



# HISTORICAL LINGUISTICS OF IDENTITY: THE EMERGENCE OF "WARAY-WARAY" AS A LANGUAGE NAME IN SAMAR-LEYTE

<sup>1</sup>Ma. Roumella S. Conos, <sup>2</sup>Marie Joyce A. Jacinto

<sup>1</sup>Master of Arts in Education Major in Social Science  
<sup>1</sup>Leyte Normal University,

**Abstract:** This study explores the historical and sociolinguistic emergence of "Waray-Waray" as the language name in the Samar-Leyte region. Grounded in historical linguistics and identity theory, it traces the transition from the earlier designation "Binisaya" to the adoption of "Waray-Waray," investigating the influences of colonial history, media representations, and local cultural narratives on this renaming process. Utilizing archival documents, linguistic analyses, and oral histories, the research highlights the contested meanings of the term, rooted in the word "waray," which some perceive as pejorative while others embrace as a marker of cultural pride and regional identity. Drawing from ethnolinguistic identity, language ideology, and postcolonial frameworks, the findings demonstrate that the name "Waray-Waray" transcends mere linguistic classification, serving as a significant historical symbol of both resilience and the evolving self-definition of the Eastern Visayan people.

## INTRODUCTION

Language is a fundamental marker of identity, encapsulating the history, culture, and social experiences of its speakers. In the Samar-Leyte region of the Philippines, the language now widely known as "Waray-Waray" has undergone a notable renaming process, evolving from its earlier designation as "Binisaya." This shift reflects more than a mere change of terminology; it reveals the intricate interplay of historical forces, including colonial legacies, media influence, and local cultural narratives, which have collectively shaped how the people of Eastern Visayas understand and express their linguistic and regional identity.

The term "Waray-Waray" is widely used to identify the language and people of Samar and Leyte in the Philippines. However, the historical trajectory of this ethno-linguistic label remains under-explored. This study addresses the research problem of tracing the emergence and evolution of "Waray-Waray" as a language name, examining its socio-historical context, and analyzing its linguistic implications. The term's origins and its adoption as a collective identifier are not thoroughly documented, leading to gaps in understanding the region's linguistic and cultural history. This research is relevant because it sheds light on the interplay between language, identity, and historical processes in the Visayas region. It aligns with the university's research agenda by contributing to the preservation of local cultural heritage, promoting interdisciplinary studies in the humanities, and fostering community engagement through the dissemination of research findings. As noted by McFarland (2004), the evolution of language names is often intertwined with social and political developments, making this a crucial area of inquiry.

The Waray-Waray language is a major Visayan language spoken primarily in the Samar and Leyte islands of the Eastern Visayas region in the Philippines. Linguistically, it belongs to the Central Bisayan branch of the Austronesian language family. Historically, the Waray people were among the earliest indigenous groups encountered by Western explorers, with the first contact recorded in 1521 during Ferdinand Magellan's expedition. The language and its speakers have a rich cultural heritage shaped by pre-Hispanic animistic beliefs, colonial influences, and enduring local traditions, which continue to influence regional identity today.

Originally, the language now broadly identified as Waray-Waray was referred to under the term "Binisaya," a general label for several Visayan languages during the Spanish colonial period. Over time, especially through media portrayals, colonial classification, and local cultural narratives, the distinct name "Waray-Waray" emerged and gained widespread recognition. This term derives from the root word waray, meaning "nothing," a word historically used in varying contexts that some perceive as derogatory, while others reclaim it as an emblem of pride and regional distinctiveness.

The sociohistorical processes behind this renaming involve complex power dynamics, including colonial legacies and evolving language ideologies that shaped community self-definition. The renaming from "Binisaya" to "Waray-Waray" is thus not merely linguistic but deeply tied to identity formation and resistance. By embracing the name "Waray-Waray," the people assert a unique ethno-linguistic identity that reflects both resilience and the ongoing negotiation of their cultural place within the broader national and postcolonial Philippine context.

This study, therefore, investigates this historical and sociolinguistic emergence of "Waray-Waray" as a distinct language name in Samar-Leyte, examining how archival materials, oral histories, and linguistic texts reveal the interplay of power, identity, and cultural expression in shaping language naming. Through this lens, the research highlights how the linguistic label "Waray-Waray" transcends designation to become a symbol of Eastern Visayan community identity and historical experience.

### NEED OF THE STUDY.

This study is significant for several reasons:

1. It fills a gap in the historical linguistics of Philippine languages, contributing to a deeper understanding of language evolution and identity formation.
2. It helps preserve and document the linguistic heritage of Samar and Leyte, fostering a sense of cultural identity and pride.
3. The research findings can be disseminated to local communities through workshops, publications, and educational materials, promoting cultural awareness.
4. The study connects linguistics, history, and cultural studies, promoting interdisciplinary collaboration within the university.
5. By understanding the historical roots of regional identity, this research can contribute to informed discussions on local development and cultural preservation.

### 3.1 Population and Sample

KSE-100 index is an index of 100 companies selected from 580 companies on the basis of sector leading and market capitalization. It represents almost 80% weight of the total market capitalization of KSE. It reflects different sector company's performance and productivity. It is the performance indicator or benchmark of all listed companies of KSE. So it can be regarded as universe of the study. Non-financial firms listed at KSE-100 Index (74 companies according to the page of KSE visited on 20.5.2015) are treated as universe of the study and the study have selected sample from these companies.

The study comprised of non-financial companies listed at KSE-100 Index and 30 actively traded companies are selected on the bases of market capitalization. And 2015 is taken as base year for KSE-100 index.

### 3.2 Data and Sources of Data

For this study secondary data has been collected. From the website of KSE the monthly stock prices for the sample firms are obtained from Jan 2010 to Dec 2014. And from the website of SBP the data for the macroeconomic variables are collected for the period of five years. The time series monthly data is collected on stock prices for sample firms and relative macroeconomic variables for the period of 5 years. The data collection period is ranging from January 2010 to Dec 2014. Monthly prices of KSE - 100 Index is taken from yahoo finance.

### 3.3 Theoretical framework

Variables of the study contains dependent and independent variable. The study used pre-specified method for the selection of variables. The study used the Stock returns are as dependent variable. From the share price of the firm the Stock returns are calculated. Rate of a stock salable at stock market is known as stock price.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research employs a qualitative historical-linguistic approach, combining archival research, linguistic analysis, and ethnographic interviews. Primary sources such as colonial-era documents, linguistic records, and government texts will be examined to trace the historical trajectory of "Waray-Waray" as a language name in Samar-Leyte. Situated in Catbalogan City, this research will leverage local resources and perspectives to enhance its depth and relevance. Semi-structured interviews with local historians and language scholars will provide further insights into the socio-political and cultural factors influencing its emergence. The data will be analyzed through thematic coding and historical comparative methods.

### 3.1 Population and Sample

KSE-100 index is an index of 100 companies selected from 580 companies on the basis of sector leading and market capitalization. It represents almost 80% weight of the total market capitalization of KSE. It reflects different sector company's performance and productivity. It is the performance indicator or benchmark of all listed companies of KSE. So it can be regarded as universe of the study. Non-financial firms listed at KSE-100 Index (74 companies according to the page of KSE visited on 20.5.2015) are treated as universe of the study and the study have selected sample from these companies.

The study comprised of non-financial companies listed at KSE-100 Index and 30 actively traded companies are selected on the bases of market capitalization. And 2015 is taken as base year for KSE-100 index.

### 3.2 Data and Sources of Data

1. Systematic examination of provincial and city archives in Catbalogan City and neighboring areas in Samar and Leyte.
2. Exploration of parish records, municipal records, and personal collections for potential references to the language name.
3. Investigation of the Eastern Visayas State University (EVSU) library and archives for relevant local historical documents.
4. Search for digitized historical documents from the National Library of the Philippines and other relevant institutions.
5. Specifically, the search for the 1930s Cebu-based magazine will be prioritized.

### 3.3 Theoretical framework

The study is grounded in sociolinguistic theory, which examines the intricate relationship between language and society. This framework is essential for analyzing how language use both reflects and shapes social identities. The research also incorporates

the "theory of geographic dialect continuum," which is particularly useful for explaining the existence of distinct speech communities and dialects within the Waray language, a phenomenon influenced by the region's mountainous terrain. The theory of language variation by Parker and Riley (2005) is also used to explore how multiple factors like politics, geography, and culture contribute to regional dialect differences

### 3.4 Statistical tools and econometric models

This research employs a qualitative historical-linguistic approach, combining archival research, linguistic analysis, and ethnographic interviews. Primary sources such as colonial-era documents, linguistic records, and government texts will be examined to trace the historical trajectory of "Waray-Waray" as a language name in Samar-Leyte.

#### 3.4.1 Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive Statics has been used to find the maximum, minimum, standard deviation, mean and normally distribution of the data of all the variables of the study. Normal distribution of data shows the sensitivity of the variables towards the periodic changes and speculation. When the data is not normally distributed it means that the data is sensitive towards periodic changes and speculations which create the chances of arbitrage and the investors have the chance to earn above the normal profit. But the assumption of the APT is that there should not be arbitrage in the market and the investors can earn only normal profit. Jarque bera test is used to test the normality of data.

#### 3.4.2 Fama-McBeth two pass regression

After the test statistics the methodology is following the next step in order to test the asset pricing models. When testing asset pricing models related to risk premium on asset to their betas, the primary question of interest is whether the beta risk of particular factor is priced. Fama and McBeth (1973) develop a two-pass methodology in which the beta of each asset with respect to a factor is estimated in a first pass time series regression and estimated betas are then used in second pass cross sectional regression to estimate the risk premium of the factor. According to Blum (1968) testing two-parameter models immediately presents an unavoidable errors-in-the variables problem. It is important to note that portfolios (rather than individual assets) are used for the reason of making the analysis statistically feasible. Fama McBeth regression is used to attenuate the problem of errors-in-variables (EIV) for two parameter models (Campbell, Lo and MacKinlay, 1997). If the errors are in the  $\beta$  (beta) of individual security are not perfectly positively correlated, the  $\beta$  of portfolios can be much more precise estimates of the true  $\beta$  (Blum, 1968).

The study follows Fama and McBeth two pass regression to test these asset pricing models. The Durbin Watson is used to check serial correlation and measures the linear association between adjacent residuals from a regression model. If there is no serial correlation, the DW statistic will be around 2. The DW statistic will fall if there is positive serial correlation (in worst case, it will be near zero). If there is a negative correlation, the statistic will lie somewhere between 2 and 4. Usually the limit for non-serial correlation is considered to be DW is from 1.8 to 2.2. A very strong positive serial correlation is considered at DW lower than 1.5 (Richardson and smith, 1993).

According to Richardson and smith (1993) to make the model more effective and efficient the selection criteria for the shares in the period are: Shares with no missing values in the period, Shares with adjusted  $R^2 < 0$  or F significant (p-value)  $> 0.05$  of the first pass regression of the excess returns on the market risk premium are excluded. And Shares are grouped by alphabetic order into group of 30 individual securities (Roll and Ross, 1980).

##### 3.4.2.1 Model for CAPM

In first pass the linear regression is used to estimate beta which is the systematic risk.

$$R_i - R_f = (R_m - R_f)\beta \quad (3.1)$$

Where  $R_i$  is Monthly return of the security,  $R_f$  is Monthly risk-free rate,  $R_m$  is Monthly return of market and  $\beta$  is systematic risk (market risk).

The excess returns  $R_i - R_f$  of each security is estimated from a time series share prices of KSE-100 index listed shares for each period under consideration. And for the same period the market Premium  $R_m - R_f$  also estimated. After that regress the excess returns  $R_i - R_f$  on the market premium  $R_m - R_f$  to find the beta coefficient (systematic risk).

Then a cross sectional regression or second pass regression is used on average excess returns of the shares and estimated betas.

$$\hat{R}_i = \gamma_0 + \gamma_1\beta_i + \epsilon \quad (3.2)$$

Where  $\lambda_0$  = intercept,  $\hat{R}_i$  is average excess returns of security  $i$ ,  $\beta_i$  is estimated be coefficient of security  $i$  and  $\epsilon$  is error term.

##### 3.4.2.2 Model for APT

In first pass the betas coefficients are computed by using regression.

$$R_i - R_f = \beta_{i1}f_1 + \beta_{i2}f_2 + \beta_{i3}f_3 + \beta_{i4}f_4 + \epsilon \quad (3.3)$$

Where  $R_i$  is the monthly return of stock  $i$ ,  $R_f$  is risk free rate,  $\beta_i$  is the sensitivity of stock  $i$  with factors and  $\epsilon$  is the error term.

Then a cross sectional regression or second pass regression is used on average excess returns of the shares on the factor scores.

$$\hat{R} = \gamma_0 + \gamma_1\beta_1 + \gamma_2\beta_2 + \gamma_3\beta_3 + \gamma_4\beta_4 + \epsilon_i \quad (3.4)$$

Where is average monthly excess return of stock  $i$ ,  $\lambda$  = risk premium,  $\beta_1$  to  $\beta_4$  are the factors scores and  $\epsilon_i$  is the error term.

### 3.4.3 Comparison of the Models

The next step of the study is to compare these competing models to evaluate that which one of these models is more supported by data. This study follows the methods used by Chen (1983), the Davidson and Mackinnon equation (1981) and the posterior odds ratio (Zellner, 1979) for comparison of these Models.

### 3.4.3.1 Davidson and MacKinnon Equation

CAPM is considered the particular or strictly case of APT. These two models are non-nested because by imposing a set of linear restrictions on the parameters the APT cannot be reduced to CAPM. In other words, the models do not have any common variable. Davidson and MacKinnon (1981) suggested the method to compare non-nested models. The study used the Davidson and MacKinnon equation (1981) to compare CAPM and APT.

This equation is as follows;

$$R_i = \alpha R_{APT} + (1 - \alpha) R_{CAPM} + e_i \quad (3.5)$$

Where  $R_i$  = the average monthly excess returns of the stock  $i$ ,  $R_{APT}$  = expected excess returns estimated by APT,  $R_{CAPM}$  = expected excess returns estimated by CAPM and  $\alpha$  measure the effectiveness of the models. The APT is the accurate model to forecast the returns of the stocks as compare to CAPM if  $\alpha$  is close to 1.

### 3.4.3.2 Posterior Odds Ratio

A standard assumption in theoretical and empirical research in finance is that relevant variables (e.g stock returns) have multivariate normal distributions (Richardson and smith, 1993). Given the assumption that the residuals of the cross-sectional regression of the CAPM and the APT satisfy the IID (Independently and identically distribution) multivariate normal assumption (Campbell, Lo and MacKinlay, 1997), it is possible to calculate the posterior odds ratio between the two models. In general, the posterior odds ratio is a more formal technique as compare to DM equation and has sounder theoretical grounds (Aggelidis and Maditinos, 2006).

The second comparison is done using posterior odd radio. The formula for posterior odds is given by Zellner (1979) in favor of model 0 over model 1.

The formula has the following form;

$$R = [ESS_0/ESS_1]^{N/2} N^{K_0-K_1/2} \quad (3.6)$$

Where  $ESS_0$  is error sum of squares of APT,  $ESS_1$  is error sum of squares of CAPM,  $N$  is number of observations,  $K_0$  is number of independent variables of the APT and  $K_1$  is number of independent variables of the CAPM. As according to the ratio when;

$R > 1$  means CAPM is more strongly supported by data under consideration than APT.

$R < 1$  means APT is more strongly supported by data under consideration than CAPM.

## IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### 4.1 Results of Descriptive Statistics of Study Variables

Table 1: Waray Language Dialects and Geographical Distribution

| Dialect Name            | Geographic Location                              | Key Features / Notes                                                    |
|-------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Estehanon               | Eastern Samar                                    | A regional variant of Waray with distinct vocabulary, tone, and accent. |
| Nortehanon              | Northern Samar                                   | A regional variant of Waray with distinct vocabulary, tone, and accent. |
| Westehanon / Kinalbayog | Western Samar (Calbayog)                         | A regional variant of Waray with distinct vocabulary, tone, and accent. |
| S-Waray                 | Northern Samar                                   | Maintains the [s] sound in common word markers.                         |
| H-Waray                 | Southern and Eastern Samar, Waray-speaking Leyte | Innovates a [h] sound in common word markers.                           |
| Tacloban Dialect        | Tacloban City and surrounding areas              | Considered the "Standard" dialect of the language.                      |
| Biliranon               | Biliran Island                                   | A dialect with a distinct name, often referred to as a Waray dialect.   |

#### I. The Linguistic Lineage and Classification of the Waray Language

Waray, closely related to Cebuano and Hiligaynon, shares the same basic phoneme inventory as other major Philippine languages, three vowels and fourteen consonants but also displays unique features, such as the /i/ vowel in some Northeastern and Eastern Samar dialects. It is not a single, uniform language but consists of multiple dialects shaped by geography and history.

Key dialects include Estehanon (Eastern Samar), Nortehanon (Northern Samar), and Westehanon or Calbayogon (Western Samar). A major dialectal divide exists between "S-Waray" and "H-Waray," marked by the change of Proto-Bisayan s to /h/ in certain morphemes a pattern influenced more by geography than genetic language change.

The geographic dialect continuum theory explains this diversity, as Samar's mountainous terrain and Leyte's Central Cordillera have created natural barriers that foster isolated speech communities. This internal variation is central to understanding

the broader debate over the language's official name. The following table provides a summary of the Waray language's dialects and their geographical distribution:

Table 2: Competing Naming Conventions and Their Origins

| Name                | Meaning / Origin                                             | Proponents                                                                         | Historical Context                                                                                      |
|---------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Waray-Waray / Waray | From the word "waray" meaning "none" or "nothing".           | Non-speakers who used a frequent word as a label; later embraced by the community. | Colloquial term, likely of external origin, eventually became the dominant name.                        |
| Lineyte-Samarnon    | Geographically based name for the people of Leyte and Samar. | The <i>Sanghiran sang Binisaya</i> , an organization of writers and ilustrados.    | Early 20th century, during the American period, as an effort to cultivate and standardize the language. |
| Binisaya            | A general term for Visayan languages.                        | The <i>Sanghiran sang Binisaya</i> and contemporary scholars.                      | Used during the pre-Hispanic and Hispanic eras; a formal but sometimes ambiguous term for the language. |

## II. The Naming Debate: Etymology, Colloquialism, and Official Policy

The naming of "Waray-Waray" reflects a tension between a popular, organically developed label and a formal, prescriptive alternative. The term Waray, meaning "nothing," likely originated as an "outsider name" given by non-speakers who frequently heard the word in conversation, similar to how Cebuanos are called *mga Kana* in Leyte. Over time, the Waray community reappropriated the term, turning it from a potential insult into a symbol of identity and pride.

In contrast, early 20th-century intellectuals in the *Sanghiran sang Binisaya*, led by Norberto Romualdez, sought to standardize the name as Lineyte-Samarnon or Binisaya—a geographically precise and dignified designation meant to unite speakers from both Leyte and Samar during the American colonial period. Despite these formal efforts, the colloquial Waray persisted and eventually became the official term, highlighting the gap between elite linguistic policy and the actual naming practices of everyday speakers. The following table summarizes the competing naming conventions for the language and their respective origins.

This research has successfully navigated the complex historical and linguistic landscape to address the study's key expected outcomes. The findings reveal a compelling narrative of how a language name, initially seen as paradoxical and even derogatory, became a recognized symbol of a people's identity.

A comprehensive historical account demonstrates a clear tension between formal and colloquial naming conventions. Early in the 20th century, the *Sanghiran sang Binisaya*, an organization of writers and intellectuals, actively promoted the formal names Lineyte-Samarnon and Binisaya to provide a precise and dignified label for the language. This top-down effort, however, was ultimately overshadowed by the widespread, bottom-up adoption of the term "Waray-Waray". This colloquial term, a word that means "nothing" or "none" in the language, became the de facto and eventually official name. The popularization of this term was further cemented by a hit 1950s film and a folk song, which introduced the name to a national and international audience. This historical path illustrates the power of popular culture and everyday usage to shape linguistic identity more effectively than institutional efforts.

The study has also identified key linguistic and socio-historical factors that propelled the adoption of "Waray-Waray." A significant linguistic factor is the "outsider naming" hypothesis, which posits that non-speakers labeled the people and their language based on a frequently heard word, a phenomenon also observed with the Cebuano people being called "*mga Kana*". This external label, however, was not passively accepted. It was actively reappropriated by the Waray people in a powerful act of resistance. What began as a term connoting "nothingness" was re-imbued with meaning, becoming a symbol of a people's resilience and fierce strength forged by centuries of historical oppression. The stereotype of the "brave warrior," encapsulated in the popular phrase "*Basta ang Waray, hindi uorong sa away*" ("The Waray would never back down from a fight"), is a direct outcome of this redefinition.

These findings offer crucial insights into the role of language names in shaping regional identity and cultural representation. The name "Waray-Waray" acts as a charged signifier, highlighting the ongoing struggle for self-definition in the face of external and often biased representations. The popular Tagalog version of the "Waray-Waray" folk song, for example, is criticized for perpetuating a negative stereotype of Waray women as belligerent. In stark contrast, a purported original Binisaya version of the song portrays the Waray people as happy, hospitable, and living in a land of plenty. This divergence in narratives underscores how language names can become battlegrounds for cultural memory. Ultimately, the choice to embrace "Waray-Waray" allows the people of Samar-Leyte to assert a distinct identity, particularly in distinguishing themselves from other Bisayan language speakers who may also use the more general term Binisaya. The name, despite its origins, serves as a powerful and unique marker of a people's journey from historical struggle to cultural affirmation.

## REFERENCES

- [1] Blust, R. (2005). *The Austronesian languages*. Pacific Linguistics, Research School of Pacific and Asian Studies, Australian National University.
- [2] Hidalgo, P. S., & Tungol, R. C. (2002). *Philippine minor languages: A wordlist*. Summer Institute of Linguistics.
- [3] Lobel, J. W. (2013). Philippine and North Bornean languages: Issues in subgrouping. *Oceanic Linguistics*, 52(1), 125-168.

[4] McFarland, C. D. (2004). Subgrouping and reconstruction of Philippine languages. Department of Linguistics, Research School of Pacific and Asian Studies, Australian National University.

[5] Zorc, R. D. (1977). The Bisayan dialects of the Philippines: Subgrouping and reconstruction. Pacific Linguistics, Research School of Pacific and Asian Studies,

