

# Hiligaynon Spoken Poetry: A Phonological Analysis

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*Abstract* — The study aimed to document and analyze Hiligaynon Spoken Poetry in Iloilo, focusing on recognizing and inspiring young poets. This study sought to celebrate their artistic talents and encourage them to further develop their passion for spoken poetry by highlighting their creative expressions. The study used a qualitative research design based on the theoretical perspective that undergirds language documentation. Generation Z and Alpha Generation were the participants of this study. The study involved 20 poets, seven females and 13 males, who contributed 28 Hiligaynon spoken poetry as the data for analysis. The collected data were transcribed and analyzed thematically. Stylistic analysis of the poems was based on the heuristic checklist of linguistic and stylistic categories. The themes derived from the poetry analysis were Rainbow after the Rain, Unfulfilled Expectations, Secret Battle, Diverse Love, and Unbearable Change. Alliteration, assonance, and consonance comprised the phonological category. Alliteration occurred 729 times, with the highest frequency in the sound /s/ and the lowest in /y/. Assonance appeared 1,106 times, with the highest frequency in /a/ and the weakest in /u/. Consonance was observed 2,705 times, with the most prevalent sound /n/ and the least common /w/. Spoken poetry is a form of performance art that allows young poets to connect with others while expressing themselves dynamically. It is recommended that organizations establish projects to support and preserve the work of these new poets, fostering the continued practice of this art form. A collectanea of Hiligaynon spoken poetry was the output of the study.

*Keywords* — **Readiness; Collectanea, Hiligaynon Spoken Poetry, Stylistics analysis**

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## I. Introduction

Youngsters today do not usually discuss their heartaches, hardships, or problems. The sudden rise of spoken word poetry and events like open mic sessions let them release their emotions. They were given the chance to scream, to voice out what they believe in – they became empowered. Before, these young individuals did not have the opportunity to explain their side of societal, psychological, and political issues simply because they had not found their voices yet. However, now, they can express their opinions, suggestions, and desired actions about these issues. Moreover, they are no longer afraid to stand for what they believe is right (Estanol et al., 2022). In support, there is a need to study spoken poetry to examine its potential to instigate social change and address pressing social realities. The research may conclude that while the spoken word is a tool for artistic expression, it can also serve as an outlet for marginal representation, which may bring about social action and change (Alfonso & Fontanilla, 2015; Kumbi, 2021).

## **Literature Review**

### **Spoken Poetry for Generation Z and Alpha Generation**

Oral literature, poetry meant to be read aloud, and wordplay and intonation are significant to it; it was born from the earlier oral approaches towards storytelling. In the Philippines, for example, even long before times of colonization, folk narratives, speeches, and songs were considered means of stating many aspects in preference to honor traditions and everyday life (Dave et al., 2018). The tradition lives on in the spoken word, emphasizing memorized performances, where meaning and emotion are told more through the poet's delivery (Aguilar, 2015). Today, it is audible to the world due to YouTube and other organizations. Poets such as Sarah Kay and Kate Tempest push the spoken word to enrich millions of lives (Alfonso & Fontanilla, 2015; Estanol et al., 2022). The art form provided the youth with an effective mouthpiece for emotions and personal experience and for addressing social, psychological, and political issues. They have, for example, been empowered to locate their voices through open mic events or to stand up for beliefs that now can be communicated in ways they have never been able to express before. Spoken word poetry has remained an essential tool for expressing oneself and for social empowerment from its history to the present.

### **Generative Phonology Theory**

The present work is based on the theory of Generative Phonology by Noam Chomsky and Morris Halle (1968) from their work, *The Sound Pattern of English*. The theory analyzes the rules governing how the sounds of any language are pronounced. This analyzes precisely how the underlying phonemic structure of words relates to their phonetic forms. It systematically explains assimilation, elision, or vowel reduction. Besides, generative phonology generally highlights the relationship between morphology and phonology and significantly describes how morphological boundaries affect phonological processes like stress assignment and syllabification, as Kiparsky (2020) concludes. Similarly, generative phonology helps understand phonetic and phonological interfaces, especially when handling morpheme alternations and rule-based sound patterns (Rumelhart et al., 1985; Cotterell et al., 2017).

The researcher chose the Linguistic and Stylistic analysis of oral poetry: (1) Phonological Categories (Khan & Jabeen, 2015).; It refers to explaining the sound systems of languages (Major, 2012).; Alliteration. Repeating the same consonant sound at the start of a word creates special effects (musical) (Major, 2012).; (2) Assonance. The effect occurs when two vowels in words next to each other share the same word sound. Assonance produces musical results for the poem (Major, 2012).; and (3) Consonance. Repeating the consonant sound at the end of a word is called half rhythm (Major, 2012; Kumbi, 2021). The phonological category employed the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA). It is vastly applied to the sounds of any language. Stylistics analysis is one method of determining the meaning of literary works. It is a method of literary text description through linguistic description. More precisely, it depicts the form of the literary text through

linguistic instruments used in describing it (Short & Candlin, 1989; Khan, 2015). Furthermore, stylistic analysis goes much further than meaning in the literary text and leans towards a more pragmatic approach, which is to "link choices in the text to social and cultural context" (Thornborrow & Wareing, 1998 in Khan, 2015).

### **Spoken Poetry as an Expression**

Spoken poetry is the form in which an artist goes on to create a poetic expression and word art, emphasizing the aesthetic quality of wordplay. It is a vehicle where emotions are communicated through writing and speech (Ki, 2019). In the Philippines, this current rise of poetry gained momentum as one of the artists, Juan Miguel Severo, had an exposure (Ki, 2019). The term spoken word encompasses poetry whose direction is recited aloud, which, therefore, depends on the effects of the play of words and intonation instead of the page's graphics. Historical records show that Philippine folk literature proves that the culture of storytelling has long been embedded in our past. Pre-colonial Filipinos have used folk narratives, speeches, and songs to honor traditions and celebrate daily occurrences (Dave et al., 2018). In the Philippines, it is a relatively recent trend. FM station Jam 88.3 recently created "Bigkas Pilipinas," the country's first radio show for spoken word. However, the local community of spoken word artists and enthusiasts was only formally established with "Speak! Philippines," with Facebook as its leading communication portal 2013. Words Anonymous was established in the same year as Speak! The Philippines is an ensemble of 11 artists holding workshops, slam poetry competition nights, and open mic nights to promote development in the spoken word world. These aficionados habitually assemble several nights every month in cafes and art houses like Sev's Café, Ronac Art Center, and Kalye Art Gallery to host said events and new creations (Alfonso & Fontanilla, 2015; Estanol et al., 2022). This form of poetry is not new, but the local spoken word artists here in the Philippines have taken up the challenge and pushed it a few notches higher, making it one that will not bore us to death or fill us with dread but instead make us feel. Moreover, this is needed by the emotionally starved millennials looking desperately for love, err, an excuse to handle stuff. They were listening to poems, watching them, and becoming one of them. Sometimes, reading through them might be a burden, but nothing was as sublime as listening to poetry in that film (Capule, 2020).

### **Epistemological and Theoretical Framework**

The study used Memory Banking Epistemology and the theoretical perspective of Language Documentation, which involves collecting and documenting knowledge, social practices, and technologies associated with cultivating, harvesting, and using traditional "heirloom" seeds. Moreover, this memory banking is developed by Virginia Nazarea, a Filipino and cultural anthropologist, as a botanical preservation tool to complement conventional practices of gene banking. The researcher considered language an integral part and cultural determinant of traditional heirloom seeds of knowledge, systems, rules, and customary laws (Katalbas, 2019).

### **Statement of the Problem**

The study aimed to document and analyze the Hiligaynon Spoken Poetry in Iloilo. A collectanea of Spoken Poetry was designed based on the stylistic analysis of the study.

Specifically, it sought answers to the following questions:

1. What are the Hiligaynon spoken poetry pieces uploaded through YouTube and Facebook social media platforms categorized according to themes?
2. What stylistic features are used in selected Hiligaynon spoken poetry when analyzed according to phonological analysis?
3. How do these stylistic features reveal the meaning of the Hiligaynon spoken poetry?
4. Based on the findings and results of the study, a collectanea of Hiligaynon Spoken Poetry was developed as an output.

## **II. Methodology**

### **Research Design**

The study used a qualitative research design based on the theoretical perspective that undergirds language documentation. Qualitative research explores, understands, and interprets social phenomena in detail within their naturalistic environment. Researchers utilize a qualitative methodology to provide richer information and a more vivid view of issues, cases, or events (Arora & Stoner, 2009).

Documentary linguistics, or language documentation, is a subfield focused on recording languages through audio and video recordings of poets and signers and annotating, translating, preserving, and distributing the resulting materials (Austin, 2011).

### **Locale and Resource Persons of the Study**

To provide the necessary data for the study, the source of the data was the Generation Z and Alpha Generation poets from Iloilo. They were identified through their uploaded Hiligaynon spoken poetry on YouTube and Facebook. They were identified through their uploaded Hiligaynon spoken poetry on YouTube and Facebook. The poets themselves originally wrote the poetry. Poets' consent was sought to elicit and record their originally composed pieces. Twenty (20) poets served as participants. Seven (7) were females, and thirteen (13) were males. The twenty (20) poets shared their twenty-eight (28) Hiligaynon spoken poetry as data for the study. Hiligaynon spoken poetry underwent thematic analysis and established five themes. For each theme, only one Hiligaynon spoken poetry was chosen as representative for stylistic analysis.

The permission to download and analyze the poets of the Hiligaynon spoken poetry was secured through chats and video calls. A brief interview was conducted to establish rapport and validate the themes of Hiligaynon Spoken Poetry. These were done to determine the extent of practices and influence of spoken poetry and to gather information about the poets.

### **Research Instruments**

The data elicited through spoken poetry corpora by preserving and documenting its information. These include digital equipment such as a cellphone and laptop, which download the audio-video presentation of the spoken poetry on any social media platform. Interview transcripts provided information from selected poets on their spoken poetry, thus becoming other research instruments used in data gathering.

### **Data Gathering Procedure**

After identifying Hiligaynon spoken poetry posted on YouTube and Facebook, the researcher conducted an online interview with the selected spoken poetry poets who were authentic owners of these literary pieces. The study's objectives were to have a collectanea of Hiligaynon or Kinaray-a spoken poetry, to give credits to the local poets, and to develop and appreciate the local spoken poetry forms through stylistics analysis.

#### **Phase 1. Collecting**

After identifying the poets, an interview was conducted in the form of a conversation to know the reason behind the Hiligaynon spoken poetry posted on YouTube and Facebook. In addition, this was one way to check the authenticity of the spoken poetry and the profile of the poets.

The poets were the ones to choose their schedule for an interview at their convenience.

Data were collected by downloading and saving the videos of spoken poetry posted on YouTube and Facebook with the poets' permission. The downloaded videos of spoken poetry were the subject of analysis. Twenty-eight (28) Hiligaynon spoken poetry were collected as corpora. It underwent thematic analysis to create five themes. For each theme, only one Hiligaynon spoken poetry was chosen as representative for stylistic analysis.

#### **Phase 2. Processing**

The data were transcribed and validated. A stylistic analysis was done to categorize the spoken poetry. The corpora were coded based on phonological (Khan & Jabeen, 2015; Kumbi, 2021), composed of alliteration, assonance, and consonance.

A stylistic analysis of stylistic features was conducted to find out the role played by these features in enriching the meaning of the spoken poem.

### **Phase 3. Storing**

It was downloaded through a cellphone or laptop. The collectanea of the Hiligaynon spoken poetry was the output of the study.

### **Data Analysis Procedure**

Data were analyzed using the heuristic checklist of linguistic and stylistic categories of the phonological category (Khan & Jabeen, 2015; Kumbi, 2021) composed of alliteration, assonance, and consonance.

Hiligaynon Reference Grammar (Wolfenden, 1971; Monari, 2016) and Hiligaynon Dictionary (Motus, 1971; Embajador, 2018) analyzed the phonological.

## **III. Results and Discussion**

### **Thematic Analysis**

Thematic analysis was conducted to highlight the commonalities and contrasts presented in the literary piece. It is also helpful in summarizing the critical features of the poems.

Hiligaynon Spoken Poetry was an outlet for emotionally starved Generation Z and Alpha Generation to express their love, hope, worship, political views, and struggles in life. Hiligaynon Spoken Poetry was the spoken word through which emotionally starved Generation Z and Alpha Generation projected their love, hopes, worship, political stances, and struggles in living. The activity of writing and reciting was their platform from which to express their sentiments and opinions.

The themes of Hiligaynon spoken poetry were Rainbow after the Rain, Secret Battle, Unbearable Change, and Unfulfilled Expectation. The theme revolved around the speakers' experiences, their family members and friends, and people in the community.

### **Rainbow after the Rain**

Poets on this theme advised listeners to be optimistic. They claimed that every adversity was an opportunity to succeed and move forward. The first poet discussed his optimistic outlook amid COVID-19. The second poet addressed the difficulties of living in a harsh world of judgments, pains, and uncertainties, but he advised focusing on the people who give you the courage to stand after all. The third poet advised that if you are going through a difficult time, look up and call out to God. He will never let you down if you put your trust in Him. Despite the criticisms, the fourth poet demonstrated the courage and bravery to work abroad to provide a good life for her family.



Frankl (2013), a psychiatrist and a survivor of Auschwitz, believed that individuals could find meaning in life even in the most incredible circumstances, which will be a source of resilience and hope.

Moreover, it was supported by Lerner et al. (2021), who found that there is an idea that people who try hard in challenging times are likely to be happier and more satisfied after the difficult times since, in some way, they learn to be stronger and appreciate life more. Moreover, those who look at being grateful and think positively about their situation tend to be generally happier and more content.

It is argued by Davis and Nolen-Hoeksema, 2020 through their statements that it is not true that everybody becomes more vital and happier after tough times. Some people may continue to stay sorrowful or mournful. Also, only some can think positively regarding the situation, while others may need extra help to cope.

These works manifest the sensitive and nuanced theme of Rainbow after the Rain and the multiple possible consequences of adversity. The authors have pointed out how people could negotiate these experiences and their potential impacts on mental health and well-being.

### **Unfulfilled Expectations**

The pandemic was an unrequited booster: the politician did not go up to the task of responsible leadership, and the poet was disappointed.

According to sociologist Robert K. Merton in Rosenthal (2012), expectations influence behavior, and people perform behaviors leading to these identical expected outcomes. In support, Simmonds et al. (2021) added evidence through their concepts that if their expectations are not met at work, they experience stress and work dissatisfaction. Similarly, unmet expectations in personal relationships imply more psychological distress along with lower satisfaction with the relationship. Moreover, academic stress and less motivation develop if academic expectations are not met.

On the contrary, Huang et al. (2020) believe that while not everyone feels miserable when unmet expectations befall them, some find new ways of happiness. Even though the expectations are not met, terrific relationships may also be retained if people are committed and understand each other very well. Similarly, people may stay motivated and engaged with their goals even when expectations are not met through re-evaluating expectations and using coping mechanisms.

The poets reveal exciting perspectives on how people can deal with such experiences and possible influence on other spheres of life.

### **Secret Battle**

In this theme, the poets sympathized with suicide people. All of us have been in battles in our lives but failed to make it. Depression is not always visible. Some victims looked cheerful and productive but wore masks to hide behind so nobody could discover their secret battles. If pillows could talk, they would tell everything they have witnessed from their owners before committing suicide. They cut their lives short so that they would get rid of the sufferings that had been so empty in their chests. Viktor Frankl argues that suffering and meaning happen at the most trying times, and sufferers can find ways for growth and transformation in them.

In addition, Zhu et al. (2021) supported the idea that people are made stronger by bad times and are enhanced in their growth. People who experienced hardships got stronger and learned to appreciate life much better than others. Mindfulness practice while under stress is practical and helpful in making a person less stressed and contented.

However, Marmar et al. (2021) stated that chronic stress and adversity put negative psychological imprints, such as heightened anxiety and sorrowfulness. Adversity affects some with post-traumatic stress disorders. Mindfulness programs might not work with everyone; someone might need support or intervention to handle stress and adversity.

Such studies imply complex and troublesome situations of human struggle and different results that may be brought through such experiences. The authors provided helpful information on how people can cope with personal problems and what influences these hardships may bring to mental health and wellness.

### **Diverse Love**

Love is for all. Some may define love negatively, and some may be positive. There are many forms of love, such as father's love, mother's love, child's love, love for a friend, love for a wife, love for God, faded love, unanswered love, and unconditional love. Most speakers described how painful their experiences were with the person they loved. However, only one guy could give love to these girls so much, the love of a father and the unconditional love of a mother. Despite painful experiences, the love of a friend can comfort bleeding hearts. Moreover, there is someone who witnesses everything in our lives: God. The love of God gave us strength to face the world no matter what.

The idea was supported by Murray S. L. et al. (2018) who stated that people accepting diversity in romantic relationships tend to have better relationship satisfaction and commitment, regardless of whether the couple is of the same race or different races. Couples with more diverse friend networks tend to have higher relationship satisfaction and intimacy levels. People who experience different forms of love, such as romantic, platonic, and familial love, tend to be happier and more satisfied.



On the other hand, Utsey, S. O., et al. (2018) argued that women who faced discrimination in their romantic relationships felt less satisfied and more depressed. People who faced discrimination based on sexual orientation had less satisfaction and intimacy in their relationships.

### **Unbearable Change**

In this world, change is constant. For or against someone, change can be. The author explained the tragic reality he was seeing, especially in the behaviors of today's generation. This included a comparison of generations then and now. There was also a discussion about the consequences of misusing technology.

The concept by Auxier and Anderson (2021) upholds the suggestion of establishing a relationship where younger ages are likely to use more social media and smartphones. Adolescents with frequent social media usage have a high chance of experiencing depression and anxiety. Students with sleeplessness increases when they use their smartphones excessively.

According to Przybylski et al. (2021), they have no evidence to support their claim that teenage digital technology use is associated with poorer well-being. They have instead discovered that other factors, such as sleep and physical activity, have a more significant influence on the well-being of adolescents than digital technology.

### **Phonological Stylistics Features of Hiligaynon Spoken Poetry**

#### **Alliteration**

It used the same consonant sound at the beginning of a word to give a text special effects (musical). The consonant sounds of the Hiligaynon spoken poetry were /p/, /t/, /b/, /d/, /g/, /s/, /h/, /k/, /m/, /n/, /l/, /r/, /w/, and /y/.

#### **Assonance**

Its repeated vowel sounds across words within the poem's lines create internal rhymes. The vowel sounds in Hiligaynon spoken poetry were a, e, i, o, and u.

#### **Consonance**

The repetition of consonant sounds in one line in a different part of the words. It could be at the word's beginning, middle, and last part. It also creates rhythm.

## **Phonological Stylistics Analysis of Hiligaynon Spoken Poetry**

### **Alliteration**

Alliteration is a repetition where consonant sounds are repeated, especially words that occur close to one another and at the beginning of words. Alliteration helps create a musical quality and emphasizes certain words or phrases to unify the poem in poetry.

The most commonly used alliteration was /s/, while the least common was /y/. The author uses much alliteration with /s/ to give the poem a soft and richly soothing sound. Since hope and optimism in adversity dominate the poem's theme, /s/ sounds suit the theme. The flowing pattern creates movement and flow to the poem as the reader understands the poem. However, alliteration choice and the use of particular sounds vary significantly depending on the author's intent and the tone and theme to be included in a poem. Think about these other sounds: /m/, /p/, or /t/. Other sounds produce another effect, depending upon the author's intent.

The low frequency of the alliteration /y/ in the poem can be due to several reasons. It might be that the lesser words in the poem started with the letter y. On the other hand, the poet used this alliteration less frequently because it was less in use or marked than the other consonants. The poet may have wanted to balance the pattern of sounds in the poem and not use too much repetition with one particular sound.

### **Assonance**

Hiligaynon spoken poetry also played around with vowel sounds so warmly to puncture the audience's ears. One of the uses of assonance in poetry is to bring about rhythm. It determines which syllables should be accented. Such rhythmic exercise had a boomerang effect. It helped the listeners memorize a set of words.

Assonance was another technique employed in literature whereby the vowel sounds of a word or words close to one another were repeated for musical effect. Why the vowel a appeared more frequently in that poem depends on several factors, most visibly the language of the poem, the poet's intention, and the poem's context. The poet used it more frequently because it appeared in that language.

Perhaps the poet, knowing the vowel a and its connotations and associations, doggedly chose the vowel because of the austere worldview of openness, clarity, and simplicity with which the vowel was associated. This went hand in hand with straightforwardness and honesty, and thus, often, with a poem or complete work based on the theme of honesty, transparency, or simplicity, this sound would be found and used frequently by the poets.

The poet used "u" less frequently for its connotations and associations. U was often associated with roundedness, depth, and darkness. It conveyed the meaning of heaviness or

sadness. Thus, a poet employs this sound less frequently in a poem that does not carry deeper or darker themes.

### **Consonance**

Poets often make a word arrangement more attractive to the ear of the listener by letting it employ consonance. Words full of consonance may give readers a desire to reread or pause over them, a longer desirable effect in poetry, where one line can contain several layers of meaning.

The poet uses the consonant sound /n/ for its connotations and associations. This was a sound associated with continuity, flow, and connection. It gives a feeling of continuity or progression. So, this sound is used more frequently in a poem by a poet with themes of continuity, flow, or connection.

The most infrequently used sound in their poetry is Hiligaynon spoken /w/ because, often enough, it is tough to use without sounding unnatural and contrived. However, as often as they used the /w/ sound to build alliteration or assonance, it was intense but, taken to excess, was distracting or monotonous.

## **IV. Conclusion**

The objective of this study is to document and analyze the Hiligaynon Spoken Poetry in Iloilo using stylistic analysis presented through phonological analysis by Khan and Jabeen (2015); Kumbi (2021).

The themes derived from the analysis of the poems were Rainbow after the Rain, Unfulfilled Expectations, Secret Battle, Diverse Love, and Unbearable Change.

Poets have used the phonological categories to develop a rhythm that helps the listeners remember the message and content of the Hiligaynon spoken poetry.

The Alpha Generation and Generation Z love composing spoken poetry, and the trend of social media hubs like Facebook and YouTube has allowed young people to share poetry with a larger audience more efficiently than ever. The social media hub has even made it easier for young poets than ever to connect with other people who share their interests and, most importantly, discover their peer community.

Many of today's youth wish to express themselves and their ideas in any form of creativity. Spoken poetry is a very effective way to explore their feelings and ideas for the first time, especially for the young generation.

It is also mainly of high personal flavor, a vibrant source of natural material from which young people get their experiences and ideas for the audience to connect. That appeals to Generation Z and the Alpha Generation since authenticity and transparency are held very dear.

Speaking poetry also serves as a form of performance art, and many youths enjoy reciting their work to an audience. Such may become a life-altering experience that enables them to connect with others while expressing themselves dynamically and interestingly.

## V. Recommendations

Based on the findings and insights from the previous section, one recommendation could be the inclusion of literary analysis in the curriculum for language teachers so that students, while developing their English language skills, are also spurred on by imagination, cultural awareness, and critical thinking to be empathetic; engagement of language learners in Hiligaynon spoken poetry should connect them to the voices of the Alpha Generation and Generation Z using literary analysis to develop critical thinking through the insights that emanate from literary criticism. To continue, the community may host more Hiligaynon poetry events to encourage public expression of talent, which would probably raise their self-esteem and might be a constructive avenue for the emotions and thoughts of the younger generation, even reducing feelings of despair and promoting cultural preservation. This activity helps create new poets by giving them recognition and valuing their contributions. Last but not least, future researchers can use stylistic analysis for any number of literary genres to explore literature further and better appreciate other forms of literature.

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