

A CONTENT ANALYSIS OF THE ITAWES UNONIS

RHODORA B. ROMERO

Associate Professor, Cagayan State University – Andrews Campus, Tuguegarao City, Cagayan, Philippines.

Abstract

Proverbs provides a view on the way of life of a people and reveals about the ways individuals think of certain situations. This research aims to describe how someone gets wisdom, which the ability to understand everything clearly and use knowledge to overcome a problem. This research made use of qualitative design was used to determine the types and classified the Itawes proverbs shared by the key informants into four: (1) proverbs expressing a general attitude towards life and the laws that govern life; (2) ethical proverbs recommending certain virtues and condemning certain vices; (3) proverbs expressing a system of values; and (4) proverbs expressing general truths and observations about life.

Keywords: Proverbs, Unonis, Content Analysis, Itawes, Indigenous Language

INTRODUCTION

Proverbs are literary works that represent societal viewpoints and are regarded as one of the literary gems of any nation is its proverbial treasure, which gives insight into the ideas, values, and behaviors of the past under various circumstances. Proverbs have always been part of the lives of people. They served as measure of the philosophies particularly those that are practical that people have in their lives. The proverbs, though they are practically considered oral literature, provide a fair reflection of principles of actions and practical views of life which Amende (2013) said constitutes one of the major aspects of linguistic activities of an unwritten culture.

Proverbs give us insight into society as a whole and the fundamental issues that affect the environment, interpersonal relationships, and ideas of liberty, freedom, and values. The way one employs proverbs in various cultures, like the case of the Philippines, depends on the generation in which one is living. In the Philippines, proverbs, as Pasagdan (2005) puts in, are traditional sayings or maxims used by Filipinos based on local culture, wisdom, and philosophies to reflect their way of life. The presence of proverbs in almost all recorded languages in the Philippines has brought about the presence of equivalent or corresponding term of the word proverb in the Philippine languages. The Tagalog words *salawikain*, *kasabihan* (saying) and *sawikain* - which may also refer to mottos or idioms), *sarsarita* or *padsasau* for the ilocanos while the Itawits call their proverbs as called *Unoni* or *Akkakahi*.

Proverbs are short sayings with philosophical undertones that develop from human experiences within a particular cultural context. Common wisdom claims that there is a proverb for every occasion. In the case of the Itawes unonis or Akkahahis, just like any other proverbs of the ethnolinguistic groups in the Philippine, they are given much respect as they form part of their culture. The Itawits know their proverbs by heart however, the proverbs which are carved from experiences of the group of people are kept by the elders as supported by an age-old adage –

with age cometh wisdom. These proverbs are passed down to the younger people by word of mouth.

Proverbs are a form of traditional wisdom that encapsulate the values and beliefs of a particular culture or community. They are often used to convey important life lessons and to offer guidance on how to navigate various situations. Proverbs can be very useful in teaching younger generations about the customs, traditions, and values of their community, as well as helping them to understand the perspectives and attitudes of the people around them. In the case of the Itawit people, proverbs likely play an important role in passing down their cultural heritage and in shaping the way that individuals within the community think about and approach various aspects of life.

In her study, Eugenio (2019) noted that proverbs are a rich source of cultural insights and can be used to create a deeper understanding of the values, beliefs, and attitudes of a particular community. In the case of the Filipino community, proverbs play an important role in shaping their way of life, as they offer guidance on a wide range of topics, from family relationships to community values to personal conduct. By examining the proverbs that are commonly used by Filipinos, one can gain a deeper appreciation for their cultural heritage and gain insight into the way that they view the world around them. Furthermore, proverbs can also help outsiders to better understand and appreciate Filipino culture, and to develop a deeper level of respect and admiration for the traditions and customs of this vibrant and diverse community.

The Itawes proverbs or Unoni or Akkakahi which form part of the local oral literature of the Itawes – an indigenous language in Northern Luzon in the Philippines is a basic example of to show how rich the culture of Filipinos is and how strong the sense of community to be found in Filipino culture, and that is represented by its proverbs.

According to UNESCO, every mother tongue deserves to be known, acknowledged, and given greater prominence in all aspects of public life, but for the majority of indigenous languages, this is not the case. Indigenous languages are in danger of extinction as their usage slowly declines and the language itself becomes less and less common. Hale, et al. as cited by Sallabank said Linguists are becoming increasingly alarmed at the rate at which languages are going out of use. A special issue of the journal *Language*, based on a colloquium held at an annual meeting of the Linguistic Society of America, drew attention to the scale of language endangerment, and called for a language documentation of the many indigenous languages. Language documentation is to record the remaining speakers and to create linguistic archives for future reference.

Threats to the Itawes language's survival include the possibility of its devaluation as a language or, worse still, of its eventual extinction. The researcher worries that the following generation may soon completely lose interest in the languages she learned growing up. In doing so, the researcher contributes to the preservation and documentation of the Itawes language. These Itawes proverbs are locally known as Unoni or akkakahi.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study made use of the qualitative research method. Qualitative design was used to determine the types of the ethnic proverbs shared by the key informants. The researcher then classified the proverbs into four groups according to subject matter: (1) proverbs expressing a general attitude towards life; (2) ethical proverbs recommending certain virtues; (3) proverbs expressing a system of values; and (4) humorous proverbs. The study also used the thematic analysis. This method of literary analysis was being employed to draw and ascertain the values of the ethno-linguistic group under study.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Classification of Itawes Proverbs

One of the early attempts of people in creating literary work as stated by Sto Tomas (1999) is their versification, generally contained in what are commonly called as proverbs today. The term generally referred to as 'agergo attolay' is called unoni or akkakahi in Itawes.

The analysis of the Itawes proverbs, in terms of their classification and form, are interesting as the themes in proverbs have a connection to the function of proverb speech as a narrative mode of thought.

The Philippine proverbs, according to Eugenio (2013), is classified into six groups according to subject matter. These are: (1) proverbs expressing a general attitude towards life and the laws that govern life; (2) ethical proverbs recommending certain virtues and condemning certain vices; (3) proverbs expressing a system of values; (4) proverbs expressing general truths and observations about life and human nature; (5) humorous proverbs; and (6) miscellaneous proverbs. However, the Itawes proverbs were classified into four (4) by the researchers.

Proverbs expressing a general attitude towards life

The proverbs under these types are those that are expressive of the point of view of the respondents regarding life. For the informants, their attitude towards life as expressed in their unonis determines how far they can go in life.

This type of proverbs is most of the time parabolic. Parabolic means that the first line of the proverb illustrates the second. The second line is the teaching, the first line is an analogy. Many of these that are parabolic seem to make little sense.

An informant said that the unonis are able to have that effect and teach a lesson in a matter of seconds. The proverbs classified under those that express general truths and observations about life and human.

Ytawes Unoni/Akkakahi	
Mappasensiya ka lamang palad, Kanya atto-tolem kan ya gukab; Lumabbet pela sangaw ya dawun, Nga ikaw pay umutun	Be patient with your life Though how miserable it is Time will surely come When you will be on top.
Nu aru ya ammun Bissut ya attalom.	The more you know The less you fear
Ya abbing nga mari makitabarang, mebara- barang.	A child who does not heed to advise goes astray.
Naganas ya mangwa kan napia Kanya kasittolem ira Tase nu tannawan da ikaw Kanya ya pangozzanan.	It is always best to do good For you shall be remembered in the end
Nu dakal ya batunis Dakal pay ya uhalis.	Big buttons need big buttonholes
Monna ya pakkaliwat Maapozzan ya pakalippawat.	You only realize your mistake After an act is already done
Mas nafuyut ya da ngem ya danum Nga makkarela kanya kallat na.	Blood is thicker than water.)
Mas napia laya makkiddaw Ngem ya makkokot.	It is better to ask than to steal.
Awan na serbi ya kaddat Nu ya angkat ya kabayu ngin e nagattat.	The grass is useless If the horse is dead
Ya makaliwat, masuffri kan ziyat.	Whoever is at fault, Suffer in recompense
Nakkalay ka kan ata - nang Agga umuttad ka yan.	You have to get down Whenever you climb
Ya gukud nga iddan mu Iggina pay ya gukud nga malak mu.	The extent of help you give Determines the extent of help you receive.
Ya napia nga inka nemula Napia nga inka pusitan.	The kindness that you sow Is the kindness that you will reap
Mofut ya kanan, Mari ya passiringan.	Food may perish But not friendship.

Ethical proverbs recommending certain virtues

This classification highlights the good qualities of people. It is often presented in antithetical format where a thought is given in the first line, and the negative result is given in the second line. In this presentation, the negative line highlights the positive one.

Ytawes Unoni/Akkakahi	
Pakarenuan mu labit ya balem, Liye ya levut ya kassittolem	Check inside your own house first Before you check the house of other's
Maski panuan mu kan vulawan ya baggim, Ammuk lamang ya ginafa-gafum.	Even if you camouflage yourself with Jewelry You will never conceal you ancestry.
Ya mari mallipay kan ya nagggfuanan na Mari makakaddet kan ya annggayan na.	He who does not look back to his ancestry Can hardly reach his destiny
Masingan mu ya ifut ya karrubam, Ngam marim masingan nga mas anaddu ya kwam.	You notice the tail of your neighbours But not yours which is even longer.
Marim mappalagupug Dakat nu yan ya inka paddungkug.	Do not be too proud For you might be humbled

Proverbs expressing a system of values

A coherent set of values which guides the person, or a community has been adopted or lived by a person, organization, or society as a standard to guide its behavior in preferences in all situations. This system of values transcends a person's or a community's social, economic, and religious boundaries no matter what geographical location or no matter culture they were brought up with. The common components of the value system according to Hereford (2019) include four cornerstones: (1) Integrity which he equated with trustworthiness, honesty and uprightness of character make the people act honourably and do what they think is right; (2) Respect which is honoring the worth and dignity of all people is a main core of a community's value system. People respect people just the way they wish themselves to be treated; (3) Loyalty which pertains to commitment and faithfulness to a person or cause makes a man a person who can be counted on to be there when the going gets tough; and (4) Responsibility which making oneself reliable, dependable and willing to take accountability for who they are and what they do believing they have a moral obligation to help others and to make a contribution to the society they live in.

The value system of the Itawes is seen in their unonis which guides them in the way they intend to conduct their lives.

Ytawes Unoni/Akkakahi	
Nalampaw nga akkatan ya balay, Nu aru ya mangakkat nga kuramay.	The house becomes light When carried by many hands
Manguffun ka kan ya ziyyat ya kavulun mu Tasenu anyan mangulffun kan ya ziyyat mu.	Help others who are in trouble or in need So that they will also help you when you bleed
Alalistu balatla ya trabahu nu aru malangan	Work is easier when more hands help.

Humorous proverbs

The Humorous proverbs are the unonis that at first glance are funny but when one takes a closer look, he will understand the logic behind the proverbs.

Ytawes Unoni/Akkakahi	
Maski bistian mu kan vulawan ya ayong Magga ayong la yan.	Even if you dress a monkey with gold Still it will remain a monkey.
Ya , mekarrela, meddufu	He who runs, stumbles
Innam mu liem nga mallatu	Look before you leap.

Analysis of Form

The Itawes Ethnic proverbs are symbolic expressions of the Itawit people of Cagayan. They come mostly in three (3) forms – single lines, couplet and quatrains. There are also some that come in 3 lines.

Quatrains

These are four (4) liner proverbs.

Ytawes Unoni/ Akkakahi	
Naganas ya mangwa kan napia Kanya kasittolem ira Tase nu tannawan da ikaw Kanya ya pangozzanan.	It is always best to do good For you shall be remembered in the end
Mappasensiya ka lamang palad, Kanya atto-tolem kan ya gukab; Lumabbet pela sangaw ya dawun, Nga ikaw pay umutun	Be patient with your life Though how miserable it is Time will surely come When you will be on top.

Couplets

These are two (2) liner proverbs.

Ytawes Unoni/Akkakahi	
Nu dakal ya batunis Dakal pay ya uhalis.	Big buttons need big buttonholes
Ya tollay nga nalappat e massappat, Ya tolay nga nalatac, e makkapag	A person who is industrious has something to eat; A person who is lazy has nothing to eat
Pakarenuan mu labit ya balem, Liye ya levut ya kassittolem	Check inside your own house first Before you check the house of other's
Monna ya pakkaliwat Maapozzan ya pakalippawat.	You only realize your mistake After an act is already done
Maski panuan mu kan vulawan ya baggim, Ammuk lamang ya ginafa-gafum.	Even if you camouflage yourself with jewelry You will never conceal you ancestry.
Maski bistian mu kan vulawan ya ayong Magga ayong la yan.	Even if you dress a monkey with gold Still it will remain a monkey.
Nalampaw nga akkatan ya balay, Nu aru ya mangakkat nga kuramay.	The house becomes light When carried by many hands
Ya mari mallipay kan ya nagggfuanan na Mari makakaddet kan ya annggayan na.	He who does not look back to his ancestry Can hardly reach his destiny
Mas nafuyut ya da ngem ya danum Nga makkarela kanya kallat na.	Blood is thicker than water.)
Ya atawa matalyan Ngam ya manak awan.	One may forget his spouse But not his parents.
Mas napia laya makkiddaw Ngem ya makkokot.	It is always better to ask than to steal.
Awan na serbi ya kaddat Nu ya angat ya kabayu ngin e nagattat.	The grass is useless If the horse is dead
Masingan mu ya ifut ya karrubam, Ngam marim masingan nga mas anaddu ya kwam.	You notice the tail of your neighbors But not yours which is even longer.
Ya makaliwat, masuffri kan ziyat.	Whoever is at fault, Suffer in recompense
Nu aru ya ammun Bissut ya attalom.	The more you know The less you fear
Ya nataggatan nga pasingan, Nariyat ngin nga tunungan.	A crooked bamboo could hardly become straight when it's already old.

Ya gukud nga iddan mu Iggina pay ya gukud nga malak mu.	The extent of help you give Determines the extent of help you receive.
Marim mappalagupug Dakat nu yan ya inka paddungkug.	Do not be too proud For you might be humbled
Nakkalay ka kan ata - nang Agga umuttad ka yan.	You have to get down Whenever you climb
Ya napia nga inka nemula Napia nga inka pusitan.	The kindness that you sow Is the kindness that you will reap
Manguffun ka kan ya ziyyat ya kavulun mu Tasenu anyan mangulffun kan ya ziyyat mu.	Help others who are in trouble or in need So that they will also help you when you bleed
Mofut ya kanan, Mari ya passiringan.	Food may perish But not friendship.
Napatu kanya dalan Nalammin kanya darafugan.	You love to appear gallant person But you have nothing to cook at home.

Single lines

These are one (1) liner proverbs.

Ytawes Unoni/Akkakahi	
Sappatan mu balalla ya sappat mu.	You will reap what you sow
Marim mamapa-lat nu baw nga la nga nappayak	Do not be very arrogant if you just reach success
Ya , mekarrela, meddufu	He who runs, stumbles
Mammula ka tase nu anyan inka pusitan.	Sow and you shall reap
Kuam sangaw, kuak naddan.	Today is yours, tomorrow will be mine.)
Ya abbing nga mari makitabarang, mebara-barang.	A child who does not heed to advise goes astray.
Innam mu liem nga mallatu	Look before you leap.
Alalistu balatla ya trabahu nu aru malangan	Work is easier when more hands help.)
Maski ya vuvun e mabbatan	Even the well gets dry

Three (3) liner

Ytawes Unoni/Akkakahi	
Ya anak nga mangulolapa kan ya manak na	A child who defies his parents
Maski ikokkob na ya siku na	Is cursed to suffer
Awan progreso kanya attole na.	No matter what he does

The incidents and/ or the accidents that happen will dictate the proverbs that will be shared to reinforce learning mostly among the younger people. For example: In the proverb - Nu asan imulam, asan pusitam mu (If you sow, you will harvest) which teaches the young people both industriousness and kindness. Industriousness for they have to work so they may have something to eat and something to save for future expenses.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the findings, the following conclusions are drawn:

The Itawes proverbs speak much of how the Itawits are as people. The unonis or the akkakahis also speak of how they go about their lives in relation to other people and to their God.

The Itawes proverbs (unoni or akkakah) are philosophical, instructive, and delightful and have the potentialities of enriching the indigenous knowledge base of the people.

Proverbs are not just simply just uttered rather they must be carefully choosing to suit the situation where one will be using it. The speaker must consider context, and the. It is a form of behavior involving choices on these components which are made, often unconsciously by the folks.

RECOMMENDATIONS

With the findings and conclusions, the following are hereby recommended:

1. Academic institutions should look into the inclusion of the 'Unonis' as one of the subject matters in Literature, and Social Studies.
2. There is a need to document the proverbs because the younger Itawit may not know the proverbs well since proverbs are oral literature.
3. The academe as well as the local governments should promote the local proverbs by institutionalizing competitions just like poster making, essay writing, and extemporaneous speaking making use of the community or mother tongue langue during school events.

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