

Bicol Agricultural Folksongs

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Abstract—Singing songs of the past may rekindle one’s cultural heritage. Bicol agricultural folksongs have the potential of introducing culture and agriculture in learning. Besides, it makes learning fun when used in classrooms. This is a qualitative study that collected agricultural folksongs both from the locals and from those available in print and non-print media. This study identified Bicol Agricultural folksongs; conducted a content analysis of agricultural folksongs, and developed teaching-learning materials as supplemental resources to raise students’ interest in agriculture. Three agricultural folksongs were identified, namely “An Harong Mi” (Our House), “Bulkan Bulusan, Mayon, Isarog” (Mount Bulusan, Mayon, Isarog), and “An Harong Ko Nipa” (My Nipa Hut House). These revealed relation and representation in agriculture and have values that can promote and heighten the interest of students in agriculture. Thus, children’s interactive storybooks, sing-along videos, and a booklet guide to contextualizing lessons using agricultural folksongs were developed.

Keywords—*Bicol, agriculture, folksongs*

I. INTRODUCTION

There is much to discover about Bicol folksongs. The popularized Bicol folksongs are only a handful of this region’s uncollected abundance of folksongs. The same goes with the native Philippine folk music which accordingly [1], offers a great deal of unexplored area of study in their peculiar forms. These folksongs are endangered of remaining in the past unless collected and preserved by the present generations. [2] In a study, it was stated that one major consideration for a folksong is the passage of the tradition of music from the past to the present through oral transmission.

In past generations, Filipinos have been adept at folksongs. Almost all their activities are played and portrayed in songs, thereby creating a reflection of the traditions and history of people in a particular place and time [3]. Also, several themes were identified in Philippine folksongs such as love and social realities depicted in Southern Leyte’s folksongs [4]. Meanwhile, it was love songs, children’s songs, death songs, work songs, and lullabies in the Provinces of Cagayan and Ilocos Norte, Philippines, [5] Another study which is on Yogad Folk Songs of Echague, Isabela, Philippines, retrieved and translated a collection of folk songs. There were 13 identified folk songs and were categorized on their specific theme and genre. The paper establishes the important role of folk songs that represent their culture and traditions in the life cycle of the Yogad tribe [3]. In the case of Bicol region,

there is a little or no evidence of studies on the collection and analysis of agricultural folksongs.

At present, Philippine folksongs were part of cultural celebrations at school and in the community. These were part of the performances at school cultural activities and during celebrations of weddings and festivities. Some of these songs were taught to elementary pupils. However, most of these collected and popularized folksongs include the major languages spoken by Filipino [3]. In the case of the Bicol folksongs, few reached popularity. Moreover, these folksongs are non-agriculture related songs. Thus, leaving agricultural folksongs on the sidelines.

Bicol region, also known as Region V, has five provinces namely, Camarines Norte, Camarines Sur, Albay, Sorsogon, Catanduanes, and Masbate. Bicol is the major dialect in the region. Almost half of the region is utilized for farming with palay and coconut as major crops. The most common livestock raising activities are hog and chicken raising while bee culture/honey production is gaining popularity among Bicolanos. More than one-third among these farmers or agricultural operators belonged to the 40-54 year age group while the lowest proportion was those belonging to the younger age (15-24 years old). This young population is mainly students thereby decreasing the opportunities to be primarily involved in agriculture [6]. However, this study aimed at increasing the interest of these young people in agriculture in the hope of letting them engage in agriculture someday.

Another major challenge in cultural promotion is preserving morals, beliefs, and traditions, particularly today when globalization has made society vulnerable [7]. In one of the studies, it was stated that there is no meaningful correlation between the highest educational attainment of the respondents and their level of preservation. Thus, it is advised that the promotion of folk arts including folksongs may be done to the younger generation from the elementary years.

Songs of all genres are an effective way of influencing the young generation today. Historically, past generations are greatly influenced by songs and music. At present, popular music is widely listened to by the young generation, introducing folksongs can also be a good idea knowing that these depict their ancestors’ history. Aside from promoting cultural heritage, the use of agricultural folk songs in lessons can also promote values that can heighten interest in agriculture. Thus, history and culture can be a source of inspiration to heighten the interest of young minds in

agriculture. Accordingly [7], folk songs and ballads can be used in varied ways in education. Songs can be sung by students at the beginning of the lesson to give an atmosphere; during the lesson to illustrate ideas; at the end to bring it to a suitable close.

Preservation and promotion of the cultural heritage had been particularly identified in the Philippine constitution, declaring that “The State shall foster the preservation, enrichment, and dynamic evolution of a Filipino national culture.” Also, section 15 of the same article states that “The State shall conserve, promote, and popularize the nation’s historical and cultural heritage and resources, as well as artistic creations.”

Republic Act 7356 states that “Culture reflects and shapes values, beliefs, aspirations, thereby defining a people's national identity.” (Sec. 3). Therefore, every citizen has to preserve and conserve the Filipino historical and cultural heritage and resources. Its promotion and preservation are legally strengthened through several mandates. Republic Act No. 10066 provides for the protection and conservation of the national cultural heritage, strengthening the National Commission for Culture and the Arts (NCCA). On the other hand, Republic Act No. 10066 or the National Cultural Heritage Act, stressed providing protection and conservation of the national cultural heritage. Also, the Republic Act No. 7356, Sec.7 states that Filipino historical and cultural heritage and resources must be protected and preserved by every citizen. In Sec. 3, it is mandated that a national Filipino culture that represents and shapes the economic, social, and political life of the Philippines shall be developed, promoted, and preserved. As such, the Philippine government through its agencies, schools, and educators has the citizen’s obligation to preserve our culture.

Despite the laws on the preservation of cultural heritage, the promotion of Bikol agricultural folksongs is not intensified, whether in the schools in the province or other parts of the country. There were several studies on Bikol folksongs and folklore although few reached a wider audience. These were usually performed at school activities, and community celebrations such as dances at weddings and fiestas. However, most of these folksongs were mainly focused on love and social realities and not on agriculture. Aside from abiding by the law on the promotion of cultural heritage, using Bikol agricultural folksongs in education can connect the past and the present. The identity of the Filipinos particularly of the Bicolanos as reflected in these folksongs can be a source of Bicolano pride [9].

Thus, this study aimed at promoting Bikol agricultural folksongs at the same time increasing the interest of students in the concepts of agriculture. This study will analyze the context of these folksongs that will be used in developing learning and teaching materials for the contextualization of lessons. It will ultimately promote this culture to the young generation who have lived in a period where technology has a great impact on their lives. As such, this study will further promote these folksongs through the

development of Information Education and Communication (IEC) materials for teaching-learning both in Basic Education and Higher Education. The use of technology will be utilized to cater to the learning needs of students in this new generation. Dissemination of these materials will be conducted through the extension program of the College of Development Education to promote and preserve Bicol history, culture, and arts with emphasis on Agriculture.

II. METHODS

This is a qualitative study that collected agricultural folksongs both from the locals and from available folksongs in print and non-print media. The “*An Harong Mi*” folksong was adapted from the collection of Bikol folksongs with additional parts adapted from the locals. It was translated into text by the researcher and was counterchecked by the respondents.

The study utilized content analysis of the identified folksongs. Codes on beliefs, social actions, attitudes, traditions, places, foods, and other agricultural features were generated. Analysis of each folk song focused on the agricultural representations were made. The data gathered were carefully analyzed, defined, and reviewed. Data triangulation was done through the musical audios and videos available on the internet and the lyrics posted on the various websites online. Locals were also asked to verify the translation of the folksongs.

III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This section discusses the identified Bikol agricultural folksongs. It likewise presents the content analysis of each of these agricultural folk songs with promotional values that can heighten interest in agriculture of students. It also described the developed supplemental resources that increase students’ interest in agriculture in the form of IEC materials.

A. *Bikol Agricultural folk songs.*

There were three Bikol agricultural folksongs identified in this study. The lyrics in Bikol and English translation is shown on Table I.

TABLE I. BIKOL AGRICULTURAL FOLKSONGS

<p>Ang Harong Mi</p> <p>I Ang harong mi Sadit sana Pero malinigon Sagkod sa kusina Magkakan man kami Pirmeng sa lamesa Ang isira mi Gulay sana Daing iba.</p> <p>II Kung kamo mag duman Mag dara nin asin Ta maluto kita nin manlainlain sa samuya natad may tanum nin laya maugmang inomun kung aga.</p>	<p>Our house</p> <p>I Our house Is just small But very clean Up to the kitchen Whenever we eat We do it on the table Our dish Is just vegetable And no other.</p> <p>II If you come and visit Just bring salt Because we will cook Different dishes. In our backyard, we have a ginger plant, It's so fun to drink it in the morning.</p>
<p>Bulkan Bulusan, Mayon, Isarog</p> <p>Bulkan Bulusan, Mayon, Isarog, na bakong tunay Saen man ako paduman, di ko malingawan Maski harayo na ibang lugar Sakong maabtan, luha sa mata ko Minabulos kung narumduman</p> <p>Bulkang Bulusan nasa probinsiyang Sorsogon Bulkang Isarog naman nasa probinsiyang Camarines Sur Probinsiyang Albay, na yaon ang Bulkan na Mayon Ang gayon nya daeng karibay Orgolyo nin Bikolnon.</p>	<p>Bulkan Bulusan, Mayon, Isarog</p> <p>Mount Bulusan, Mayon, Isarog, so surreal Anywhere I may go, I won't forget</p> <p>Even from a far place I get tears in my eyes.</p> <p>My overflowing emotions</p> <p>Mount Bulusan is in the province of Sorsogon While Mount Isarog is in the province of Camarines Sur. Province of Albay, where there's Mount Mayon. Its Beauty can't be replaced Pride of Bikolandia.</p>
<p>An Harong Ko Nipa</p> <p>An harong ko nipa Minsan ngani sadit Manga maritas diyan nasasaray Singkamas asin talong Sigarilyas asin mani Sitaw, bataw patani Kundol, patola, upo kalabasa Sa kadakul-dakul pang labanos Mustasa, sibulyas, kamatis Bawang saka luya Sa palibot may langa.</p>	<p>My Nipa Hut House</p> <p>My house is a nipa hut Sometimes small Plants that grow are varied Turnip and eggplant Winged bean and peanut String bean, hyacinth bean, lima bean. Wax gourd, sponge gourd, white squash & pumpkin, And there's also radish, mustard, Onion, tomato, garlic & ginger And are sesame seeds all around.</p>

B. Identify the Headings

Table II below presents the revolving themes and the relation to the agriculture of the selected Bikol folksongs. The analysis of the lyrics of the following folksongs: *“An Harong Mi” (Our House)*, *“Bulkan Bulusan, Mayon, Isarog” (Mount Bulusan, Mayon, Isarog)*, and *“An Harong Ko Nipa” (My Nipa Hut House)* reveals its relation and representation in agriculture particularly in farming.

TABLE II. REVOLVING THEMES ON THE SELECTED BIKOL FOLKSONGS AND THEIR RELATION TO AGRICULTURE

Folksong	Themes	Relation to Agriculture
<i>“An Harong Mi” (Our House)</i>	Agriculture, Nutrition, and Family	The song promotes the importance of eating vegetables, cooking their dishes, and making healthy beverages. It also speaks about having their home garden.
<i>“Bulkan Bulusan, Mayon, Isarog” (Mount Bulusan, Mayon, Isarog)</i>	Nature and Agriculture	The song speaks about the appreciation of nature. It is famous among the locals of agricultural communities at the foot of the said mountains.
<i>“An Harong Ko Nipa” (My Nipa Hut House)</i>	Agriculture and Nutrition	The song tells about the home garden and the varied plants they grow.

C. Bikol Agricultural Folksongs

Presented above are three of the identified Bikol Agricultural folksongs. The song *“An Harong Mi” (Our House)* contains two verses, the first is readily available online in print and non-printed media. As for the second part of the song, it was obtained through an interview with local citizens. They were able to sing the song in chorus without a copy of lyrics proving that the song is traditionally passed and evolved through the oral transmission process [2]. The song *“Bulkan Bulusan, Mayon, Isarog” (Mount Bulusan, Mayon, Isarog)* is also one of the famous folksongs available in print and non-printed media. Several singers had already sung and popularized the song like the version of Ms. Carmen Camacho. As for the third folksong entitled *“An Harong Ko Nipa” (My Nipa Hut House)*, It is the Bikol version of the popular Filipino folksong *“Bahay Kubo”* credited to have been composed by Felipe Padilla de León, the National Artist for Music in the year 1997.

It was noted that folksongs related to agriculture were scarce when looking for available Bikol Agricultural folk music in print and non-printed formats. Most of the themes used in Bikol folksongs available revolved around love and social realities. The song *“Babaeng Taga Bikol” (Girl from Bikol)* talks about the beauty of Bikolana women. *“Si Nanay si Tatay” (Mother and Father)* speaks of a child's love for his parents. *“Ining Kalibangbang” (This Butterfly)* is about a man waiting for the girl he loves. These findings could imply that the reason for having fewer Bikol folksongs related to agriculture and more on love and social realities is that these forms of songs are easily passed due to having more avenues to be used and promoted. Romantic folksongs are used during *“Harana” (Serenade)*, courtship, wedding, and barangay fiesta/festivities, thus, more folksongs were created, passed, and preserved under the themes of Love and Social Realities.

In selected municipalities of the Provinces of Cagayan and Ilocos Norte, the Philippines, [5]. compiled, categorized, translated, and analyzed Ilokano folksongs. There were sixteen folksongs listed and among them, there are five categories identified. The study revealed that they are love songs, children's songs, death songs, work songs, and lullabies. Agriculturally

themed folksongs were sparse in the said collection.

In the compilation and analysis of Southern Leyte folksong of [4] [10], the common themes shown were social realities, rural life imagery, courtship, and patriotism. Only one of the songs was related to agriculture.

Continued levels of poverty in agricultural areas have dissuaded young Filipinos from finding opportunities in this field [11]. As there is a current stigma on agriculture that equates to poverty and the lower caste, this may be another potential explanation for lesser-known agricultural-related folk songs. This suggests that folksongs related to agriculture are not promoted and propagated by the youth thus, the gradual decay and diminution of these traditional folksongs could be expected.

More comprehensive research on farming-focused Bikol Agricultural folksongs is recommended. This can be achieved by interviewing the locals of agricultural communities to find more agricultural-related folksongs that are existing but not in-print or recorded media.

D. Content analysis of Agricultural Folksongs

The song “An Harong Mi” (Our House) is about a small but clean house where the members appreciate eating vegetable dishes “Ang isira mi, gulay sana” (Our dish is just vegetable). The second verse tells about inviting a friend over requesting for salt for them to cook different dishes “Kung kamo mag duman, mag dara sana nin asin” (If you go and visit, just bring salt”. This could imply that their cooked dishes are all-natural and free of preservatives. From this, we can also see the inherent camaraderie of the Bicolanos that it is normal to invite people over to cook together. In the last sentence, “May tanum nin Laya, maugmang inumon kung aga” (We have a ginger plant, Happy to drink in the morning), This shows that fresh produce can also be used to make beverages and not just cooked dishes.

The folksong “Bulkan Bulusan, Mayon, Isarog” (Mount Bulusan, Mayon, Isarog) projects an image of appreciation for the beauty of nature. The three mountains; Mt. Bulusan, Mt. Mayon and Mt. Isarog are being appreciated for their natural beauty. “Saen man ako paduman, di ko malilingawan” Anywhere I may go, I won’t forget. From this line, it is assumed that the person is leaving home to a faraway place “Maski harayo na ibang lugar” (Even from a faraway place). Given that this song is popular amongst the locals of agricultural communities at the foot of these mountains in scrutiny, we can say that the person would be parting from his/her agricultural life but still wants to keep the beauty of nature and agriculture in his/her heart. This also proves that there is social mobility amongst these groups which is agreed upon among scholars that the young will leave rural areas for a more lucrative lifestyle and career opportunities [12].

The “An Harong Ko Nipa” (My Nipa Hut House) talks about a family living in a Nipa Hut surrounded by various vegetables. This folksong which is originally written in Tagalog is popular among school children but mostly sung in Tagalog even in the province of Bikol. This song implies that it is possible to have a sustainable source of food that is organically grown in the backyard. It also promotes healthy living by growing and eating food with high nutritional value.

E. Developed IEC Materials

The supplemental teaching-learning resources may be incorporated in education. The following were developed:

- Reading materials such as children’s storybooks where the lessons on agriculture are integrated at the same time, the folksongs can be sung. These were written in Bikol dialect.
- A sing-along video of the Bikol agricultural folksongs for the students and teachers to get acquainted with the music and lyrics of the folksongs. This can be uploaded on the internet for wider dissemination. This will aid the readers of the storybook of the musical tune of the folksongs. Also, these videos can be used by teachers in the contextualization of their lessons.
- A lesson guide for the teachers in using the folksongs in their lessons.

IV. CONCLUSION

There were three identified folksongs related to agriculture in Bicol region. These folksongs reveal their relation and representation in agriculture as a result of the content analysis. Thus, Bikol agricultural folksongs can both preserve the culture and heighten interest in agriculture among the young generation. These can be achieved through the developed IEC such as the children’s interactive books, sing-along videos, and a booklet guide to contextualizing lessons using agricultural folksongs. This study showed that education can aid in the preservation of Bicol culture and in promoting agriculture. Both students and teachers may benefit from the results of this study thereby ensuring the conservation of Bikol folksongs which are considered the pride of the region.

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