. The research study title, 'Rediscovering the Literary Forms of Surigao, is a manifestation of the researcher's journey to collect literary manuscripts that the *Surigaonons* could have forgotten.

In the same way, when World War II ended, there was a desperate move to collect all these literary forms to protect our cultural heritage, which was almost totally lost when the war broke down. Notably, literature is a necessary tool in preserving one's culture. (Baltazar et al., 2001)

Researchers believe literature promotes cultural and

intercultural awareness (Van, as cited in Khatib, 2011). There is no better way to inculcate this knowledge but through formal education. And so, scholars and classroom teachers have been using literature as the main source of input in many language classes around the world. This move has ignited cultural knowledge and taught many students to express themselves in different literary genres.

Likewise, Johnson (1996) also shares a similar belief that culture consists of symbols, ideas, forms of expression, and material products associated with the social system. It is a dynamic medium through which societies create a collective way of life reflected in beliefs, values, music, literature, dance, science, religious ritual, and technology. Although it includes both material and non-material aspects, the essence of culture consists of ideas. The researcher significantly gathered some theories and concepts to understand the relationship between literature and culture further. It explains how literature shapes people's culture and guides them in day-to-day activities dictated by cultural standards and norms.

This research is anchored on the Theory of Functionalism of Talcott Parson, Literature as a Social Fact by Emil Durkheim (1933), and Symbolic Interactionism of Mead (1967).

First, Talcott Parson's Theory of Functionalism (1954) states that human behavior is constrained by his efforts to conform to society's moral code to control human behavior to promote the common good. For Parsons, the key to societal survival was its individual members' shared norms and values. Social survival explains that families perform the critical functions of procreation and socializing of children to fit into society. Literature operates within a community to ensure conformity to the accepted cultural norms and continuity from generation to generation to maintain the stability of that culture. It teaches the customs and ethical standards to the young generation and ridicules or criticizes the adults or anyone for deviation from culture's normative standards. The Theory of Structural Functionalism proved that the past's customs and ethical standards were preserved because of literature

Moreover, this study also adheres to the concept of Emil Durkheim (1933) of the principle that literature is a social fact. He argues that social facts existed in the past and will continue to exist after any specific individual. Its forms may change, though, since literature contains prescriptions of behavior and descriptions of sanctions to deviants. It provides

individuals with knowledge of cultural expectations and prompts them to act according to cultural standards to avoid sanctions. Literary materials may contain cultural norms of a society in which families assume the role of inculcating to their children normative standards of culture.

This study likewise is derived from the Theory of Symbolic Interactionism of Mead (1967) and other social psychologists. According to this theory, literature is a study of significant symbols. The defining elements of powerful symbols are that their meaning exists apart from the specific context; they are universal and objective. Mead (1967) also implies that the symbols that constitute a language represent concepts with particular meanings and evoke specific expected responses. Symbolic interaction interprets meanings of significant symbols and investigates their impact on the everyday behavior of the people who use them. Literature conveys the same meaning to self and others, producing universal and objective responses and, as a result, creating intersubjective meaning in everyday social life. By implication, since literature is transmitted through language, literature is an intersubjective phenomenon by definition.

## Methodology

This research utilized the qualitative method in gathering the data. Qualitative research collects information that is not measurable or in numerical form. This inquiry about the collection of the literary forms of Surigao is unquantifiable; therefore, qualitative research is the best method for gathering the data.

## Participants

The research participants were meticulously determined and identified by the researcher with the help of some informants who are experts of Surigao's history and culture. The participants were chosen according to preselected criteria relevant to a particular research question. The preselected criteria were as follows; the participant should be a *Surigaonon*, they were writers or composers of literary forms needed in the study, the participant was knowledgeable of some literary forms in *Surigaonon* dialect, and lastly that the

respondent can refer or recommend people to be the respondents of this research study. Referrals lead from one to the other, facilitating the researcher's pursuit of finding more respondents for her research. One recommendation of an informant leads to another potential respondent and so on. This kind of sampling, which falls under the purposive type of sampling, is also known as snowball or chain referral sampling.

The purposive type of sampling is determining the target, those to be involved in the study. On the other hand, snowball or chain referral sampling is a design that requires the identification of a few persons who meet the requisite characteristics important to the study. After interviewing them, these persons act as informants to identify others who qualify for inclusion which, in turn, leads to more people qualifying. The process continued until the desired number of samples was attained. This method is appropriate when there is a limited list of respondents to work on (Ardales, 2006).

The researcher was able to gather 32 respondents for this study. They were classified into three categories: First, were those whose works were documented and published; Second, those whose work or contribution were documented but unpublished and lastly, those whose knowledge of literature came from an oral tradition that has never been in printed pages.

This study focused only on Surigao City, the capital of Surigao del Norte, one of the provinces of the Caraga region. Surigao del Norte is a small province located at the northernmost tip of the island of Mindanao. This mainland portion borders Agusan del Norte and Surigao del Sur to the south. The City of Surigao is the most populated urban area in the Caraga region. In 2011, ranked as one of the most competitive small-sized cities in the Philippines, according to the Asian Institute of Management. Today, Surigao is among the most important seaports in the country.

The demonym for a Surigao resident is *Surigaonon* or *Surigueño*. Most of the residents speak *Surigaonon* (dialect derived from *Cebuano*) as a major dialect, and influences of *Boholano*, *Waray*, and Tagalog with a *Tausug* accent can be traced. A few speak *Waray* and *Tagalog*, but the majority can speak English. The *Surigaonons* were a combination of diverse cultures and customs. They were evidently of Malay origin but with little influence from the Chinese, Japanese, Arab blood, European, and American (Surigao del Norte Fact Book 2012).

The researcher gathered research data from primary

sources who were primarily composed of old folks, as well as secondary sources. She asked for the assistance of key persons who acted as resource persons for referrals of materials and respondents of this study. The researcher also sought the help of the local officials for the possible familiarity of the research study, referrals for other sources of the relevant data, and recommendations for possible respondents in this study. She approached Mr. Fernando A. Almeda Jr., a well-known historian, and writer who is the Managing Director of the Surigao Cultural Heritage Center, for some referrals of these people who are proficient in the culture and history of the *Surigaonons*. He named some personalities who can help her find relevant information about this study. The researcher had also identified some of the writers and composers of Surigao City who were willing to share their literary pieces and be included in the compilation or collection of the researcher.

The researcher approached the respondents and asked their permission for an interview. They were informed that the interview was part of the researcher's study on the collection of Surigao Literary Forms. The researcher utilized the interview guide questionnaire, appended in this manuscript. They were asked to share their knowledge about these literary forms. The respondents willingly shared the information that became part of the literary collection gathered by the researcher. The data collected from the interview was documented through photography, video and audio recording, and interview printed transcriptions between the respondents and the researcher.

### Materials

This study was qualitative research using an in-depth or open-ended interview with the aid of a self-constructed interview guide questionnaire to collect data from respondents. The questionnaire was presented, reviewed, and validated by experts in research, mainly qualitative research, during the Proposal Defense of the researcher. She then started to conduct her research using this instrument to gather the pertinent data for her study. The questionnaire was written in English with a *Surigaonon* translation for the benefit of the local respondents for the interview to be more productive and more dynamic.

The study employed mechanical devices such as a photo camera, audio, video recorder, and desktop computer to document the collected data and other relevant information. The researcher also utilized the internet by conducting interviews online to gather some information from the respondents who no longer

reside in the country. The researcher recorded the interview response in a journal which were later transcribed and printed. Transcriptions of these interviews were appended in this manuscript. All the accumulated information was then translated from the *Surigaonon* dialect to the English language to benefit those who did not understand the dialect.

### Design and Procedure

This study is qualitative research using the ethnographic design. According to Myers (2009), qualitative research is designed to help researchers understand people and the social and cultural contexts within which they live. Such studies allow the complexities and differences of worlds-under-study to be explored and represented (Philip, 1998).

Different knowledge claims, inquiry strategies, and data collection methods and analysis are employed (Creswell, 2013). Qualitative data sources include observation and participant observation (fieldwork), interviews and questionnaires, documents and texts, and the researcher's impressions and reactions (Myers, 2009). Data is derived from direct observation of behaviors, interviews, written opinions, or public documents (Sprinthall, Schmutte, and Surois, 1991).

On the other hand, ethnography means the systematic process of observing, detailing, describing, documenting, and analyzing the lifeways or a particular pattern of a culture (or subculture) to grasp the lifeways or practices of the people in their familiar environment (Leininger, 1994). Ethnographic studies involve collecting and analyzing data about cultural groups (Agar, 1996).

The researcher found the method of ethnography appropriate for this inquiry since the study showcased the rich cultural heritage of the people through the literature. The literary pieces collected embody the lifeways of the *Surigaonon* from the remote past and the present generation. This collection provided documentation of their day-to-day life experiences, creating a deeper understanding of the *Surigaonon* as a people and cultural group.

The researcher utilized rigor in qualitative research to ensure the thoroughness and integrity of this study. The four factors in establishing trustworthiness were employed: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Denzin and Lincoln, 2012).

*Credibility* means confidence in the truth of the findings (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). They argue that

ensuring credibility is one of the essential factors in establishing trustworthiness. The researcher assured that the study was free from bias, predispositions and had accurately recorded the data collected. The respondents were correctly identified and were also mentioned in the paper. *Dependability* refers to the stability or consistency of the inquiry processed over time (Bitsch, 2005). The logic used for selecting people and events to observe, interview, and include in the study was clearly presented. If the study were repeated, in the same context, with the same methods, and with the same participants, similar results would be obtained.

*Transferability* shows that the findings have applicability in other contexts preserving their meanings and inferences from the completed study (Leininger, 1994). The researcher ensured that sufficient contextual information about the place of study was provided to enable the reader to make such a transfer. It was also important that a sufficient description of the fact being studied was provided to allow the readers to properly understand it and compare the instances of such facts that they have seen emerge in their situations.

*Confirmability* means a degree of neutrality or the extent to which the respondents shape the findings of a study and not the researcher's bias, motivation, and interest (Tobin and Begley 2004). The findings of this study were the result of respondents' experiences and ideas rather than the researcher's characteristics and preferences.

## Results and Discussion

This section presents the results and discussions of the data gathered. It also contains the Collection of the Literary Forms of Surigao. The first aim of this study was to collect the different literary forms of Surigao and classify them according to their literary genre. As the researcher analyzed the data gathered, she was able to identify the literary forms of Surigao. The researcher collected 35 legends, 13 riddles, 18 sayings, and 11 poems from 22 respondents. Each literary form was discussed and explained in this section, followed by a presentation of the collection of these literary pieces. The second aim of this study was to find ways to preserve the literature of the *Surigaonon* by asking the people how they can safeguard these literary pieces from extinction. These *Surigaonon* literary forms were reported and discussed below.

## Legends

Legends are traditional historical tales that are believed to be accurate by people living in certain localities. Most legends in Surigao can be categorized as non-etiological legends; heroic legends, religious legends, miscellaneous legends recounting supernatural beings, and the place name legends. Non-etiological legends are those considered not under the etiological legends, which explain the origin of things, how things came to be and why things are as they are. (Eugenio, 2011)

Heroic legends were prose accounts of episodes in the lives of great men, culture heroes, epic heroes, prominent men in history, and men who possessed extraordinary powers. In some instances, some of these stories may contain historic bases as the characters mentioned previously existed though these observations were not proven or validated true. The legend of Magallanes related the good deed of a well-known character in history and how the place got its name.

This legend was shared by Respondent 1. Most of the legends collected came from this respondent. He shared that most of the legends collected were religious in nature. One of his legends from a spiritual perspective narrates how San Vicente got its name.

*“Hamok man an istorya na may kalambigitan sa mga santo na tagtuohan nan mga tawo. Nagpakita ra lamang ini nan pagka relihiyosa nan mga katawhan. Nagtuo an mga tawo sa mga santo na muluwas sa ila sa panahon nan kalisdanan”.* (There are so many stories about saints which people believed to be true. This only shows how religious Surigaonon people are and they believed that the saints can save them in times of crises).

From the conversation with Respondent 1, I can say that one of the literary forms of Surigao was legends. He shared a number of his collection of *Surigaonon* legends of different municipalities of the Province of Surigao del Norte. This collection of legends were included in this section.

Religious legends form a large group of Philippine tales that narrate the miraculous manifestation of God and His Saints. The largest group of Saints' legends describe the miracles performed by the Blessed Virgin in her various manifestations. Some *Surigao* legends are also religious-related. These legends collected by the researcher may have been published but aside from no other religious legend was obtained, these legends

were included for purposes of presentation about religious legends. These were the *Legends of San Vicente*, a place named after the *San Vicente of Lakandula* and *The Miraculous Saint of General Luna*, from whom the municipality of General Luna was named.

Legends narrating encounters with supernatural beings took us to the realm of lower mythology. Filipino folks believed in a wide variety of supernatural beings – the *aswangs*, *kapre*, the devil, *duendes*, *engkantos*, ghosts, *matanda sa punso*, mermaids, *santilmo*, *tianak*, *tikbalang*, etc. A legend about supernatural beings was the Legend of *Kanbilibid*. It was believed that a long time ago, the *madiotoks* or dwarves lived as one with the people in the community. They were considered ordinary people who performed normal functions like humans. The story of *Kanbilibid* was believed to have been existed by the people who lived in that particular area.

Place-name legends tell about how a place got its name. In some instances, stories may contain historic bases as the characters mentioned existed in the past, though this observation was not proven or validated true (Eugenio, 2005)

Most of the legends expressed the presence of the *Mamanwas*, the indigenous people of *Surigao*. They were mentioned in the Legends of *Biyabid*, *Dakung Patag*, *Sison*, *Panatao* and *Malimono*. Though the *Mamanwas* were not clearly mentioned in some legends, they were referred to as the *Negrito*es or natives whose origin was traced from the Visayas. (See Appendix F: Legends. *Amontay*, *Hayanggabon*, *Lapinigan*, *Claver* and *Surigao*).

The existence of Spanish characters was mentioned in some well-known legends. In fact, two of them were also named in some *Surigao* legends. In the Legend of *Hayanggabon*, for instance, the name of the Spaniard Anthony Hay de Gabon was identified as the one who found the place of *Hayanggabon* to be a good harbor for anchoring their ships and a bountiful source of seafood (See Appendix F: Legends. Legend of *Hayanggabon*). His navigator, Bernard dela Torre named the place *Hay An Gabon* in honor of the Spanish explorer.

The character of Anthony Hay de Gabon may be fictitious, but Bernard dela Torre was indeed a Spanish sailor who has traveled to parts of the Pacific Ocean, including Mindanao. This inclusion of real-life people in the story affirms Webster's (1993) definition that

legends are stories from the past handed down from one generation to the other and popularly accepted as true.

Another legend related to the presence of the Spaniards is the Legend of *Lapinigan*; *Surigaonon* claimed that Spaniards used to live in *Tayaga* (now, Claver). The presence of the character of the Spaniards somehow confirms that Spain conquered the Philippines for a particular time in history or the presence of the characters of the Spaniards validates the truth behind the stories. The actual story mentioned may not be proven true. Still, these real-life characters' presence makes it appear accurate, as Eugenio (2005) and Thompson (1946) discussed in their description of legends.

In another aspect, there were narrated legends called miscellaneous legends about particular places containing stories about the encounter of humans with supernatural beings like *aswangs*, ghosts, *engkantos*, and the mermaids. These supernatural beings were mentioned in the Legend of *Panatao*.

*While hunting, the Mamanwa could always hear unusual voices were coming from the balite tree. They suspected that the place was inhabited by some enchanted creatures they believed to be Agta, black skin, balete dwelling with bow and arrow, or Encanto, believed to be the owners of wild pigs and chickens.*

A legend about supernatural beings was the Legend of the Enchanted Cave. It is a story about a generous and kind *engkantada*. The legend is considered to have happened in a particular place, as Thompson (1946) discussed in his description of legends. It tells about the people's experience with marvelous creatures they believed in, like *aswangs*, *kapres*, fairies, ghosts, the devil, and the like.

The researcher collected a myriad number of legends as they were abundantly available from different sources. According to Eugenio (2005), legends are numerous than any other type of narrative because of their brevity and simplicity in structure.

The data gathered about *Surigao* legends came from primary and secondary sources. Most of the gathered materials were obtained from a compilation of researchers and individuals who shared a similar interest in gathering these literary pieces and some residents who learned these stories from their elders. Some materials may have been published, and versions of these legends may be similar, but the sources were

different. For instance, the Story of *Mainit* Lake had different interpretations from other sources.

Respondent 2 contributed different versions about legends of *Mainit*, who also happened to collect different literary genres. Most of his collection of legends revolved around the story of how *Mainit* Lake was formed and the stories related to *Mainit* Lake like the Legends of Mt. Hibok- hibok, Lake *Mahukdam*, Mt. *Maniayaw*, *Basul* Island, *Mapaso* Hot Spring and even *Camiguin* Island (Appendix F).

The golden ladle was both mentioned in the two versions of the story about Lake *Mainit*, but the use of that ladle as a paddle was only presented in the first Legend of *Mainit*. It was not also declared lost, unlike in the first story that implied that the golden ladle might still be at the bottom of the lake at this present time. The different stories also sprang stories of the origins of other places like *Camiguin* Island, Lake *Mahukdam*, Mt. *Maniayaw*, *Mapaso* Spring, *Basul* Island, and Mt. *Hibo-Hibok*.

In another version of the story, the *diwatas* were the first inhabitants of the place, contrary to the first version, who identified them as *enkantos*. The presence of the noisy hornbills who disturbed them as to why these enchanted people left the place was identical in both stories. Below is an excerpt of the third version of the story of *Mainit*. This version was shared by a researcher, Respondent 3; a former Supervisor of the Department of Education. She is active in her community in providing students with necessary materials like books and computers to improve educational literacy. Her study about the Cultural History of *Mainit* included another version of The Legend of *Mainit*.

*The lore of Mainit started in the days of the great forefathers when the Moro pirates were the terrors of the sea. Mainit was then just a vast virginal forest, high up mountains, a part of the Diwata Mountain Range. Nobody lived in those mountains except the "diwatas" or enchanted people, the fairies, dwarfs, and the gnomes and their beautiful pet birds. One of these birds was the hornbill. They lived harmoniously together, but as their number increased, troubles began. The diwatas got tired of the incessant noise made by the hornbills...*

The researcher collected another version of The Legend of Lake *Mainit* from another source, Respondent 4. The story also related how *Basul* Island

and Mt. *Hibok-Hibok* came to be.

Another story, the Origin of *Camiguin* corroborated the claim in Legend of *Mainit* that the piece of land taken from the area which the lake now stood was thrown into a faraway place and became *Camiguin* Island. A *Surigaonon* folk retold this story, Respondent 5. According to him;

*"Sigon sa mga katiguyangan* (According to the old folks.

*An isla nan Camiguin* (The island of *Camiguin*)

*gikan sa Danaw nan Mainit*. (Came from the lake of *Mainit*)

*Nahibal'is kon hain sija kuman tungod sa kasaba nan mga Kalaw sa kada adlaw*. (It had been transferred because of the constant noise of the hornbills on a day-to-day basis)

*Tagsaba'an an mga diwata ugsa tagpalupad nila an kabukiran na nahimu kuno kuman na Isla nan Camiguin"*. (The fairies were disturbed by its noise that they threw the mountain that became the Island of *Camiguin*)

Another story confirmed that *Camiguin* Island came from the mountain where Lake *Mainit* now stood. This was mentioned in the Legend of Lake *Mahukdam* (Appendix F). A sixth version of The Legend of *Mainit* was extracted from the previous source (Respondent 2). The story was totally different from the two previously discussed, which shared similar elements in their account. It narrated about a childless couple who lived on a riverbank and how their wish of having a baby was granted.

The legend of Lake *Mainit* may have six versions, but only the two versions were popular among its residents. These two versions of *Camiguin* Island being the mountain taken and thrown to the area where the island now stood were the only ones well-known among the people of *Mainit*.

Below is an excerpt of an interview from Respondent 6, narrating the Legend of the lake in the *Surigaonon* dialect. It was the only version of the legend in the *Surigaonon* dialect. He had known about the legend since he was a small kid who was told to him by his parents, who were native *Mainitnons*.

*An Lake Mainit isa ka dako na lasang sa una na taghuy an nan mga* (A long time ago, the area where Lake *Mainit* stood was a huge forest which was inhabited) *langgam na kalaw sanan lain-lain na mga*

*langgam*. (by hornbills and other kinds of birds). *Saba karajaw sila amo na nangisog an mga diwata*. (The birds were so noisy that angered the fairies). *Tag ibot an lupa na taghuy an nan mga langgam hampan taglabay na noporma sa Isla nan Camiguin*. (The fairies took the land where the birds lived and threw it in a faraway distance that formed to be the Island of Camiguin)

Another legend with two identical stories was narrated about two enchanted bells; The Bell of Busay (Respondent 2) and the Enchanted Bell of General Luna (Respondent 1)(Appendix F). The stories may be similar, but the story occurred were from different places. The first story happened in Dinagat and the other one in General Luna. Dinagat and General Luna are island municipalities of the Province of Surigao del Norte. The first version was published (The Legend of Busay), while the latter was not. The legends were presented for comparison of the similarity of the legends. These two legends came from two different sources who contributed a wide array of legends previously mentioned in this chapter.

The story of these two enchanted bells manifested the lives of the people in the past where their existence was endangered by the presence of the pirates, the constant threats to their safety. The stories depicted the sufferings of those people in the hands of these merciless pirates who regularly raided their respective communities. Though similar, these two stories have different versions of how the enchanted bells were presented. In the Bell of *Busay*, the bell was for warning the residents of the coming pirates. While in the Enchanted Bell of General Luna, the bell caused the inhabitants of that place to be located by the pirates. Because when the bell rang, it could be heard at the farthest distance, making the pirates knew eventually of their presence. Another contrasting element in both stories was how the bells were disposed. In the first story, the Bell of *Busay*, the pirates buried the bell in a bito or natural well so people will lose this warning device to advise them of the pirates' coming. In the second version, the Enchanted Bell of General Luna, the residents dumped the bell into the deepest part of the ocean so the pirates would no longer hear of its ringing.

The legends gathered by the researcher were already written in the English language for academic purposes. Original manuscripts in the *Surigaonon* dialect were no longer available when the researcher conducted her study. However, the English versions can be translated in the *Surigaonon* dialect to be utilized as a material for teaching literature in MTB-MLE-based curriculum.

Only a few young people are aware of these legends. Their knowledge about these literary forms seems to be forgotten. With the effort of the Department of Education in promoting culture and the arts, the enthusiasm of the *Surigaonons* about legends and other literary works will be rekindled.

### Riddles

Riddles are the simplest genres of folk literature, and they abound in every cultural community (Eugenio, 2005). This form of oral literature strikes a kind of intellectual exercise on the part of the audience. They used highly figurative language and possessed an intense quality that stimulated the mind. In some cultures, riddles were formalized guessing games wherein participants took turns in asking riddles. Whoever failed to answer loses the game. Philippine riddles are used during funeral wakes for entertainment and are used by the younger generations as a past time or an activity (Ong, 2004).

*Surigaonon* riddles are called *Tukod-tukod* and were used to entertain people in the past during social gatherings. It was confirmed by a respondent that they practiced the art of riddling during a funeral wake or any social gathering or program. The poser of the riddle would ask his audience;

*Magtukod tukod kita, tukda?* (Let's have a guessing game, guess it?).

When the researcher conducted an interview with old folks asking them what they could recall of the past or something they considered an old way that was no longer practiced today. Most of the respondent answered, *Tigmo- tigmo* or *Tukod-tukod*. The researcher had collected only a few due to a limited source of reference. Only a few people still knew about this literary form, and some were no longer familiar. When asked about any *Surigaonon* riddle, they could not give any. Only a few old folks still recalled these riddles that became part of their lives when they were kids. This oral tradition was handed to the respondents by their parents and their ancestors who came before them.

*Surigaonon* riddles are considered folk riddles. They belong to the true type of riddles. It is a description of objects in terms intended to suggest something entirely different.

*"An gi-ud nan tama, dili mapaya"* (The giant's footsteps cannot be erased).

It suggested that any wrongdoings of a mature person

who is supposed to know what is right or wrong will never be forgotten.

The clever riddle is another type of riddle that demands the possession of special knowledge on the hearer's part, the performance of arithmetical calculation, or acquaintance of Biblical history. This type of riddle can be found in the researcher's collection of the Surigaonon riddles.

"*Pitoy patay, Pilay patay?*" (Pitoy dead, how many died?). The answer is two; *Pitoy and Pilay*.

The second statement *Pilay Patay* connotes two different translations. It could be *Pilay dead, or how many died?*

Enriquez (2006) pointed out that riddles use obscure and nonsense words for rhyme and meter. The following riddles are examples of this kind. Below is a riddle shared by Respondent 7, who learned this from his grandmother, who hailed from Mainit, Surigao del Norte.

*Bukid na masigpit, mutunga musinggit* (Crowded mountain, appears and shouts). The answer for this riddle is *utot (fart)*.

The theme of the riddles can be drawn from its surroundings like flora and fauna, human body, tools and utensils, toys, and other unknown sources.

*Iton Iton na, sa dahon mo ra kitaa*

(Here it is, here it is. You can only see it in the leaves)

The answer is *hangin/wind*

Respondent 8 explained that the wind could not be seen, but its presence can be felt through the movement of the leaves or swaying of the trees. According to her; *Dili man nimo makit an an hangin*. You cannot see the wind *Hibaw ammo ra na jaon kon molihok na an mga dahoon*. The movement of the leaves will make you aware of its presence *sanang sangang nan kahoy*. And the swaying of the branches of the trees. The same respondent contributed more riddles below.

*Pakang na pakang di hibatian*

Even slammed together, it's inaudible Answer: *mata/eyes*

Respondent 9 exclaimed that no matter how hard you close your eyes, you will never hear anything. *Purbari ra gud pag sira abri ton imo mga mata mahinay o makusog waya may imo mabati*.

Below is another riddle about flora and fauna. It also follows a certain kind of rhyme and meter.

*Dahon inispada an bunga binotelya*

The leaves are sword-like, the fruit like a bottle  
Answer: *mais/corn*

Respondent 10 illustrated the shape of the corn's leaves is like a sword, and its fruits are similar to a bottle's shape. She said, *Tan awa ra gud an mais. Di ba amora sija nan ispada an ija dahon? An ija sab bunga amora nan botelya*. (Look at the corn, its leaves look like a sword while its cob resembles a bottle).

Riddles are the simplest genre of folk literature. They are common in some cultural communities, but only a few have been gathered from Surigao. The reason could have been because the riddle collection started late in the Philippines. No collection of riddles was published during the three centuries of Spanish rule. It was during the American period that American teachers and anthropologists rekindled the collection of a riddle. (Kahayon and Zulueta, 2008)

The Surigaonon riddle is often a description of some objects asked of an individual in a conversation or a game. Riddling is a favorite pastime of the family during nighttime and even parties as a game for selected participants. Some *Surigaonons* felt that it is better to introduce this past time to the youth as it can promote the thinking and analytical skill of an individual. Below is another example of that riddle.

*Duha ka maglumon dili gajud magkitaay* Two siblings do not see each other  
Answer: *Ears*

Respondents 10 and 11 contributed to this riddle: old folks from Dinagat Province and Mainit, Surigao del Norte. They both shared that this was their favorite pastime during their youth. This riddle session was done regularly, usually after dinner or during parties, wake, and other occasions.

Below are also riddles contributed by Respondent 12, an old folk from Malimono, Surigao del Norte. Her family was originally from Dinagat Province but migrated in search of a better life. She considered riddles as part of her childhood. "*Sa una amo may amo kalingawan an tigmo-tigmo malingaw man kami. Kuman waya namay mga bata na mahibayo nan ini*". Riddles was our favorite pastime and entertainment. At present, the young generations are no longer knowledgeable about this. "*Waya na sab itudlo nan mga ginikanan*". The parents do not teach their children about riddles.

*Sili silihay, huot sa bayay*

(Little chillies tight to the house) Answer is: *suga/bulb*

*Panaw bajaw, huyati bajaw*

Walk bajaw, wait bajaw Answer: tikod/heel

Nowadays, the art of riddling as past time was no longer practiced and only a few people are aware of the existence of these riddles. It was becoming extinct due to the non-awareness of the younger generation. Except for some that were found in books, only a limited source can be collected from individuals who were knowledgeable of this genre of literature. The researcher had gathered only a few due to a limited source of reference. Only a few old folks still knew about this literary form that became part of their lives when they were kids. This oral tradition was handed to the respondents by their parents and by their ancestors who came before them.

**Sayings**

Sayings or proverbs play a variety of roles in any society. These are a little (tidbit) of wisdom for everyone about any circumstance. Most commonly, its function is to educate. It is being tossed as a bit of expert advice in conversations, giving people a scenario on what might happen if they do something.

*Surigaonon* sayings, like any other sayings, express fundamental truths and describe a basic rule of conduct (Enriquez, 2006). It also contains advice in the form of concise and straightforward language using everyday domestic situations, making it more understandable, and easy to remember (Enriquez, 2006).

*“Dajawa lamang jaon imo paghanggat nan kayajo Kay basin sa бага kaw maghampang”*

(Be careful with your playing with fire because in the long run You might be playing with flames).

In this proverb, a typical domestic situation is used, which is playing with fire. One is warned that being mischievous can sometimes backfire or create trouble in relationships.

*“An kahoy na hamok bunga hamok langgam na mohapok/ mohapon. Pero pag way na gani bunga, an kahoy kagi rakan an mabilin”* (Many birds flock the tree who bears abundantly with fruits. But when the fruits vanished, only the bats are left).

The saying spoke about genuine friendship or relationship. Authentic friends or partners were tested in times of crisis. Genuine people remain in times of hardships and fake people left when they can no longer receive material favors from a person who used to share their blessings to others while still in abundance.

According to Respondent 13, the first saying was a stern warning for those about to commit a mistake, specifically, adultery or concubinage. *“Ako man jaon madungog sa ako uya sanan popo kay arang man sab kagwatsi ni popo”*. I heard this saying from my grandmother and grandfather because my grandfather can be mischievous sometimes. The second saying according to the respondent means, *“ang buot ipasabot..pag an tawo moasenso hamok amigo, lumon og kilaya..pero mapobre gani pamilya ra kay nabilin og moayuda*. It means a person who becomes rich gains a lot of friends, relatives, and acquaintances, but if he becomes poor, it's only the family who is left and willing to help.

Respondent 13 learned the different literary genres from his elders, especially his grandfather, uncles, and aunts. He had quite several contributions in this literary collection of the researcher.

According to Eugenio (2006), proverbs are natural gifts to Filipinos to give advice or counsel in talks or conversations. Proverbs embody general truths on human nature, rules of conduct, or morals. The following *Surigaonon* sayings talk about basic rules of conduct. It is expected for every individual to say *Thank you and be grateful* for whatever favor received from others.

*Amora ra kaw nan onggoy na kon makadawat nan saging derecho jagan na dili mahibayo magpasalamat* (You are like a monkey that after receiving banana, leaves immediately without being thankful/grateful).

*Amora kaw nan bato sa bukid na masin kaligid*

*Marajaw pa inin bato sa dagat kay bisan taglumutan pero taghipuslan* (You are like the stones in the mountains which frequently fall downhill, The rocks in the water are far much better, though covered w/ moss, Still, it is useful).

The same respondent (Respondent 13) shared these sayings, which he learned from his grandfather. It was a word of advice thrown to his uncle when the latter arrived home drunk. *“ Kan Tatay A. ko man jaon madungog kon magpahimangno na kan Angkol L. kon mouli na hubog”*.

*Surigaonon* sayings are also called *Panultihon o Pasumbingay*. The old folks are fond of using these when teaching or molding the youths of good manners and proper conduct.

*“Haora an pamatasan nan hurmigas. Sige naghakot sa pagdapog nan pagkaon kay pag abot nan tig uyan*

*may ila kaunon*”

Follow the traits of the ants who never cease to store food that they can eat for the rainy days.

*"Ajaw pagsalig bansilay sa imo pagkapiskay* (Don't be so confident treetop of your strength and might)

*kay kun di ka dutlan sa wasay*, (If you cannot be broken by an axe),

*an bukbok o anay an mupatay*". (the termites will surely kill you).

According to Respondent 14, *An bansilay isa ka kahoy na amora nan puthaw di dutlan ngani nan bala, maligon kusganon*. The treetop is a sturdy tree like an iron which cannot be penetrated by a bullet. *Pero bisan sa ija kalig-on kakusog surrender sa bukbok sanan anay* (Despite of its being strong, it surrenders to the termites). *An kapiskay, kalig-on o kakusganon dili dajon, dili hangtod sa way katapusan may utlanan*". (The strength and stability is not forever, everything has its end. *Amora sa estorya ni David and Goliath*. (Just like the story of David and Goliath). Below is another proverb shared by the same respondent.)

*"Kaharuhay sa isa ka tuay isa ka sakay an nagangay"*! The mud clam becomes contented, one ride makes one comfortable

According to him, *"An tuay isa ka sea shell sa oras nan kinahanglan sa panahon sa gutom an isa ka sakay/baroto ila tagbahinbahin sa ngayan nan pakigangay"*! The mud clam is a kind of sea shell, in times of hunger, one ride/boat is shared for the sake of harmony. *The idea of sharing something is a Christian virtue where everyone benefits from that something God has provided in His creation.*”

But sad to say, these are seldom used by the present generation. Today's parents seldom use it anymore to instill values towards their children. The reason is that parents preferred to use the English language in communicating with their children. In schools, the medium of instruction is English, and students cannot speak in the vernacular.

The researcher was also able to gather some materials from Respondent 2, classified as expressions but considered Proverbs according to its definition. Proverbs are traditional sayings that sum up a situation and recommend a course of action for the future (The Book of Knowledge, 1973). The following can be proverbs or sayings.

*"Kun hain may aso didto may kayajo"*

When there is smoke, there is fire

*"Tampaligon an tubig, sa wayong ra pauli"*

When water is splashed, it will hit your face

*"Ang kinabuhi madaub-madajang, mapuya-maputi"*

Life is sometimes up or it's down, red or white

*Hapyas de lana, dukyat de bala*

Apply the oil, and the bullet will just slip away

Most of the sayings are adaptations of Philippine common proverbs, which are written in the *Surigaonon* dialect. The last one was explained by Respondent 2. According to him, this was an old belief *na an lana may oracion...*the oil somewhat contains a spell *kun ihapyas sa tawo...* that if applied to a man's body *habak ini...*it's like a protection or shield *biskan maigo nan bala...*even if hit by a bullet *mudukyay ra* it will just slip away *Haman ini gamita na mga sitwasyon?* In what situations is this used? Originally *panahon nan gira*. Initially during the war. *Sa kuman na panahon, umay ja gamit o may gamit on pa ba?* In this modern time, what is its use, or is it still used in the present time? But in recent times, particularly if there was an upcoming conflict or danger. The message was to find something that can protect you when referring to *lana*".

### Songs

Songs are short compositions in which words and music come together in unity. A song belonging to the folk music of a people or area, often existing in various versions or with regional variations, is called a folk song. Folk songs are of great importance to particular communities. Through the songs, the group expresses its common emotions and aspirations. It lightens people of the burden, which is a result of hard work and emotional trauma. In some preliterate communities, folk songs are used to enchant enemies and defeat them, attract lovers, and invoke the favor of the supernatural powers. Sometimes the magic effect of these songs is so greatly valued that actual ownership of songs is maintained and their use carefully guarded (The New Book of Knowledge, 2007). The following lyrics below were taken from a song in *Pangamoral Nan Surigaonon* (Courtship in Surigao)

*Gihigugma ko Ikaw* (I love you)

*Sa linti man matunaw* (Though by lightning it will be melted)

*An bagjo, asdangan magtampisaw* (In typhoons, I will face and soak me) *Dili magsapayan, kinabuhi mahanaw* (I don't care this life will be lost)

*Gugma tangandoy, taglantaw* (Love, desire, foresee)

This material was shared by Respondent 15, whose source came from a research study on the style of courtship in Surigao. He is also active in community service and the promotion of the preservation of Surigao culture and language.

Even when folk songs were not used for such practical purposes but only for the pleasure of singing or listening, the more significant part of the world used them to express ideas or emotions held in common by a certain community or group.

It has been observed that Surigaonon songs written in the past used the Cebuano language in their compositions. It was only in the present time that the composers used their native dialect in their writings. The lyric of the song below is an excerpt from Evacuation, which was composed during World War II. The song was contributed by Respondent 1.

*Pagkapait sa among kahimtang* (How sad is our fate)  
*Binakwitay sa mga butang* (Have to evacuate our belongings)  
*Bisan asa kami magtago* (We keep on hiding anywhere)

*Ang espiya maoy magatudlo* (The spy locate us)  
*Bisan asa kami mobakwit* (Wherever we go)  
*Hinumduman namo ang mga langit* (We remembered the heavens)

The song also depicted the difficulties and sufferings brought about by the war. It showed their fears and feelings of uncertainty and despair. They were confronted in a situation where they had no choice but to bear all the consequences of this conflict.

*Surigaonon* songs also depict the kind of life in a certain time. Another song about the Second World War drew certain emotions about the people's sufferings during that time. The song about the poor Conchita, a case of mistaken identity, was a tragic story of a young and aspiring teacher. Her untimely death was a result of a suitor's rage about being rejected.

*Atong komposahon kadtong si Conchita* (Let us compose about Conchita)

*Dili taga dinhi taga Bohol siya* (She is not from here but from Bohol)  
*Ang iya pag anhi buot magmaestra* (She came here to be a teacher)

*Maoy nakaamong kadtong estudyante* (Everything was the fault of that student)

*Nangulitawo apan wala sugta* (Who courted her but

was not successful)

*Ug misumbong sa army nga adunay espiya* (He reported to the army that there was a spy)

*Nga ang ngalan niya mao si Conchita.* (And her name was Conchita)

It has also been noted that the composers of the present generation love to write songs about their native hometown, which is Surigao City. They talked about how lovely, marvelous, and captivating their city is. The songs also depicted the hospitality, warmth of the people in welcoming guests, and scenic spots that abound throughout the city and the province of Surigao.

There were a wide variety of songs that promoted the natural beauty of Surigao City and its neighboring places. The song *Garbo Gajud* (It's really a pride) talked about Surigao's tiny and tidy streets. Respondent 16 was the composer of this Surigaonon song. A former seminarian, he confessed that he could compose music over a bottle of wine. Below is an excerpt of that song.

*Gagmay kahinlo nan mga dayan. Kahinlo nan dagat, hangin ka presko.* (The sea is clean, the air so fresh).

Another Surigaonon song *Suroy Surigao* is inviting people to visit Surigao City and experience its natural goodness.

*Nakasuroy na ba kaw* (Have you wandered around)?

*Sa Syudad nan Surigao* (The City of Surigao)

*Tag kilay- an na malinaw* (Known for its serenity)  
*Sa intero Mindanao* (All over Mindanao)  
*Motabok ta Sagisi* (Let's cross to Sagisi)

*Mamokot sa Danawan* (Go net fishing at Danawan)

*Magbaroto sa Day-asan* (Try boating at Day-asan)

*Molagos sa kabakhawan* (All the way to the mangroves).

These places mentioned in this song were the tourist attractions in Surigao City. These songs were compositions of Respondent 17 who shared his compositions willingly with the researcher.

Another song promoting the beautiful sites in Surigao is *Taya na*, Lake Mainit (Come to Lake Mainit). It was a song that promoted Lake Mainit as spectacular scenery. The respondent (Respondent 2) was the composer of this song. He has shared with the researcher his vast collection of literary forms.

*Sa baybay nan Bonga, nakaligo na ba kaw?* (Have you ever swum on the shores of Bonga)?

*Na an tubig didto arang gadjud katin-aw* (Where the

water is crystal-clear).

Nakapamigjo na ba kaw nan lambuyo sa Panayakpan?  
(Have you seized a baby mudfish)

at Panayakpan *Na tagbantog na bayay nan ka-  
buajahan* (Which known as the home of the  
crocodiles)

*Magana gihapon sayum-sayumon*, (It's still good to  
dive)

*Kay mahamok pa an imo masuyong*. (Because you  
have a lot to see).

Another song also took pride in being a Surigaonon  
from Respondent 18. Some of his songs in the  
*Surigaonon* dialect were released commercially. He  
was also the composer of the lullaby, *Waya dinhi si  
Nanay* found in the latter part of this chapter.

*Bisan hain na dapit imo hibatian, kay di man  
mahilimod mga mayunglaki man* (Anywhere you go,  
you are being acknowledged and never deny that you  
are the best),

*Di mo mailad kay mag-una ra man, hagaron mo nan  
inom di kaw atrasan*, (You can never deceive because  
he's always ahead if invited for a drink, he gladly  
accepts)

*Sa panginabuhi, modiskarte man, magkalisod-lisod sa  
lamesa may sud-an*, (In earning a living, he makes  
strategies, in difficult times, food is served on the  
table).

Folk songs are not always happy, but they also express  
sorrows, loneliness, and despair. They embody the  
emotions and sentiments of the composers and of the  
people in a particular time. The following are excerpts  
from the song, *Paghandum* and *Waya Dinhi si Nanay*.

### **Paghandum**

*Matag gabii nag-ampo ako sa hilom* (Every night I  
pray in silence)

*Nga hinaut unta* (How I wish)

*Dili na madugay ang adlaw* (That the time will not be  
long)

*Ang adlaw sa akong pagbalik*. (*The time I am coming  
home*)

The song was an original composition of a *Surigaonon*  
who had been away from his hometown for an  
extended period of time. It expressed his longingness  
to be home and how he looked forward to that  
moment. This composition was shared by Respondent  
19, who was also a singer/composer himself. The song  
was a composition of a fellow singer/composer who  
was an entry to the First Surigao Pop Music Festival in

1987. The researcher was also able to uncover another  
priceless find of songs from the said festival. She  
included these songs in her collection because copies  
of the entries became extinct due to the failure of the  
event's sponsor to retain copies of the song entries.  
The generous Respondent 19, a composer, shared the  
copies of these songs in his possession. The researcher  
was able to speak with the grand prize winner of the  
song festival. He did not have a copy of his  
composition because he surrendered his copy to the  
Jaycees as the sponsor of that music festival. The  
copies of the songs were appended in this manuscript.

The next song is an excerpt of a lullaby shared by  
Respondent 18, a well-known composer of *Surigaonon*  
songs. A songwriter by profession, this composition is  
not of commercial value and not included in his  
albums.

*Waya dinhi si Nanay*

*Waya dinhi si Nanay* (Mother is not here)

*Adtoy panaw* (She left for some reason)

*Katuyog na rakan, Katuyog na* (You better sleep, sleep  
tight) *Ajaw pagkabirow, ajaw kahadlok, ajaw paghaja,  
ajaw pagluha* (Don't worry, don't be afraid, don't cry,  
don't shed a tear)

The *Surigaonon* songs depicted a variety of themes,  
mostly about love for one's hometown. There were  
several songs composed by *Surigaonons* about Surigao  
that the researcher no longer included in her collection  
because it was too many, and the themes were just  
similar. These songs were composed by different  
musicians of different generations. There were still  
new song compositions about Surigao by a new breed  
of composers, even up to this writing.

The *Surigaonon* are gifted songwriters. It was evident  
in the various songs the researcher discovered in the  
course of this study. A songwriting workshop was just  
launched recently to encourage the *Surigaonons* to  
embark on writing song compositions. This project  
was another endeavor to develop the existing talents of  
the *Surigaonon* and discover their abilities to  
songwriting simultaneously an avenue to record the  
present life of the people.

### **Poetry**

Poetry is the art of rhythmical composition, written or  
spoken, for exciting pleasure by beautiful, imaginative,  
or elevated thoughts. (Collins Dictionary, 2009) Poems  
inspire people and make them think and experience  
what it means to be human. Through reading a poem  
each day, new worlds are being revealed to the reader.

It makes one experience new things through the world of imagination.

*Surigaonon* poems are primarily of the Lyric type of poetry. It expresses personal feelings and thoughts. The poem below was shared by Respondent 19.

*Nagsukbot trapo, way ligo, nagkato* (Dressed in rags, no bath and dirty),

*Si Aya-Aya, Emit sanan Waway* (Aya-Aya, Emit and Waway)

*Kuman sila di na kilay-an kay nanudlay* (Today, they are irrecognizable because they are well-groomed)

*Desente, gani kun eleksyon mokandidato.* (Decent, on election time, they even ran for a post).

These three famous figures *Aya-aya* and *Waway* were well known to *Surigaonons*. The identity of these two famous personalities is quite apparent to all *Surigaonons*, born in their time. Their characters were being compared to the politicians who ran for public posts. They (politicians) can wear the finest clothes, but their true personalities can never be concealed by their physical appearance. They were just like *Aya-aya*, *Emit*, and *Waway* hiding in their elegant wardrobes.

The following lines were taken from the poetry; *Kandidato Ako*. It narrated how a candidate prepared himself for the election. Respondent 20, who shared this poetry composition,.

*Mokadto ako kuman sa Munisipyo* (I am going to the Municipal Office)

*Mosumiter nan inin ako COC* (To file my Certificate of Candidacy).

*Mosuba dajon ako sa ilaja* (And I am going to the mountains) *Marajaw inin mag-una-una* (It would be better to be the first) *Mosuroy ako, molibot* (I am going around)

*Para taas an maabot.* (So I can reach many)

*Pahiran ko nan pamada na hamok* (I am going to use lavish pomade)

*Para dili mapalid inin ako buhok* (So my hair will never be blown by the wind)

*Kinahanglan sab ako alisto* (I need to be alert)

*Pagduhoy sa ako kamot para molamano* (To extend my hand for a handshake) *Moagbay- agbay, mobangka nan tangway* (To pat their shoulders and offer them drinks).

The poem did not mention the desire to be of service to the people. It only tackled how he looked and how

he portrayed himself to the voters. The poem was a satire directed to politicians whose purpose of running for a public post is not service-oriented but based on a personal motive to be famous and influential. These poems were derived from the collection of the *Manunuyat Surigao*. The researcher asked their permission to include their compositions in her literary collection as part of a research study.

The collection of *Surigaonon* poems also constituted dramatic types of poetry. Dramatic poetry, also known as dramatic verse or verse drama, was a written work that tells a story and connects the reader to an audience through emotions or behavior (Bascara, 2004). A form of narrative closely related to acting was usually performed physically and can be either spoken or sung (wiseGEEK). *Itsa de Panyo* and *Pangamoral nan Surigaonon* (Appendix F) are examples of dramatic poetry in *Surigao*. These two were performed as plays to entertain people on certain occasions. *Itsa de Panyo* is a battle of verses performed during a funeral wake. On the other hand, *Pangamoral nan Surigaonon* is a musical playlet showcasing courtship in the past, the *Surigaonon way*. (See Appendix E: Poetry)

The poem *Semana 25* is poetry that expresses a conversation or interchange of the deeply felt experiences of human beings as described by Patron (2002). The author, Respondent 21, was trying to express his love towards his unborn child. He tried to give the child a wonderful picture of what the world looks like. The father manifested his excitement by enumerating the places he would bring his child when he/she is born. Below is an excerpt of the poetry.

*Anak, pamati: ini an imo tatay* Child, listen to your father *Muhagas ko sa ako kalipay*

I will whisper in joy

*Balakan ko kaw nan Sinurigao*

I will render you a *Surigaonon* poem

Another piece of poetry was collected from Respondent 22, who retold about his mother and aunt's supposed conversation. They were talking about their past experiences. They recalled the time when they would attend a *bayle* (dance).

*Namati ako sa ila.* (I was listening to them)

*Si Nanay sanan si Auntie Trining sinpangatawa* (Mother and Aunt Trining were laughing)

*nag recall nan ila mga pamayle sa una* (They recalled of their dancing way back then)

*sinundo, inareglar kuno sila nan nagpasiugda* (They were fetched, well attended to by the sponsors)

*jauy manok na tinuya bag-o magsugod an cha-cha*  
(There was boiled chicken before the dancing of cha-cha)

*An baylehan way abog kay an lupa pinamaya* (The dance floor was dust free because the soil was dried)  
*sandal dili kon steel heels kay molubong sa lupa* (The shoes were not made of steel that would stick to the ground).

According to the respondent, *taghimo ko ini fresh after nan ila istoryahay*.

I wrote this poem right after their conversation. When asked what could be his inspiration for his works, he answered. *Inspiration? random ra man..moabot ra sija*. Inspiration? It just came randomly without any inspiration. The respondent was also a composer of Surigaonon poetry and a member of the *Manunuyat Surigao*.

Poetry is considered to be the oldest form of literary expression. It is an effective medium to express the thoughts and feelings of the writers. The poem recounted the authors' experience or was retold to them by people who existed in the past. It gave a vivid picture of what transpired in the past that was not documented in books and other materials related to history.

On the other hand, the literary forms of Surigao provided a tremendous source of information of the past and present of *Surigaonons*. The past and the present literary works bring the readers and the *Surigaonons* to a closer look at their cultural heritage in their legends, riddles, sayings, songs, and poetry. It got a better understanding of their present life as people and culture. The literary forms bridged the gap or created a connection of some unanswered questions regarding the life of the people. These happenings in the past might be missed out in the documentation of its history.

This research aimed to gather the *Surigaonon* literary forms, an initiative of the writer to preserve the rich cultural heritage of the *Surigaonons* and use the gathered materials as a reference for teaching literature in their mother tongue as implemented by the Department of Education.

Many things can still be done to prevent the vanishing of this rich cultural heritage. In the course of collecting the literary forms of Surigao, the researcher was able to discover some cause-oriented organizations whose goal was to preserve the *Surigaonon* dialect and its cultural heritage by encouraging writers and composers

to write or compose literary pieces in their native tongue.

One of these organizations was the *Manunuyat Surigao or Surigao Writers*, which was established for the said purpose. Through this group, the researcher was able to gather literary materials which were included in this study. The members unselfishly shared their works and referred other non-members but could be resource persons of the researcher. The *Manunuyat or Writers* created a homepage online to encourage members to contribute literary pieces written in the vernacular. Members of this group were *Surigaonons* who were residents of the area and those who were now living from different parts of the globe who relentlessly contributed their compositions and other literary forms that had been handed to them by their ancestors. The researcher utilized the use of the internet and social media in locating these individuals. Some interviews were done through online chats and emails.

The researcher developed an admiration for these people who were still able to find time to work for their cause despite their respective engagement in their field of endeavor. These members continued to contribute their literary works through blogs through the *Manunuyat* homepage. The researcher felt so happy and grateful that some people shared a similar desire to preserve the *Surigaonon* literature, protecting the unique *Surigaonon* dialect and its culture from extinction.

The *Manunuyat* also conducted regular activities like meetings for poetry reading which was open to the public. They have coordinated with government agencies like the city government and other non-government organizations to support their cause.

The researcher was also able to meet fellow researchers whose study was related to preserving and conserving the *Surigaonon* dialect and its culture. Another organization of writers called *Sinurigao Makalingaw*, like the *Manunuyat*, also empowered its people to preserve the local dialect by writing literary forms in *Surigaonon*. The *Surigaonon* writers have a common goal of increasing awareness of its people's necessity and relevance to maintain their language. These cause-oriented groups were composed of the natives and young generations who felt that their language would be preserved through writing literary materials.

Furthermore, the researcher interviewed some writers,

researchers, and locales on how the literary forms can be preserved. The researcher showed a diagram below to present the theme for this objective.

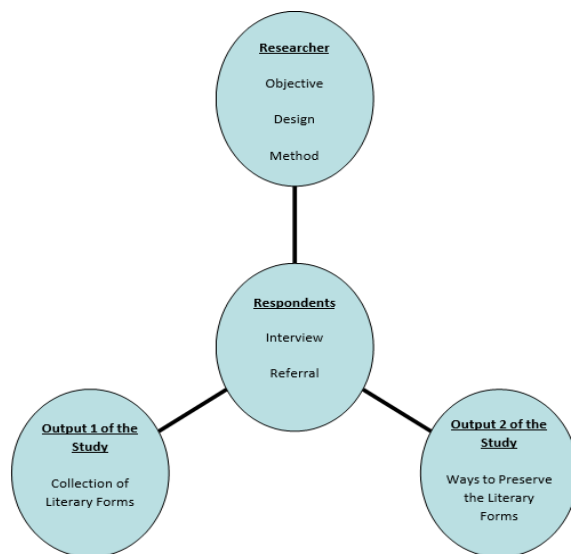


Figure 1. Objectives of the Study These are some of the responses from the respondents.

Respondent A: *“To institutionalize a Center for Surigaonon Studies or Language and integrate the efforts of the government LGUs and National Agencies like Surigao State College of Technology, National Commission for the Culture and the Arts, Department of Education and other private organizations like the Manunuyat Surigaonon, Surigao Makalingaw and the Surigao Cultural and Heritage Center. To conduct research and record an oral history, genealogy, folklore, and folksongs by engaging the public through events like poetry recital. Lastly, to persevere in promoting the language through literature”.*

Respondent B: *“To encourage the Surigaonons to compose or write Surigaonon poetry, songs, videos, blogs to preserve their literature because it is part of their heritage and wealth as people.”*

Respondent C: *“To preserve and protect the Surigaonon literature using the materials to express and teach the concept that the students should learn. In the K-12 Curriculum, the locales and the natives are given importance in the place where actual stories happened, music, art, and literature because lessons need to be contextualized and indigenized”.*

Respondent D: *“Written literature and oral traditions should be preserved in the libraries and have digital copies of it. There should be academic contests like play production and theatre arena in schools, which should be done regularly to hand down these literary pieces from one generation to the other”.*

Respondent E: *“There should be a collection of these literary forms and should be documented, be presented in literary events, be displayed in public libraries for everyone to see.”*

Respondent F: *“The literary forms should be taught in classrooms for the young generations to be aware of their literature and appreciate the value of studying these. In doing so, these literary forms will never be forgotten by the young Surigaonons of today and in the future”.*

The researcher discovered more of these literary forms that were no longer included in her collection due to time constraints. She hoped to continue this study in the future and to provide a wide variety of literary forms of the Surigaonon. She also desired to contribute to the revival of the undocumented or unpublished materials for reference materials in the study of Surigaonon literature. Through this study, more people will get interested and conduct similar research to preserve the rich cultural treasures of Surigao.

## Conclusion

The *Surigaonons* possess a variety of literary forms to flaunt their rich cultural heritage. Sad to say, this rich cultural heritage was gradually losing its value, respect and identity because the present generation is focused towards the influences of the Western culture.

Most of the literary works of the *Surigaonon* especially the present ones were written in their own dialect. The *Surigaonon* language allowed its members to transmit culture from one generation to the other. But some changes in language shift were noted in the transition from the traditional to modern society. Some foreign words or expressions have been integrated and slowly replacing the indigenous dialect. Notably, language is the medium of literature. It is what makes a literature distinct from the other.

Likewise, the Department of Education has been holding a regular event like the *Pista sa Kutura sanan Arte Surigaonon* (A Tribute to the Surigaonon Culture

and the Arts). It was an annual event to showcase the culture of Surigao in different genres like songwriting, singing and dance. This important occasion was highly participated by the different schools in the province and the city of Surigao wherein prizes were given to the winners.

In same manner, a group of *Surigaonon* writers and composers (*Manunuyat Surigao/Surigaonon*) were presently working on this aspect of preserving their cultural heritage by encouraging more writers to compose and to share their compositions to the group. They encouraged writers to write in their own dialect which was an indication that there was already a move among the *Surigaonons* for the conservation of their language and culture as well.

Private institutions and individuals were also keen of preserving the rich culture of the *Surigaonons* by engaging in the preservation of the arts, language and literature. More writers, composers, researchers were encouraged in this effort of preservation of their rich cultural heritage.

The researcher's study of rediscovering the literary forms of Surigao was a realization that Surigao owned various literary genres which were not published and no regional representation in Philippine Literature. Nothing much has been written about these literary genres when in fact, it abounds in Surigao.

## Recommendations

Surigao is gifted with a rich cultural heritage which is contained in their various literary genres. The different literary compositions will enhance the preservation of the *Surigaonon* culture and will further develop unity of the people in terms of their shared values, traditions and beliefs.

The need for the preservation of their culture should therefore be encouraged by not just a few people but by the local government and other private organizations who firmly believe in the importance of culture for identity as people or community. Language and literature preservation is an essential vehicle in the preservation of the withering cultural traditions, heritage and traditional values

The programs created by non-government organizations to inspire songwriters to compose songs must continue. Such programs will also give equal support to writers of other literary forms to foster the spirits of these people to create and share their

compositions. The literary compositions of today will be provide a linkage of our past to the future generations to come. The local government and non-government agencies should create literary workshops to be able to collect and preserve literary materials which contain the gradually vanishing traditions.

Likewise, a similar study be conducted on other literary forms of Surigao which are not included in this collection. The people are also encouraged to support such studies and contribute whatever they knew of their literature to be able to gather what is left in the present by their past ancestors.

The writers on the other hand, must promote the enrichment of Surigao literature through the inclusion of these literary forms in books and other materials for publication, identity and preservation and be displayed in public libraries for everyone to see. A cultural museum and library be made available in every municipality to encourage people to share what they knew and learned from their ancestors about literary forms. This will also enhance the love for writing by the present generation and will continue in the next generation to come.

Moreover, the literary forms of Surigao can be integrated in the teaching of literature in the primary and secondary education of schools in Surigao del Norte and Surigao del Sur. The literary compilation will be a good source of material for the teaching of the Mother Tongue-Based (MTB) Multilingual Education (MLE) program implemented by the Department of Education. The teaching of cultural values, traditions and practices be integrated so the *Surigaonons* will never forget their past and make this present generation a bridge towards the generation of the future.

The school heads of every educational institution of Surigao should motivate literature teachers to include their own literary forms in the teaching of literature. Doing so, will make their students aware and be encouraged to read their own literature. This will help the young generation to be appreciative and proud of their own literature. It will also foster the revival of the cultural traditions, values and practices which are valuable in molding the character of our future generation.

Lastly, a copy of this study will be donated to the Surigao City Library or the Surigao Cultural Heritage Center for reference material of other researchers, students and individuals who wish to preserve the *Surigaonon* literature and culture. This study will



enhance interest of literature enthusiasts and will provide encouragement for others to make a related study in relation to this research.

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