Hiligaynon Folk Utterances: Interjections and Proverbs

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A. Introduction

Distinct in a cultural group of people is their verbal or oral tradition. Their verbal tradition defines them as a people. It manifests their values, hopes and aspirations. It portrays, too, a way of life being lived and nurtured. Thus, verbal tradition is a window where one can peep through a culture of a people who live in a defined geographical, social and cultural milieu.

The Ilonggos of Western Visayas are not bereft of such verbal tradition. Theirs is expressed in their beautiful language called Hiligaynon. Theirs is a rich oral tradition that forms part of their folklore and cultural heritage. It can be said, then, that Hiligaynon verbal tradition encompasses a wide range of oral expressions of the Ilonggos. These are folk poetry, one of which is called lo-a. The non-poetic forms are the narratives such as myths and legends or mythological stories and folktales, as well as, brief utterances.

The Hiligaynon verbal tradition, however, is a vanishing genre. The younger people seem not to know of their existence. For the older ones, they are nothing more but a part of their memory. In the academe, not much attention is given to indigenous materials in its educational function of cultural heritage transmission. In research, few scholars explore indigenous cultural areas for their researches.

Nevertheless, on the part of this researcher, exploration on Hiligaynon folk poetry (lo-a) and on Hiligaynon mythological stories and folktales had been conducted, the research outputs of which had been published. This study on folk utterances is the third study by the researcher on Hiligaynon verbal tradition, thereby, completing the research ventures on all aspects of the Hiligaynon verbal tradition. Hopefully, in studying and teaching indigenous materials, scholars and teachers may also focus on folk utterances as cultural artifacts of a given group of people, the Ilonggos.
Folk utterance, for some authorities, is a generic term that covers all verbal expressions or speeches. In this study, however, folk utterances are limited to brief verbal expressions that are commonly uttered by the folks. Other verbal forms are already distinguished and named as oral literature with their own literary form and genre such as folk poetry and folk narratives. In this study, folk utterances, by its form, include interjections (salambiton) and proverbs (hurobaton).

The intent of this study, hence, is to analyze Hiligaynon folk utterances such as interjections (salambiton) and proverbs (hurobaton). Specifically, this study examines these folk utterances as signs in a socio-cultural context, taking into consideration their sign vehicles or forms, their senses or meanings, and their referent/object or symbols.

As reflected in the above-stated intent, this study’s theoretical or philosophical base is semiotics or semiosis that is called as the science of signs. Semiotics is the study of signs in everyday speech and of anything which stands for something else.

Signs include words, images, sounds, gestures, and objects. Such signs are studied not in isolation but as part of semiotic sign system... Put more simply, semioticians study how meanings are made... (http://www.aber.ac.uk/~dgc/sem01.html).

Ferdinand de Saussure stated that language is a system of signs. Every sign has a signifier, the form and the signified, the concept it represents. Saussure, hence, offered a “dyad.” Charles Sanders Pierce, on the other hand, introduced a “triad” version. He said that the first is the sign or representamen, the second is the interpretant and the third is its object. A variant of Pierce’s theory is called the semiotic triangle. The semiotic triangle has three parts. The first is the “sign vehicle” which is the form of the sign. The second is “sense” which is the meaning of the sign. The third is “referent” which is what it stands for (http://www.aber.ac.uk/~dgc/sem02.htm).

Umberto Eco saw the compatibility of the Saussurean and Piercean theories of semiosis. He averred that a sign does not only stand for something else. A sign is something that can and must be interpreted (http://www.aber.ac.uk/~dgc/sem02.htm).

Thus, culture in semiosis, according to Dr. Karin Weinz, is seen as a program of semiotic coding which forms the basis of one’s construction of reality and possible worlds(http://Landlow.stg.brown.edu/cspace/ht/weinz/intro.html).
Semiotics, in this study, serves not only as the theoretical or philosophical base, but also as a methodology. Semiotics may be applied in the analysis of texts in any medium. It focuses on texts as structured whole and in the examination of their connotative meanings (http://www.aber.ac.uk/~dgc/sem02.htm).

The methodology of the study then is purely qualitative, specifically, employing qualitative content-textual analysis and using the semiotic triad of sign vehicle, sense and referent as units of analysis. The data are examined, identifying commonality, recurring patterns, themes or ideas. The identified commonalities are then synthesized into value categories (Rabuco; Augustinian, May 2001, Vol.5 No.1: 36).

The folk utterances that are included in the study are taken from the collection of Hiligaynon folk utterances (Appendix). The folk utterances were gathered during the last part of 1983 and early part of 1984. There is a total of 300 folk utterances: a total of 160 interjections (salambiton) and 140 proverbs (hurobaton).

The collection of folk utterances came from a total of 38 informants. Their ages ranged from 17 to 81 years of age. Most of them were 41 years old and above. Majority of them were female. In terms of occupation, majority were housewives. Most of them, in matters of educational attainment, belonged to the elementary level. The informants learned the folk utterances from their parents and/or grand parents.

B. Hiligaynon Folk Utterances: Interjections and Proverbs

1. Signifying Interjections

Ilonggo folks are fond of utterances which appear to be spoken unknowingly or automatically as verbal reactions or responses to situations. These are called salambiton or interjections.

Interjections are words used to express strong feeling or sudden emotion. They are included in a sentence usually ... to express a sentiment or a strong emotion such as surprise, disgust, joy, excitement or enthusiasm (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki//interjections).
Among the Ilonggos, interjections are spoken, particularly, when one is mad or angry with someone, when one drives away evil spirits, when one blames somebody or when one welcomes somebody or when one calls for an attention.

a. Brevity of Form But Meaningful Sense

In matters of form, interjections are sounds that are uttered by the folks. These are addressed to someone or something present or absent. These are brief utterances that are commonly made up of one or two words. There are also phrases or fragments and statements. They are, sometimes, paired with other interjections like “ah,” “eh,” “no,” or “ba.” In text form, the interjections may end with exclamation point (!) or question mark (?) or ellipses (…).

Interjections may be brief; yet, they are very expressive. They are spoken and expressed in a language, the Hiligaynon language. They signify meanings or messages. They are uttered emphatically, sometimes, accompanied by facial expressions or gestures. The interjections appear to be culture-bound, being understood only by the Ilonggos. Thus, they are interpreted and appreciated within the Ilonggo socio-cultural context, conveying verbal expressions with cultural implications.

There are many one-word interjections that are spoken by the Ilonggo folks.

The one-word expression of the Ilongos “Ay!” tends to be an interesting two-letter word. For non-Ilonggos, “Ay!”, as an expression, may not mean anything. However, “Ay!”, among the Ilonggos, is an expression of surprise or a common reaction to an unexpected occurrence. When one stumbles, or when he or she falls, or when being jolted in a crowd, he or she utters “Ay!”

When one receives an unexpected gift or wins in a lottery or games, he or she shouts “Ay!”. It becomes then an expression of jubilation. Such reaction is sometimes accompanied by jumping or clapping of hands. The sound and tone of the utterance is loud with excitement.
Nevertheless, “Ay!” can also be an expression of dismay, or of sadness, or of being sorry. The sound and tone of the verbal expression is rather soft. The gestures seen are falling faces and or drooping shoulders. The expression appears in text without an exclamation point (!). Instead, “Ay” is followed by ellipses (Ay. . .). In some instances the “Ay. . .” is paired with another interjection, “Ay. . .ah.” In some, the “Ay” utterance turns into a fragment with the addition of other interjections, like “Ay. . .sus. . .ah. . .” In others, the “Ay!” turns into another one-word interjection, “Ahay. . .” or two-word, “Ahay. . .ah.”

Another one-word Hiligaynon verbal expression, usually heard of in conversations, is “Kwan” or “Kuan.” The “Kwan” interjection seems to be an enigma. What does it really mean? However, when two Ilonggos are speaking “kwan” in their conversations, they tend to understand each other.

The term “kwan”, as understood by the Ilonggos, is a pronoun. According to an informant, “kwan” is a tinaga nga ginagamit baylo sa ngalan sang tao o butang nga dapat hingadlan (...a word that is used to refer to a name or a thing that is being mentioned).

In other words, the word is a reference to someone or something. One who listens to a conversation may not know the reference, but the conversing persons understand to what it refers to. The interjection “kwan” may also be expressed in two words, like “Si kwan” or “Ang kwan” or in a phrase or fragment, like “Si Kwan bala” or “Ang kwan bala.”

“Mirisi” is another one-word interjection commonly heard of from the Ilonggo folks. According to an informant, it is a “tinaga sang pagbasol” (word of blame). The word “mirisi” is usually spoken if one hears a tragic event, particularly, if it happens to someone whom one hates so much or to an adversary. The expression says, “He or she deserves it.” The term “mirisi”, when uttered, is emphasized by a nod of the head with tight-closed lips. Uttering the word “mirisi” with the head and facial gestures above completes the message that is being conveyed. It means he or she deserves the tragic event, such as death, sickness or imprisonment or failure in business or board examinations and at the same time such tragic happening is “good” for him or her. The term, to be very emphatic when spoken, may also be expanded into two words “Mirisi ya!” or into a fragment “Mirisi ya gid!” A two-word interjection related to it is “Ti man!”
Another one-word interjection that may mean “mirisi” is the utterance “Gaba!” The word “gaba”, when spoken, may imply blame with one deserving the tragic event. The utterance “gaba” though differs from “mirisi” in some ways. Here, the tragic event is not only deserved, but it is also a punishment from God. So, sometimes, the utterance is expressed in a fragment “Gaba gid sang Diyos!” The young people now-a-days replace the two words, “mirisi” and “gaba”, with the term “Karma!”

There are one-word interjections with their corresponding pair of interjections. These are spoken to call attention and to drive away someone or something. Sometimes, in order to be heard or to catch attention, the one-word interjection is repeated. Many would not understand and some find it rude for Ilonggos to call someone by uttering “Hoy!” or “Hoy! Hoy!” At times, the “hoy” becomes simply a sound “Pssst! Pssst!” To drive someone away, the Ilonggos utter the one-word term “Layas!” or two-word “Sige. Layas!”

In calling or beckoning animals or driving away animals, appropriate utterances are expressed. For dogs, the Ilonggos use “Totoy.” The word “Totoy” is repeated and for some, it is followed by a whistle. To drive away the dog, the utterance “Sili-sili!” is spoken. For cats, the paired utterance is “Miming!” and “Sika!” For pigs, the Ilonggos say “Idik-idik!” and for chickens, they say “Kuruting-kuruting!” To drive away pigs and chickens, they shout “Tsu-tsu!”

There are still other paired interjections. While in a public transportation, particularly in jeepsneys, one may hear people say “Diretso!”, meaning, for the driver to proceed and “Para!”, that is, for the driver to pull over. At home, Ilonggos, if not knocking at the door, they call the attention of the host by shouting “Tagbalay!”. In response, the host welcomes them by saying “Dayon!”

In reacting to gossips, Ilonggos may express disbelief or doubt by saying “Tu-od?” “Tu-od”, however, is an interesting word. If coupled with another interjection “no”, “Tu-od no?” it would mean the opposite. It would be a “tinaga sang pagpati” (word of belief). Expressions of disbelief that carries disagreement are also uttered, like “Santi-sima!” or “Susmaryosep!” (Mary, Joseph and Jesus!) or “Kanami!” “Abaw!’ when added with “Ah”, that is, “Abaw ah!” is also an expression of disbelief. As an informant puts it, it is a “tinaga sang indi pagpati sa butang nga iya nabatian” (word of disbelief from what one hears about something).
If Ilonggos would like to stop the person from spreading words, they say “Hala!” or “Hala-hala!”, giving him or her a warning. “Hala!” as a warning is also spoken to people, particularly, children who misbehave. Another expression of warning, indicating what will happen is “Gurgori-ok!” This is usually accompanied by a gesture – the forefinger is raised to the neck level and moved to a slicing gesture. “Gurgori-ok!” is derived from the act of killing a chicken (barrio style) by cutting or chopping off the neck. “Gurgori-ok” indicates that, for the wrong one did, he or she will receive a punishment or sanction. It is just like saying “You’re dead!” or in Tagalog expression that became part of the Ilonggo interjections’ “Patay kang bata ka!”

Cuss words, particularly, one-word expressions abound among the Ilonggo folks. These are the so-called “bad words”, yet when uttered and heard they seem to be simply verbal expressions that are ordinarily spoken when proper occasions or situations occur. “Yugs!” is the most common. The word “yugs” is spoken to show that one is in disagreement with what the other says or does or when one manifests dissatisfaction or when one displays anger. The term “yugs” is a reduction of another interjection “Yuga!” “Yugs or Yuga” is milder version of another cuss word “Yuta!” Here, the speaker does not only communicate anger, dissatisfaction or disagreement; but, it also attacks the person of the one to other cuss words which Ilonggos speak with intensity and gusto in order to display anger or hatred or dislike are mostly Spanish words that became part of the Ilonggo lingua franca. One usually spoken is the term “Linte!” (Lightning!) or the localized “Lilinti-an!” When one finds the other to be stupid, the Ilonggos say “Estupido or Estupida!” Another one that is closer to it is “Mal-educado or mal-educada!” The local version is “Gago or gaga!” For being naughty, one may be called “Maldita!” or “Cuchina!” or the other word “Tonto!” For emphasis, “Tonto!” is coupled with another localized word “gid”, “Tonto gid!” For one who failed to show reciprocity for a good turn done, he or she is called “Engrata!” or the local term “Lampingasan!” or “Tampalasan!” For one who is quarrelsome, Ilonggos name him or her as “Salbahe!” or Escandaloso or Escandalosa!”

Just like the one-word expressions, there are also many two-word utterances among the Ilonggo folks.

A common two-word interjection among the Ilonggos is “Ti, mo!” It is as enigmatic as the one-word “Kwan!” Just like “kwan”, it is also heard commonly in conversations between and among Ilonggo
An informant explained that “Ti, mo!” is a “tinaga nga ginagamit kun ang natungdan nga ginapamangkot matamad na nga mag-isplika sang detalye or razon” (word used when one being asked is lazy to explain or give a reason). For one who simply listens, it is difficult to grasp what “Ti, mo!” as a response would mean. Here, if such is the response, the other person understands it and does not insist for an explanation. If he or she does insist, then the response would be too emphatic. The interjection becomes a fragment by adding “ah”, so it turns into “Ti, mo ah!”

There are two-word interjections which start with the Spanish word “Puera.” These are utterances that are spoken by the Ilonggos to drive away evil spirits or to prevent evil things to happen to them when greeted by strangers or other people. The most frequently uttered is “Puera buyag!” This expression, the Ilonggos believe, will prevent strangers from overpowering their persons, granting that such strangers have stronger personality. This relates to the belief of the Ilonggos in the concept of “dungan.” The closest meaning of “dungan” in English is personhood or the total or complete being. Ilonggos believe that when one is born his “dungan” might be weak that those with stronger “dungan” may overpower him. If it happens then the person with weaker “dungan” may get sick. Other expressions that are similar to “Puera buyag!” are “Puera usog!” “Puera tuyaw!” “Puera olin!” and “Puera bugno!” Hiligaynon utterances without “puera” which would indicate the same meaning are “Umpok balatian!” and “Abayan lang!”

Other “puera” expressions may mean differently from “buyag”, but the concept of driving away unfavorable happening is the same. For instance, when the Ilonggos say “Puera aswang!”, this means that they should not be bewitched. Another is “Puera lumay!”, referring to a suitor whom a woman dislikes. It is uttered so the woman may not likely be beguiled to fall for the suitor. When Ilonggos do not want that the same tragic or sad event be befallen on them, they say “Puera gaba!” or “Puera sulay!” If they are in a wake, so the dead person may not appear and disturb them in their sleep, they utter the interjection “Puera damgo!”

There are other two-word interjections that are commonly spoken by the Ilonggo folks. When they refuse to answer queries they simply say “Ambot ay!” or “Ma-an bay!” or they would respond with a question “Insa, haw!” If the one being asked gets irritated due to persistent questioning, he says “Hipos da!” or “Kasabad ah!”
threat may also be said “Ah karon…” The interjection “Ah karon…” is, likewise, spoken to children who persistently misbehave in spite of reprimands from their parents.

If things become uncertain, the Ilonggo folks say “Bahala na!”, meaning, it is up to God. They also refer to God if they are scared or afraid. They say “Ginoo ko!” If unfavorable things that they do not expect to occur happen, they shrug their shoulders and cry “Malas gid!” or they say “Hamak mo?” or “Grabe ba!” However, if an impending favorable event is heard of, they utter the words “Kabay pa!” If they find doing things to be easy, they say with pride, “Tsiken ped!” (chicken feed). If they hear from someone unfavorable talks about them, they speak the words “Gali, ha!” This is spoken with a threatening tone. If they would like to ignore the talks, they say “Bay-e da!” This term, when spoken, implies that the speaker does not care so others should not bother themselves too.

Phrases or fragments or three or more words when taken together find their place in folk utterances as interjections. Mostly, the fragments are combined with other one-word interjections such as “ay,” “no,” “ba,” or “gid.”

In conversations, the commonly heard of fragment is “Labay man ang akon…” This is spoken when one introduces a different topic or issue other than what is being talked about. It is like asking permission to introduce a new topic. It is similar to the English expression “Excuse me!” When expressed, its tone may be gossipy. Sometimes, the one saying it moves his body in a slight leaning position to be closer to the other person or he or she covers slightly his or her mouth with a hand. The new topic or issue, once heard by others, may elicit reactions, like “Hinugay gani dira!” to express disbelief or doubt. Others may confirm and agree by saying “Ti, kita mo!” (You see!) If one has a background or previous knowledge, he or she may react by saying “Ga-i ko man!” or “Tuod gid ya, no?”

When children intrude in conversations, older folks say “Sip-onon ka pa gani!” or “May gatas pa gani and baba!” (Milk is still in your mouth!). The same expressions are heard when children engage in adult behaviors, particularly, the forbidden ones, like getting pregnant or having babies at a young age. The words stress that the children are too young to behave that way or to be in such a situation. Inversely, when the old ones behave like children, Ilonggo folks say “Ka mal-am na kanimo!” (You’re old already!).
When children misbehave or earn the ire of their parents or the elders, they hear more emphatic and threatening speeches, like “Ah, patyon ta karon!” (I’ll kill you!) or “Sipa-on ta karon!” (I’ll kick you!) or “Huyapan ta karon!” (I’ll slap you!) or “Kug-on ta gid karon!” (I’ll wring your neck!). There are also responses to threatening phrases. In defiance, children or the folk, for threats that they hear, may respond with interjections, like “Kurog tuhod ko ba!” (my knees are trembling!) or “Ba, pamalhas man ko ba!” (I’m sweating!). These are verbal irony, implying that they are not scared at all.

Godly invocations are, likewise, present in fragment utterances of the Ilonggo folks, spoken particularly by the older ones. When the Ilonggo folks are surprised or when they hear bad or good news, they shout “Ay, Diyos ko!” (Oh, my god!). When the folks do not agree or conform to whatever that is being proposed, they say “Ay, Diyos ta!” or “Por Dios por Santo!” When they receive favors or when the occurrence is what they expected or asked for, they thank God by saying “Sa kalu-oy sang Diyos!” It is a modest response, attributing good happenings to God rather than to them. When forgiving an erring child or person, the folks, again, turn to God and state “Patawara lang sang iya mga sala!” (Forgive him of his sins!).

Fragment interjections are also expressed when Ilonggo folks do not believe or rely on the ability of a person. Almost always they say, especially the young folks, “Diin man nga diyes man!” In other words, he or she will not “buy” the idea or issue even with a ten-centavo coin. Others may say “Wa-ay, wa-ay gid!” (He or she is nothing!). When they do not believe and, at the same time, when they are not impressed, the folks show it with a verbal irony saying “Bileb ko ba!” (I believe!). However, when they believe and it is proven to be true, they utter the phrase “Daw linabo sa bato!” When they do not believe what is being asked for them to do and, at the same time, they refuse to do it, the folks express their disbelief and refusal by speaking “Ano ka, sinwerte?” (What are you, lucky?) or ironically, they state “Buas, aga pa!” (Tomorrow, early morning!).

Other Hiligaynon interjections are in the form of statements. They are considered statements rather than mere phrases or fragments because they convey complete thoughts or ideas. The statements, likewise, are spoken and intended to be heard by someone or something. These are one-line statements. Nevertheless, three-line statements were also recorded. Here, the lines usually rhyme.
Heard of commonly from the old folks are statements which can be taken as incantations. For instance, when passing through new and strange places which are known to be the abode of spirits, the Ilonggo folks recite

*Tabi-tabsi mga amigo*
*Basi masalapay kamo*
*Indi ako makakita sa inyo!*

*(Excuse me my friends
You might be touched
I cannot see you!)*

The expression is a way of asking permission for one to pass through in a territory where unseen elements live. Usually, the utterance is accompanied by a gesture of extending the right hand forward and slightly bending the body forward. The complete or whole utterance shows acknowledgement of, belief in and respect for spirits, those creatures that the eyes could not see. Commonly though the statement is reduced into the shorter version “Tabi-tabsi anay!”

Another incantation statement is recited when a particle intrudes into the eye. The Ilonggo folks recite

*Tingting kulating
Dakpa si Merting
Dagdag puling!*

The statement indicates the sound (tingting) of an instrument (kulating). The sound of the instrument will catch the person (Merting) so as the particle in the eye would fall. In some instances, the statement is uttered simultaneously with pulling a strand of an eyelid from the person’s eye. By doing so, they hope that the “puling” will disappear.

Heard, particularly, during the Ati-atihan festival in Iloilo City, is the statement “Hala bira!” This is spoken while dancing the ati-atihan steps. Nevertheless, the lines do not end there. The Ilonggo folks’ naughty mind proceeds and adds two more lines “Sige dasok, Bisan gutok!” and so the lines go this way
Taken simply, “hala bira” encourages the person to dance some more. With the added two lines, the meaning changes. It urges the person to push and push some more even if it is too tight. The added two lines twist the meaning into a more colorful concept – that of sexual intercourse.

One-line statements are, likewise, stated in particular situations. Usually, Ilonggo folks would focus their attention and bantering on courtship or marriage. Sweethearts are greeted with this expression “Mahigop tamon ka sabaw!” (We want to sip soup!) The statement encourages the couple to marry so the folks could feast on the food during the wedding celebrations. Hence, they always would chide unmarried women, especially, those who are not getting any younger. In a barrio or town, the folks would search for a male match. If, however, the woman does not like, she utters the statement “Malaon na lang ko!” (I’d rather be an old maid!) or she says “Mamadre na lang ko!” (I’d rather be a nun!). To really emphasize her dislike, she says “Asinan ko na lang an akon!” (I’d rather preserve mine with salt).

Other commonly heard of statement interjections are greetings or invitations to show good will to friends and neighbors. If friends or neighbors would pass by, the Ilonggo folks invite them by saying “Hapit anay kamo rigya!” (Please drop by here!). If it is meal time, the folks would also invite friends or neighbors to eat with them. If the invited persons beg off, then the folks speak “Hawidan lang namon amon panyapon!” (We’ll just keep our dinner!). Good will is also manifested in their greetings of “Diin ka makadto?” (Where are you going?) or “Diin ka maghalin?” (Where have you been?). Good will is also shown in their word of appreciation “Salamat gid!” (Thank you very much!).

Common statement interjections are heard from the young folks. In conversations, one may often hear the young people comment “Nga-a masakit tiyan ko?” (Why, will my stomach ache?). This statement is said when the person is not invited or included in any endeavor which he or she hopes to have been invited or have been included. When uttered, the statement implies a tinge of disappointment; yet, the tone conveys a hope to be invited or included again. Likewise, when the young folks listen to problems that their friends are too
worried about, they say “Kaputot sina nga problema!” (That’s a short problem!). This means, for the speaker, that problem is not that much of a problem at all. It can be solved or remedied. Though spoken with a shrug, the statement also tells that one does not have to worry at all. If they did not want any harm that their adversaries wish to happen to them, the young folks say “Umpok sa akon, dulot sa iya!” (Bounce from me, stick back to him!). In other words, the harm should not be fallen them, instead it goes back to the one who wishes them harm.

Hiligaynon salambiton or interjections, by themselves, seem to be nonsense. Being heard, they may be simply sounds coming from the mouth. Being read, they appear to be merely strokes on the page. Thus, the uninitiated may fail to comprehend the message they try to communicate. Nevertheless, to a group of people, that is, the Ilonggo folks, from where these expressions emanate and ordinarily spoken, these utterances communicate meanings that are understood and appreciated. Aside from the meanings, Hiligaynon salambiton or interjections portray the Ilonggo folks’ nature as a people. As signs, in salambiton or interjections “. . .denotations emerged, but they go deeper.” (Eco;1984:25). According to Umberto Eco, deeper meanings or the referent of the sign can be known through inference.

b. Culture-bound Referent

Gleaned from the Hiligaynon salambiton or interjections, the Ilonggo folks appear to posses a language that only they can communicate and comprehend. Some interjections, if not most of them, are difficult to decipher and cannot be translated into the English language. One who is outside of the Ilonggo group may always fail to understand the Hiligaynon words, for example, the interjections “Kwan!” or “Ti, mo!” Nevertheless, through the Hiligaynon interjections, the Ilonggo folks reveal their resiliency when it comes to the spoken tongue. Their tongues can readily embrace foreign terms. Consequently, Spanish, Tagalog and even English words find their place in the Hiligaynon interjections.

Moreover, the Ilonggo folks’ intense emotions, particularly, in expressing anger are relayed with the use of embraced foreign words, like Spanish terms. Hiligaynon interjections abound with Spanish cuss words. In some cases, Hiligaynon and Spanish words are combined or Spanish expressions are contracted. The contracted or reduced Spanish phrases form part of the spoken Hiligaynon language. Hiligaynon interjections then tend to indicate that the Ilonggo folks are
a passionate people. In matters of expressing their emotions, they show them without reservations— their anger and even their love. As seen in Hiligaynon interjections, their emotions consume their whole being for the moment. Their emotions, as expressed by them, are blurted out in words and sounds that seem to tear them apart (Rabuco; 2003:33-34).

Hiligaynon interjections do not only project the Ilonggo folks’ raw emotions, the interjections also show the Ilonggo folks’ soft and sweet ways as a people. The Ilonggos are known to be “malambing” (sweet). Sometimes, others may find them too pleasant. Hiligaynon interjections, as seen in greetings and invitations, disclose the Ilonggo folks’ welcoming ways and eagerness to please. Revealed, likewise, through the Hiligaynon interjections, is the Ilonggo folk’s never ending courtesy by saying “Salamat gid!”

Ilonggos, particularly in small community like the barrio or town, know each other. Concern for others is easily given. Such concern for a “kasimaryo” or “kasimanwa” (town mate), also, manifests in Hiligaynon interjections. Thus, as seen in the interjections, the interference of the barrio folks in matters of love and courtship emerged. Ilonggo women are encouraged to marry. Unmarried women become the subject of jokes and banters. Too much concern, however, verges on gossips and intrusion in other people’s lives. In a barrio or town, as the Hiligaynon interjections reveal, one’s business is not only his or hers; it is everybody’s business.

For the uninitiated, such over concern is incomprehensible. Mind bugling, too, is the Ilonggo folks’ psyche, essentially, on their dual belief in Christianity and paganism. Though they are brief utterances, the Hiligaynon salambiton or interjections vividly portray such dualism. The Ilonggo folks may utter “Susmaryosep!” or “Por Dios por Santo!” in one moment; yet, they say “Tabi-tabi anay!” or “Puera usog!” the next moment. The first utterances invoke the Christian holy family while the latter call on fairies, dwarfs, witches and other spirits. As the Hiligaynon salambiton or interjections disclose, it can be said then that among the Ilonggo folks, their indigenous paganism is still rooted in their subconscious, in spite of acculturation or influence of foreign cultures.

2. Wisdom-Giving Proverbs

Hiligaynon hurobaton or proverbs abound with wisdom. They are by-words or sayings that are popularly known and repeated from
generation to generation. Just like the proverbs of other languages, Hiligaynon proverbs relay truth based on common sense and practical experiences of the Ilonggos as a people. As Wolfgang Mieder stated,

A proverb is a short, generally, known sentence of the folk which contains wisdom, truth, morals, traditional views in metaphorical fixed and memorizable form and which is handed down from generation to generation (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/proverbs).

Hence, Hiligaynon hurobaton or proverbs, according to informants are . . .ginagamit sang aton mga katigulangan, ilabi nagid sang aton mga ginkikanan, ngakun ini sila may makita nga salawayon sa aton nga mga kabata-an . . .(being used as instruction for living a good life, and giving lessons to the new generation . . .)

a. Short-poetic Form, But Deep in Sense

In order for the teachings to be easily put to heart, Hiligaynon proverbs, in matters of form, are brief. They are one-line sentences or at the most two-line sayings. Shirley Arora notes, “. . .typical features of the proverb are its shortness. . .and the fact that its author is generally unknown” (otherwise it would be a quotation) (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/proverbs).

The lines, so they can easily be repeated, are expressed with the use of poetic devices although proverbs are not considered poems per se as a genre. Hence, the Hiligaynon proverbs’ external features are metaphor, rhyme, alliteration, assonance, consonance, parallelism and ellipses. The internal features of the Hiligaynon proverbs are usually imagery, paradox, hyperbole, connotations and personification.

As seen in the one-line proverb below, when the Ilonggo folks allude to issues or occurrences that burst forth and people tend not to believe, they say

\textit{Kun may aso, may kalayo.}
\textit{(When there’s smoke, there’s fire).}

Literally, it means that there can never be a smoke without a fire. For true, indeed, smoke emanates from fire. The Ilonggo folks, however, do not refer to smoke and fire. The proverb, with the use of the images of smoke and fire and with parallel structure of rhyming end words, conveys the thought that “an effect has a cause.” In other
words, events do not simply happen. Events can always be traced to their roots.

Another Hiligaynon by-word of the same form that is usually uttered by the Ilonggo folks is

*Kun may taob, may hunas.*
*(If there is high tide, there is low tide).*

Concrete images of high tide and low tide are portrayed, a natural phenomenon which is true. Again, the Ilonggo folks refer not to the behavior of the sea; but, to the life of people. The proverb is saying that, in one’s life, there will be “highs” and “lows” or happiness and sadness. This message relates to another proverb that states

*Kun may kalipay, may kalisod.*
*(If there is happiness, there is sadness).*

A similar Hiligaynon proverb declares

*Kun may pag-antos, may kauswagan.*
*(If there is suffering, there is progress).*

This proverb refers to the meaning of the previous proverbs; yet, it extends the meaning as well. Life is with sorrows and pains; but, there is something to hope for because after that, there will be progress or happiness. Added to this is another one-line proverb that states

*Ang sakripisyo, utod sang kadalag-an.*
*(Sacrifice, is brother to success).*

Stated in ellipses form, the proverb says that sacrifice is coupled with success. Another elliptic one-line by word of the same thought is

*Sa likud sang gal-om, nagasilak ang adlaw.*
*(Behind the cloud, shines the sun).*

The internal features of the three Hiligaynon proverbs are paradoxical, stating contradictory statements; yet, these are true. The Ilonggo folks, through these proverbs, are telling the young people not to despair and to keep on hoping.
Though there are three-line Hiligaynon sayings, the commonly recorded Hiligaynon hurobaton or proverbs are two-line by-words. In external features, these Hiligaynon sayings have rhyming lines, usually rhyming end lines. Rhyme within the lines like alliteration, assonance and consonance are also noted. The internal features, too, are basically metaphorical. Proverbs, generally, compare man’s life on earth with phenomena and occurrences in nature, with man’s behavior or actuations as the folks experienced in the way they live.

The following three-line Hiligaynon proverb

Ang pangabuhi sang tao pareho sang kariton,
Kun kaisa ara sa ibabaw,
Kun kaisa ara sa idalom.
(Man’s life is like a wheel,
Sometimes there on the top,
Sometimes there below).

speaks of life of man in general. The statement compares, with the use of simile, life to a wheel. Two paradoxical words “ibabaw” and “idalom” determined its meaning. The end words “kariton” and “idalom” rhyme. Alliteration is seen in the words “kon kaisa.” All of these add up to the poetic form of the proverb.

A two-line proverb of similar form states

Ang tao nga wala sing pilak
Pareho sang pispis nga wala sing pakpak.
(A man without money
Is like a bird without wings).

The saying compares a man without wealth to a bird that could not soar high. The Ilonggo folks try to tell people that money or wealth is important for without it, living would be difficult. The words “pilak” and “pakpak” are two unlike concepts, yet they are made to rhyme. As formed by the folks’ mind, the content of the saying is easily grasped and the lines are easily memorized.

Direct or implied comparison, likewise, is noticeable in Hiligaynon proverbs. Seen in this by-word is a direct or implied comparison of two different concepts “pasensya” and “bunga.”
Ang pasensya mapait,
Apang ang bunga matam-is.
(Patience is bitter,
But the fruit is sweet.)

The message of the two lines lurks in the paradoxical terms “mapait” and “matam-is” (bitter and sweet). It says that, although patience as a virtue is full of pains and sacrifices, the end result is always fruitful and rewarding. The brief lines advise one to be patient.

Beautifully coached in ellipses and parallelism, the following Hiligaynon proverb compares impliedly or directly a hen and a woman.

Imo kahig, imo tuka;
Imo busong, imo bata.
(Your scratch, your pick
Your pregnancy, your child.)

The usual act of a hen in the folks’ daily activities, scratching the ground to find food, is compared to another usual occurrence of a woman getting pregnant and having a baby. The llongo folk try to insinuate that when a woman gets pregnant, what she gets is a child just like the hen that when it does some ground scratching, it finds food. The proverb implies that for a woman to be pregnant and to eventually have a child is a great responsibility. The tone of this saying, when spoken, is rather stern and blaming. This is to remind girls that pregnancy is not a joke. So they have to be wary of getting into such a predicament for after that life will not be easy for them.

The use of personification in Hiligaynon proverbs, likewise, reveals their content and meaning. Mostly though, the personification is implied. The person being alluded to is “absent” in the statement. For instance, in the Hiligaynon proverb below, a man is compared to a cat that always strays away, so it cannot catch a mouse.

Ang kuring nga palalagaw,
Indi makadakop balabaw.
(A cat that strays,
Cannot catch a mouse.)

What the proverb relays is one who strays, like a cat, will not
“gather moss.” Since he or she is moving from place to place, he or she cannot take root. In life, then, he or she fails to find his a niche where he could grow and develop as a person. The proverb may mean one who roams around will fail to find a better work in order to earn his or her keep. Another Hiligaynon proverb compares a person to a river.

*Ang magahod nga suba, manabaw;*  
*Ang matinong nga suba, madalom.*  
*(A noisy river, shallow; A calm river, deep).*

It is like saying “running water is shallow while silent water runs deep.” The proverb, by comparing a person to a river, refers to a talkative person who is shallow while a silent one is deep. In other words, a talker talks nonsense, while a listener listens and speaks with sense. Again, the paradoxical words “manabaw” and “madalom” provides the clincher to the meaning or the message that is being relayed. A similar meaning is noted in another two-word Hiligaynon saying that states

*Ang mahipos nga idu, alandaman,*  
*Ang palataghol nga idu, indi palakagat.*  
*(A silent dog, one has to be careful, A barking dog does not bite.)*

These lines compare a person to a dog. Just like a dog, a talker is not to be believed while a silent person is not to be taken for granted.

Personification is also used in this three-line Hiligaynon proverb. A person is being compared to a stone.

*Bisan ano ka tig-a sang bato,*  
*Sa dalayon nga tulo*  
*Sang tubig, nagabuho.*  
*(No matter how hard a stone is, Through constant drop Of water, holes.)*

What the Hiligaynon proverb says is that a hard person is like a hard stone. Through constant egging and prayer, the person, just like the constant rain or droppings of water on the stone, he or she
will eventually soften. The Ilonggo folks, through this proverb, are giving an advice for one to be patient and should not stop or give up on hard-to-get people. For they know that a hard person will eventually give in and be won over.

b. Value-laden Referent

As folk speeches, Hiligaynon proverbs emanate from the traditional practices, morals and practical experiences of the folks. Hiligaynon proverbs are rich in “principles and values that situate and orient them within their common and shared world of reality” (Rabuco; 2006:88). Values, according to F. Landa Jocano are . . “concepts that we use as point of reference or criteria for recognizing, expressing, and evaluating social realities in the environment in terms of their desirability, importance, significance, worth, quality, merit, price and usefulness for us” s(Jocano; 2002: 19).

The Ilonggo folks find these values or concepts as living forces that sustain their life as a people. The Hiligaynon proverbs, therefore, are gems of wisdom that are bequeathed and handed down through generations.

The Ilonggo mind, as seen in Hiligaynon proverbs, grasps the reality of life and forms an understanding and judgment of such life. Such understanding and judgment are expressed as comments on life, in general. These comments are taken to mean as guidelines for living.

As the following proverb conveys

Ang indi kahibalo magbalikid sa iya ginhalinan,
Indi maka-abot sa iya pagakadtu-an.
(One who knows not to look back at his roots,
Cannot reach his destination.)

The proverb sounds very common in other languages; but, the Ilonggo folks may have shared experiences that are basic experiences of the human race. Indeed, one’s life does not sprout from a vacuum. It has beginning, a middle and an end. Hence, the Ilonggo people, through the proverb, are telling the new generation to go back to their roots, not only as a person, but also as a people. In life, as the Ilonggo folks believe, one’s success or failure may be traced from where one’s life started. One then should study his past or history so he may learn
from it and he may be guided in pursuing his future. The Ilonggo folks, further, are inculcating in the new generation’s mind that future success in life would be sweeter and fully appreciated by looking back. They are stating that one’s past or history and lessons learned from it will guide one to where he or she intends to go and what he intends to be.

A Hiligaynon proverb that relates to the previous one speaks also of going back to one’s roots.

*Bisan ano ka laba sang prosesyon,*
*Sa simbahan man gihapon ang padulong.*
*(No matter how long the religious parade,*
*I still goes back to the church.*)

The Ilonggo mind is so keen in learning insights from their daily and usual experiences and activities like the “prosesyon” during Holy Week. As an activity, the “prosesyon” starts from the church and it returns to the same church in the end. What the proverb is telling the Ilonggos is that one may leave one’s roots and roam around the world; yet, there is always a longing to go back “home.” It further implies that life is a “journey” – a journey towards home. The Ilonggo mind elevates the insight into a standard principle in life and expresses it into a two-line proverb. It appears, therefore, that the Ilonggos value their roots as a people.

Ilonggo folks, through their proverbs, believe in man’s growth and development. Comparing the behavior of nature, like the weather phenomenon to man’s behavior, the Ilonggo mind captures the essence of bonding between man and nature. A Hiligaynon proverb elaborates that

*Indi lang ang panahon nagabaylo,*
*Kundi pati man tao.*
*(Not only the weather changes,*
*But also man does.*)

The Ilonggo folks’ comment on the nature of man stresses their faith, not only in nature but also in man. The proverb captures the nuances of the Ilonggo’s closeness to nature. Just like their narrative tradition, the Hiligaynon proverbs...attested to the Ilonggo’s oneness with their immediate physical and natural surroundings. The realistic content and details...were drawn from those materials readily
Still, referring to natural occurrences, the Ilonggo folks made sense in getting insights from their daily experiences. Like the simple and natural tendency of an army of ants to always move and flock towards the sugar (sweet things). This is a sense experience normally and naturally seen; yet, the Ilonggo mind never fails to notice and declares, through their proverbs, a general comment about man’s behavior – that the Ilonggos, too, are attracted to “sweet” or “good” things just like the ants. The Hiligaynon proverb states

Kon diin ang kalamay,
Rugto ang subay.
(Where sugar is,
There, the ants are.)

The above-stated proverb implies that the Ilonggos, as a people, love pursuing the “good and the beautiful.” What they want, need and will is always directed towards the good. Unknowingly, the proverb alludes to the Christian concept of the “will.” In Christianity, the object of the will is always the good.

The said proverb may be interpreted to mean the opposite. It also alludes to the Ilonggo’s love for pleasures in life – such pleasures may not be necessarily good. The proverb may be uttered in appropriate situations where one finds himself. The word “kalamay” (sugar) may refer to wealth or money. Hence, among the Ilonggos, a common situation that is observable is when relatives live in with rich relatives.

Hiligaynon proverbs prescribed, particularly, for the young people, guidelines on good behavior and for a better kind of living. An informant ventured by saying that

Ang hurobaton ginagamit sa pagsaway sa isa ka tao, bata man ukon tigulang, nga kun ini sila may nahimo nga sala ukon malaw-ay nga buhat, katulad abi sang paglibak sa isa ka tao ukon pag-anggid sang isa ka tao sa isa man ka butang, katulad abi sang pagpangaluyag. (Proverbs are used to reprimand a person, young or old, when he or she committed a mistake or did something bad, or when comparing a person to a thing, like in courtship.)

Commonly uttered Hiligaynon saying on backbiting refers
to fishing – that one who speaks ill of others will always be caught through his own words.

*Ang isda indi madawi sa ikog,*
*Kundi sa baba.*
*(A fish cannot be caught through its tail, But through its mouth.)*

This is so, as explained by another Hiligaynon proverb, for

*Mapunggan ang suba,*
*Indi ang baba.*
*(A river can be stopped, But the mouth cannot.)*

Here, the proverb tells people that words, once spoken, easily spread. The Ilonggo folks then seem not agreeable to backbiting. They remind people that

*Indi ikaw maglibak sa iba,*
*Hay ang dalan may talinga.*
*(Don’t backbite others, Because the road has ears.)*

They further remind people that words move from mouth to mouth because

*May dalunggan ang duta,*
*May pakpak ang balita.*
*(Earth has ears, News has wings.)*

The Ilonggo folks, hence, reprimand the old and the young not to engage in backbiting and idle talks. Backbiting and idle talks may be scorned at by the Ilonggo folks; but, they dislike more negative criticisms hurled against a person. They would say

*Tan-awon mo anay ang buring mo,*
*Antis magtan-aw ka buring ka iba.*
*(Mind at the dirt on your skin first Before you mind that of others)*
The Ilonggo folks’ disagreeable attitude towards negative criticism is elicited from the tone of the two-proverbs above - the tone of disgust that is thrown back to the person criticizing.

The Ilonggo folks, likewise, tend to adhere to a strict discipline for the young people. They believe that

\[
\text{Ang imo ginhimo sang diutay ka pa,} \\
\text{Imo madala hasta magtigulang ka.} \\
\text{(What you did as a child,} \\
\text{You’ll carry till old age.)}
\]

The folks see, as they have experienced, that parents should inculcate good manners and right conduct to their children, at an early age as possible, because

\[
\text{Ang sanga nga nagatiku, untayon nga bata pa,} \\
\text{Kay kun magmal-am, indi ron matadlong.} \\
\text{(A bent branch should be straightened while young,} \\
\text{For when it becomes old, it cannot be straightened anymore.)}
\]

As a rejoinder, parents should discipline their children because

\[
\text{Ang paghinulsol} \\
\text{Nabutang tanan sa ulihi.} \\
\text{(Regret, all comes rather late.)}
\]

The discussion above shows that the meat of Hiligaynon proverbs is in the sense and message they communicate. Their sense or content speak of the valuing practices of a group of people, as their way of life. Thus, deciphered from the recorded Hiligaynon proverbs are the values the Ilonggos try to carry and live up to.

Hiligaynon hurobaton or proverbs are replete with “godly” sayings. Some are noted to be biblical in origin. Ilonggo folks, as seen in their oral tradition, invoke their pagan gods and spirits; yet, strong too are their faith in the Christian God. They put their “fate” in the hands of God. As one saying declares

\[
\text{Sa Diyos ang kalu-oy,} \\
\text{Sa tao ang pag-obra.} \\
\text{(Mercy is with God,} \\
\text{Work is with man.)}
\]
The proverb attempts to express that God “dispenses” while man “proposes.” In every endeavor, the Ilonggo folks should exert effort; but, in doing so, they do not fail to turn to God.

Likewise, the Ilonggo folks adhere to the golden rules, like

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Kun ikaw ginahaboy kang bato,} \\
\text{Balusan mo kang puto.} \\
(\text{If stone is thrown at you,} \\
\text{Throw back rice cake.})
\end{align*}
\]

Another one is

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Ang butang nga malain para sa imo,} \\
\text{Indi mo paghimuon sa imo isigkatao.} \\
(\text{Do not do to others,} \\
\text{What you don’t want others to do onto you.})
\end{align*}
\]

Added to this is a related saying, also, with biblical allusion that speaks of the Ilonggo folks’ adherence to righteousness.

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Ang balay sang mala-iton pagalaglagon,} \\
\text{Ang iya sang matadlong paga uswagon.} \\
(\text{The house of the wrong doer will fall,} \\
\text{The house of the righteous will progress.})
\end{align*}
\]

The value of Truth, Love and Charity are also reflected in the Hiligaynon proverbs. The Ilonggo folks appear to embrace these virtues. They hand them down to their children through the Hiligaynon proverbs.

The Hiligaynon saying below speaks of truth and lying. It says

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Ang Gino-o nagaka-akig sa mga butigon,} \\
\text{Pero nalipay siya sa mga mamimatud-on.} \\
(\text{The Lord scorns at the liars,} \\
\text{But rejoice with the truthful.})
\end{align*}
\]
Another proverb emphasized the Ilonggo’s truthfulness.

*Ma-ayo pa ang imol nga maminatud-on,*  
*Sang sa manggaranon nga butigon kag bugalon.*  
*(Better is the poor who is truthful,*  
*Than the rich who is untruthful and proud.)*

The aforementioned proverb states that, between wealth and truth, truth is more valuable and precious. Valuable, too, is charity. As the Hiligaynon by-word declares

*Madungganon ang magtugro,*  
*Kang sa mangayo.*  
*(It is honorable to give,*  
*Than to receive.)*

The Ilonggo folks, as the saying above tries to emphasize, tend to be generous. Another Hiligaynon proverb affirms this.

*Ang mayad nga kabubut-on,*  
*Indi mabakal ka pilatk.*  
*(A good heart*  
*Cannot be bought by money.)*

Hence, the Ilonggo folks, as the Hiligaynon proverbs show, value “goodness” in a person. As seen in the by-word below, goodness in a person makes him a person of good behavior.

*Ang tao nga mabu-ot,*  
*Mahumot sang panimu-ot.*  
*(A good person*  
*Smells good in his behavior.)*

Related to “goodness” in a person, Hiligaynon proverbs, also, cited humility as a favored trait among the Ilonggos. If one is good, then, he is humble. The proverb below says that if one flies so high, when he falls, he falls loudly.

*Kun mata-as ang lupad,*  
*Matunog ang lagpak.*  
*(When high is the fly,*  
*Loud is the fall.)*
The proverb insinuates that one should not be too proud. Pride, as the proverb goes, brings one to perdition. As one saying clarifies,

\begin{quote}
Ang tao nga bugalon,
Madali mahulog sa disgrasya.
(A proud man
Easily falls into accidents.)
\end{quote}

“Goodness” is affiliated to another value that the Ilonggo folks treasure, that is, the value of honor. As the Hiligaynon proverb advances,

\begin{quote}
Ang matarong nga tao
Nga nagalakat sa kadungganan,
Ang iya anak sa ulihi, bulahan.
(A righteous man who walks with honor
His child later is blessed.)
\end{quote}

The above Hiligaynon saying reminds one not only to be righteous, but also to live an honorable life. Honor, more than anything else, is the best legacy one can bequeath to his child. Consequently, a child with honorable parents will have, in the future, more blessings.

“Goodness” implies living life not merely as a human being, but also as what a human being should be. As the Ilonggo folks say,

\begin{quote}
Anhon mo ang palasyo kon ang naga-istar bukaw,
Mayad pa ang payag kon ang naga-istar tao.
(What use is the palace if an owl resides in it,
Better is the nipa hut if a human being there lives.)
\end{quote}

The above Hiligaynon proverb indirectly expresses the Ilonggo’s sentiments on how one should live. One should live, not like an animal, but as a person.

However, the good life that the above Hiligaynon proverb elucidates should be pursued with courage. Courage, as a virtue, is also favored by the Ilonggos. As one Hiligaynon saying tells us,

\begin{quote}
Pakama-ayuhon ko nga mapatay nga isa ka baganihan,
Sang mapatay nga isa ka talawan.
(I prefer to die as a hero,
Rather than a coward.)
\end{quote}
Hiligaynon proverbs, moreover, disclose other values in life that the Ilonggos hold on to.

Obedience, as seen in Hiligaynon oral tradition, appears consistently in Hiligaynon sayings.

Ang bata nga malalison
Wala gid it mayad nga para-abuton.
(A disobedient child
Will not have a good future.)

Ang anak nga malalison sa pulong sang ginikanan,
Masunson nagaka-agum daku nga kalisdanan.
(A child who disobeys the words of his or her parents,
Always suffer from great sorrow.)

The two sayings are addressed to the children when they try to disobey their parents. The tone of these two sayings seems to be threatening. They explain that one who fails to obey his or her parents will be cursed. Consequently, obedience to the elders should not be challenged. Going against the wishes of the elders will lead to “gaba.” (Rabuco; 2006: 93).

Industry, as seen in the Hiligaynon proverbs, is a value that the Ilonggos adhere to. It is a way to become rich or to improve one’s economic standing in life. As one saying goes,

Ang tao nga mapisan
Mangin manggaran.
(An industrious person will get rich.)

One who is lazy will not go anywhere in his life. Laziness jeopardizes one’s future. The saying below tells it well.

Ang tao nga tamad,
Wala pala-abuton nga buas damlag.
(A lazy person has no future.)

These two Hiligaynon proverbs; hence, try to inculcate in the minds of the young people that industry is a trait that children should have. For, like disobedience, one who is not industrious, he or she may suffer (Rabuco; 2006: 95).
Prudence, too, is a virtue that the elders stress among the children through the proverbs. The elders would always warn the children by telling them

Ang tao nga daso-daso
Madali madugso.
(A person who acts without thinking
Will easily stumble down.)

One should be prudent in his or her actions. Otherwise, he or she will commit mistakes in his or her life. And so the elders further add,

Imo anay huna-huna-on ang imo pagabuhaton,
Kon ano sa ulihi ang imo pagadangaton.
(You should think first what you will do,
What in the end your destination).

The above-stated Hiligaynon proverbs are paired with another by-word that emphasizes another trait, that is, patience.

Indi magsako kay dali ka madusmo,
Indi magdali kay dali ka mabali.
(Do not be busy because you will easily stumble,
Do not be in a hurry because you will easily break.)

One, therefore, should not only “think before he or she leaps,” but he or she should wait.

Thrift is a trait that is related to the previous values. Hiligaynon proverbs also focus on thrift as a value that the Ilonggos live by. The following Hiligaynon proverbs elucidate on this.

Ang makinoton indi madali madwad-an.
(The thrifty will not easily want.)

The Ilonggos, as the saying notes, favor saving “for the rainy days.” They have their known bamboo “alkansiya” or bamboo bank. The saying inculcates among the young people that saving is a habit that they have to learn and practice. Children are taught to save and spend wisely. As another saying declares,
Kon ang imong bulsa lubot,
Indi ikaw makasupot.
(If your pocket has a hole,
You cannot save.)

Education, knowledge or learning, as attested by the Hiligaynon proverbs, is valued by the Ilonggos. One Hiligaynon saying says,

Ang gamut sang ihibalong labi na sa katumbal,
Busa ang binunga matam-is labi sa arnibal.
(The root of knowledge is bitter more than chili,
So the fruit is sweet more than sweet banana.)

The saying tells us that the attainment of knowledge is difficult; yet, once attained, it is most rewarding.

Hence, between knowledge and money or wealth, the Ilonggos favor knowledge. As the Hiligaynon by-word says,

Mas labi kaayo ang may kaalam kag ihibalo
Sang sa bulawan kag pilak.
(Better is knowledge and wisdom
Than gold and money.)

A related Hiligaynon saying, likewise, points out that

Maskin wa-ay kan-on
Kon may pinanilagan.)
(Even without food
As long as there is learning.)

The use of exaggeration underscores the Ilonggos preference for education and educated person. So, one Hiligaynon proverb elucidates that

Ang tao nga inteleginte
May daku nga handum
Sa pagtu-on pa gid.
(An intelligent person
Has a great desire
To study more.)
The above saying conveys the concept that the pursuit of knowledge or wisdom, for the Ilonggos, is a continuing effort. Even in the choice of friends, learning should be considered. A Hiligaynon saying indicates that one should make friends or go with people who are intelligent and learned.

*Mag-upod sa tao nga maalam
Agud mangin maalam ka man.*
( Go with an intelligent person  
So you will be intelligent too.)

Ilonggo parents, as shown not only in Hiligaynon proverbs, but also in oral literature, strive to have their children educated. More so for the poor, they always considered education as “manggad” or wealth as their legacy to their children (Rabuco; 2006: 91).

The “bayanihan” spirit appears to be alive among the Ilonggos. As seen in a Hiligaynon saying, the Ilonggos agree that cooperation among them can facilitate the realization of whatever endeavor the community pursues.

*Ang mabug-at nga ulobrahon nagamag-an
Kon ang tanan magtuwang.*
(A heavy work lightens,  
If all would cooperate.)

Seen from the previous discussions, it can be said, that Hiligaynon hurobaton or proverbs reflected the valuing experiences of the Ilonggos as a people – their measure of what is good or bad, of what is right or wrong, and of what should be observed and valued or not in situations. These values are inculcated in the minds of the young generation, forming guidelines in living a good life as a people.

As signs in text form, Hiligaynon hurobaton or proverbs can, therefore, be examined and analyzed. In form, “…texts create their sign spaces in a metaphorical sense. . .” (http://Landow.stg.brown.edu/cspace/ht/weng/intohtml). The Hiligaynon proverbs, in text form, are seen as open multi-faceted view of textuality in which “all the nodes form an unlimited space” (http://Landow.stg.brown.edu/cspace/ht/weng/intohtml). Umberto Eco explained that “meta hor in its true sense convey the thing as it is and at the same time refers to something else. . .Metaphors are produced based on a rich cultural framework” (Eco; 1994: 112). Applying semiosis in analyzing the Hiligaynon proverbs;
hence, the cultural and social way of life of the Ilonggos may surface. As Umberto Eco further elaborated, semiosis is “. . . the process by which culture produces signs and/or attribute meaning to signs. A semiotics concerned to stress the social aspect of signification. . . Their meaning is construed as semiotic value produced through culturally shared codes” (http://www.aber.ac.w~/dgc/sem01html).

C. Conclusion

Hiligaynon folk utterances are brief verbal expressions that are spoken in various situations. These are the salambiton or interjections and hurobaton or proverbs.

The salambiton or interjections are mostly uttered in one word, two words, fragments or phrases and, occasionally, in statements. The meaningful senses they signify are usually understandable to the Ilonggo folks. The Hiligaynon salambiton or interjections are difficult to translate into the English language or most of the Hiligaynon interjections have no English equivalent. The meanings or messages they relate are understandable and are appreciated only by the Ilonggo folks. Hence, the referent or symbols they represent tend to be culture bound.

The Hiligaynon salambiton or interjections mirror the Ilonggo’s resiliency in terms of languages. The Hiligaynon interjections embraced some Spanish words and expressions, turning such expressions into localized forms. The Hiligaynon interjections, also, reveal that the Ilonggos are intense and very passionate in the expressions and communication of their emotions – the raw emotions of surprise, dismay, anger or hatred. Though brief, the Hiligaynon interjections disclose, too, the Ilonggos’ amiability and courtesy, as well as, their trust in God and respect for unseen spirits that dwell in their environment.

Hiligaynon hurobaton or proverbs are considered brief folk speeches. They are of one-line or two-line statements. They are poetically constructed. Though not considered as poetry, the Hiligaynon proverbs imbibe poetic elements in its external form, like rhyme, such as alliteration, assonance, consonance and end rhymes. The statements are often metaphorical and the lines observe parallelism and ellipses. Their internal features, like hyperbole, paradox, connotation and personification, stress the sense or message that the proverbs intend.
In their sense, the Hiligaynon hurobaton or proverbs are didactic or moralistic. They are uttered in situations that the elders find occasion to advice or reprimand the young people. The Hiligaynon proverbs then turn out to be guidelines for good behavior and conduct and for what is right and wrong, particularly, in the context of how the Ilonggos should live as a people.

The Hiligaynon hurobaton or proverbs record the Ilonggo elders’ deep wisdom that was gained through learning and practical experiences. When analyzed, the Hiligaynon proverbs prove to be a legacy of the elder Ilonggo generation to the young generation. The Hiligaynon proverbs are replete with values to live-by that the Ilonggos uphold and favor in their way of life.

The Ilonggos, as seen their proverbs, have faith and trust in God. As such the Hiligaynon proverbs abound with sayings on the values of honesty, truthfulness, kindness, generosity and humility. The Hiligaynon by-words, likewise, indicate that the Ilonggos are industrious people for industry as a value recurs several times in the recorded Hiligaynon proverbs. Aside from industry, the Hiligaynon proverbs disclose the Ilonggos’ strong preference for the value of obedience, prudence and patience that should be inculcated in the minds of the young. Another value that the young should head and pursue is the value of education or knowledge or learning. The elders, too, as reflected in their proverbs, emphasize the value of honor in a person, more than anything elses in life. As a group of people, the Ilonggos’ “bayanihan” spirit or the value of cooperation is also seen.

Hiligaynon folk utterances, therefore, prove to be a rich resource in understanding and appreciating the Ilonggos as a group of people – what they value in life and how they live in their own socio-cultural milieu.
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Appendix A: Hiligaynon Salambiton or Interjections

One-Word

Ay!
Ahay
Kuwan or Kuan
Mirisí
Gaba
Hoy
Pssst
Layas
Totoy
Sili
Mimming
Sika
Diretso
Para
Tagbalay
Dayon
Idik-idik
Kuruting
Tsu-tsu
Tu-od?
Hala or Hala-hala
Susmaryosep
Kanami
Gurgori-ok
Punyeta
Abaw
Ambot
Imagine
Este. . .
Milagro
Panulay
Buwisit
Yugs
Yuga
Yuta
Yudiputa
Linte or Litse
Lilinti-an
Gago or Gaga
Estupido or Estupida
Maldita
Cuchina
Tonto
Engrata
Lampingasan
Tampalasan
Salbahe
Escandalosa
Santisima

Two-Word

Ti, mo!
Puera buyag
Puera usog
Puera olin
Puera bugno
Umpok balati-an
Puera aswang
Puera lumay
Puera gaba
Puera sulay
Puera damgo
Ambot ay
Ma-an bay
Insa haw?
Hipos da
Kasabad, ah
Hala, sige
Sigeha, da
Ah karon . . .
Bahala na
Gino-o ko
Malas gid
Hamak mo
Kabay pa
Tsiken ped
Gali, ha?
Bay-e da
Abayan lang
Marisi mo
Dayon ikaw
Apok balati-an
Hamak mo
Tu-od, no?
Abaw ah
Ambot ay
Hitsura sini
Ti man
Bala haw
Kuno abi
Sakit ba
Ato na
Salamat gid
Salawayon gid
Madre mia
Grabe ba
Sulod dukot
‘Nami eh
Ara na
Ma-isog ba
Pesteng yawa-a
Yawa ka
Tonto gid
Kuwidaw ka
Bu-ang bu-ang gid
Dugay-dugay lang
Sigeha, day
Tilawi lang
Iririmaw taton
Three-Word or Phrases or Fragments

Labay man ang akon
Hinugay gani dira
Ti, kita mo
Ga-i ko man
Tu-od gid ya pero
Sip-onon pa gani
May gatas pa gani ang baba
Kamal-am na kanimo
Ah, patyon ta karon
Sipa-on ta karon
Huyapan ta karon
Kug-on tag id karon
Kurog ko ba
Ba, pamalhas man ko ba
Kurog tuhod ko ba

Sa kalu-oy sang Diyos
Patawara lang sang iya mga sala
Diin man nga diyes man
Wa-ay wa-ay gid
Bileb ko ba
Daw linabo sa bato
Ano ka, sinusuwerte?
Buas, aga pa
Hesus Maria kag Josep
Ti mo. Kay amo ina ya mo
Ambot sa imo
Ayu Diyos ta
Ayu, kanugon no?
Patay kang bata ka
Ka putot sina nga problema
Inisnab ang beauty ko
Malusod pa ko di ay
Bilat sang iloy
Hele hele bago kiyere
Kabuki sa imo
Patay gutom gid
‘Nali maghinulsol ka
Ayu, Diyos ko
Por Dios por Santo
Statements

Tabi-taban anay mga amigo
Basi masalapay kamo
Indi ako makakita sa inyo.

Tingting kulating
Dakpa si Merting
Dagdag puling.

Hala bira
Sige dasok
Bisan gutok.

Mahigop tamon ka sabaw.
Mala-on na lang ko.
Mamadre na lang ko.
Asinan ko na lang ang akon.
Umpok sa akon. Dulot sa imo.
Nga-a masakit tiyan ko?
Malusod pa ko di ay.

Appendix B: Hiligaynon Hurobaton or Proverbs

One-Line

Kon may aso, may kalayo.

Sobra nga pangadi, malusot sa tambi.

Durong sugilanon, durong salabton.

Siendo linahe, among trahe.

Ang sakripisyo, utod sang kadalag-an.

Magtipon para sa ma-ulan nga panahon.

Kon may ta-ob, may hunas.
Kon may pag-antos, may kauswagan.
Ang makinoton indi dali mawad-an.
Ang una pamunu-an una ma lub-okan.
Ang kabata-an amo ang pag-asa sang banwa.
Tubtob nagakabuhi, may pag-asa.
Basta may kabudlay, may katawhay.
Natabunan don ka abo, kutkuton pa.
Diin lang ya baga nga indi mag-igpat.
Sambilog nga tul-an, kapila sabawan.
Ang butigon utod sang makawat.
Indi paghusgaran ang libro sa iya hitsura.
Ang langka bisa anhon mo ka tago manimanghot gid.
Kun may kalipay, may kalisod.
Wara du daluk nga indi madunlan.

Two-Line

Kun may itanom,
May anihon.

Ang ta-o nga mapisan
Mangin manggaran.

Ang ta-o nga wala sing pilak,
Pareho sang pispis nga wala sing pakpak.

Ang ta-o nga mabinutang-butangon
Mabinuhaton.
Wala ti mapilasan
Nga indi mahapdi-an.

Ang dugo nagapanalaytay
Sa ka-ugatan.

Ang baga bisan itagu,
Naga-inggat kang kalayo.

Madungganon ang magtugro
Kang sa mangayo.

Wara ti magluko,
Kung wara ti mallukuhon.

Ang mayad nga kabubut-on,
Indi mabakal ka pilak.

Kon ang imong bulsa luhot,
Indi ikaw makasupot.

Indi ikaw maglibak sa iba
Hay ang dalan may talinga.

Ang mahipos nga idu alandaman;
Ang palataghol nga idu indi palakagat.

Tan-awon mo ang buring mo,
Antes magtan-aw ka buring ka iban.

Ang ta-o nga palasaway,
Nagapangulintas sang saway.

Ang santol indi mamunga
Kang mangga.

Kon diin ang kalamay,
Rugto ang subay.

Bul-on mo ang muri kang mata mo,
Antes ikaw magbu-ol ka ana kang iba.
Ang ta-o nga dasu-daso,
Madali makadug-so.

Wara ti ginamos nga matago,
Hay mabaho.

Indi pag-isipa ang itlo,
Kon wala pa mabuto.

Ang gino-o na-akig sa mga butigon;
Pero nalipay siya sa mga maminatud-on.

Ang matamad nga ta-o ayhon daku ang iya hadum,
Pero indi niya ini ma-angkon tungod sang iya katamaron.

Ang mga ta-o nagaplano,
Pero ang Diyos amo ang nagapamat-od.

Ma-ayo pa ang imol nga maminatud-on;
Sang sa manggaranon nga butigon kag bugalon.

Ang pasensiya mapait,
Apang ang bunga matam-is.

Ang indi magpati sang ginasiling sang mga tigulang,
Sa ulihi nga adlaw pagakadton ya ang anang siko.

Kung nagalakat ka sang madasig,
Kun matunok ka madalum.

Ang imo ginahimo sang diutay ka pa,
Imo madala hasta magtigulang ka.

Indi magsako kay madali ka madusmo;
Indi magdali kaydali ka mabali.

Imo kahig, imo tuka;
Imo busong, imo bata.

Ang suwerte sang ta-o
Indi ka libot kuko.
Ang ta-o nga mapili
Makadto sa pinili-an.

Kon mata-as ang lupad,
Matunog ang lagpak.

Hay nabasa ron gid man,
Marigos na lang.

Ang dalagko nga walis,
Nagakinahanglan sang dalagku nga butones.

Tukturon nga binangon
Kon pirme ibaid naga tarom.

Bulahan ang ginatamay,
Kay iya ang ginharian sang langit.

Sa likod sinang gal-um,
May adlaw nga nagasiga.

Indi lang ang panahon nagabaylo,
Kundi pati man ta-o.

Wala sang may natakluban
Nga indi mabuksan.

Ang diutay nga tinun-an
Isa ka makatalagam nga butang.

Ang bato nga nagaligid
Wala sang matipon nga lumot.

Ang pagninulsol
Nabutang tanan sa ulihi.

Mabudlay pukawon ang nagatulog
Kon nagapatulog-tulog lang.

Himo-a sang matuod ang imo inoras,
Tungod ang inoras indi mo Makita liwat.
Ang saging nga sab-a
Indi mamonga sang lisuhan.

Ang anak nga malalison
Wala mayo nga pala-abuton.

Ang ta-o nga mabu-ot
Mahumot sang panimu-ot.

Ang ta-o nga maalikaya
Sa katilingban gina amuma.

Two-Line

Ang indi kahibalo magbalikid sa iya ginhalinan;
Indi maka-abot sa iya pagakadtu-an.

Ang butang nga malain para sa imo;
Indi mo paghimu-on sa imo isigkatao.

May dalunggan ang duta;
May pakpak ang balita.

Mabaskog ang sulod,
Maluya ang tuhod.

Anhon mo pa ang kumpay
Kun patay na ang kabayo.

Kun ano ang puno
Amo man ang bunga.

Kun maykabudlay,
May katawhay.

Ang bata nga malalison
Wara gid ti mayad nga para-abuton.

Santa, Santita
Corazon maldita.
Bisan ano ka laba sang prosesyon,
Sa simbahan man gihapon ang padulong.

Bisan may ara, magpangita,
Kay bisan gani ang tuburan ginahubsan.

Ang ta-o nga palalagaw
May isulod sa kalalaw.

Kun ano ang nanay’
Amo man ang bata.

Kon ano ang sinapsap,
Amo man ang inagsap.

Ang ta-o nga tamad,
Wala pala-abuton nga buas damlag.

Pakama-ayuhon ko nga mapatay nga isa ka baganihan,
San mapatay nga isa ka talawan.

Kon may tanum ka,
May anihon ka.

Kon ano ang gin-utang,
Amo man ang igabayad.

Wala sing kalipay sa duta
Nga dili mabugayan sang luha.

Anhon mo ang kugos,
Kung naga dalus-os.

Kun sa sungdang ka nagakabuhi,
Sa sundang ka man mapatay.

Iya ulo, iya kulo;
Iya kalag, iya bakero.

Ang isda indi madawi sa ikug,
Kundi sa baba.
Wara ti utang,
Nga indi mabayaran.

Mapunggan ang suba,
Indi ang baba.

Wara ti matarum nga indi maghabol;
Wara ti matarawis nga indi magdupol.

Ang sanga nga tiku, untayon nga bata pa;
Kay kun magmal-am, indi ron matadlong.

Kon ano kabahol sang butones,
Amo man ang walis.

Kon ano ka ta-as sang lupad,
Amo man ang tunog ka anang lagapak.

Ang mabug-at nga ulobrahon nagamag-an,
Kon ang tanan magtuwang.

Indi gid maghampang sang kalayo,
Kun indi ka maluyag masunog.

Kon ano tata-as sang imo ginhulugan,
Amo man kasakit sang imo mabatyagan.

Nagakita-ay gani ang sili kag luwag,
Ayhan pa ang mga ta-o nga nagarayu-ay.

Ang mahimo mo subong
Indi na buwas paghulaton nga buhaton.

Ang balay sang mala-uton pagalaglagon,
Ang iya sang matadlong paga-uswagon.

Mag-upod sa ta-o nga ma-alam,
Agud mangin ma-alam ka man.

Ang ta-o nga bugalon,
Madali mahulog sa disgrasya.
Bisan asin lang ang sud-an,
Basta naga-ululupod kag nagahigugma-anay ang tanan.

Ang ta-o nga ma-inandamon,
Magapahilayo sa disgrasya.

Maskin wa-ay kan-on,
Kon may pinanilagan.

Ang makahilo sa isda,
Ang iya kahakog sa baba.

Ang kuring nga palalagaw
Indi makadakop balabaw.

Ang magahod nga suba, manabaw;
Ang matinong nga suba, madalum.

Mas labi kayo ang may kaalam kag ihibalo,
Sang sa bulawan kag pilak.

Kung gusto naton umasenso,
Magtrabaho kita sang husto.

Binaya-an ang karne;
Pinasulabi ang tugabang kag kamote.
Ang ta-o nga wala pakpak
Indi makalupad.

Ang mabudlay kuha-on
Manamit kan-on.

Ang mga pispis nga pareho sang balahibo
Nagaupdamay.

Sa Diyos ang kalu-oy,
Sa ta-o ang pag-obra.

Sa likud sang gal-om
Nagasilak ang adlaw.

Indi pagbutangi sang higko ang bubon
Nga nagahatag sang tubig sa imo.
Ang tanan indi bulawan
Nga nagasilak.

Anhon mo ang palasyo kon ang naga-istar bukaw;
Mayad pa ang payag kon ang naga-istar ta-o.

Kon ikaw ginhaboy kang bato,
Baslan mo kang puto.

Ang amo indi man igsakto sa tanan nga tiempo,
Pero siya man gihapon ang amo.

Husto na ang isa kahambal
Sa ta-o nga maalam sang panghuna-huna.

Ang wala nagapangabudlay sa pagpangita,
Wala nagakanugon sa paggasto.

Three-line or More

Ang pangabuhi sang ta-o pareho sang kariton,
Kon kaisa ara sa ibabaw,
Kon kaisa ara sa idalom.

Bisan ano ka tig-a sang bato,
Sa dalayon nga tulo
Sang tubig, nagabuho.

Bisan anhon mo sang tangkal,
Kay sa lunang naghalin,
Kon mabuhi sa lunang man mabalik.

Ang nagapamati nga ta-o
Sang ginatudlo sa iya, maalam;
Pero ang nasikway sang ginatudlo
Sa iya nga ka-ayuhan, buang-buan.

Ang manggad nga nakuha
Sa mahapos nga paagi madali madula;
Pero ang manggad nga nakuha
Sa mabudlay indi madula.
Kon may ara ka
Madamo ang amiga;
Kon wala ka duha ka pulo
Wala sing isa.

Ang nagahigugma sang pagsabdong
Nagahigugma sang kinaadman;
Apang ang nagakaakig sang pagsaway
Among buang-buang.

Imo anay hunahuna-on
Ang imo pagabuhaton;
Kon ano sa ulihi
Ang imo pagadangaton.

Ang matarong nga ta-o
Nga nagalakat sa kadungganan;
Ang iya mga anak
Sa ulihi, bulahan.

Ang gamut sang ihibalo mapait
Labi sa katumbal;
Busa ang binunga matam-is
Labi sa arnibal.

Ang anak nga malalison
Sa pulong sang ginikanan
Masunson nagaka-agom
Dalagko nga kalisdanan.