



CONTENT ANALYSIS OF ITAWES PROVERBS

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ABSTRACT: *Proverbs are part of people's lives. They are the gauge that are used to look into the practical philosophies that of people in their lives. They give a fair reflection of principles of actions and practical views of life though they are practically considered oral literature which according to Amende (2013) constitutes one of the major aspects of linguistic activities of an unwritten culture. This study focused on the analysis of Itawes proverbs. The study made use of the qualitative research method. Qualitative design was used in order 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 employed to draw and ascertain the values of the ethno-linguistic group under study. Based on the findings, it is concluded that the Itawes proverbs speak much of how the Itawits are as people. The unonis or the akkahahis also speak of how they go about their lives in relation to other people and to their God. Therefore, it is strongly recommended that 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.*

KEYWORDS: *proverbs, unwritten culture, Itawes, system of values, qualitative design, thematic method*

INTRODUCTION

Proverbs are part of people's lives. They are the gauge that are used to look into the practical philosophies that of people in their lives. They give a fair reflection of principles of actions and practical views of life though they are practically considered oral literature which according to Amende (2013) constitutes one of the major aspects of linguistic activities of an unwritten culture.

Pasagdan (2005) said the Philippine proverbs are traditional sayings or maxims used by Filipinos based on local culture, wisdom, and philosophies from Filipino life. The word proverb corresponds to the Tagalog words *salawikain*, *kasabihan* (saying) and *sawikain* - which may also refer to mottos or idioms), and to the Ilocano word *sarsarita*. Proverb to the *Itawits* is called *Unoni* or *Akkahahi*. The *Itawits unoni* or *Akkahahi*, just like any other



proverbs of the ethno linguistic groups in the Philippine, 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 most of the time are considered circumstantial speech acts as they are frequently used in conversations, public speeches and oratory to embellish, conceal and adorn the speeches where proverbs are used. This goes to say that the proverbs are only used when the situations call for it (their use). This is supported by Nadeu (1989) saying that proverbs just so tuned to the need of the moment are lovingly handed down. And so the proverbs are learned and make their steady way through time, impressed on the hearts of those they touch.

Proverbs are used for everyday reasoning, and for giving necessary lesson on character and values to people particularly the younger people. Proverbs likewise embody solidified attitudes or traditional modes of thought of a certain culture and group of people just like the *Itawits*.

In her study, Eugenio (2019) observed that with the proverbs that he Filipino communities use, it is possible to formulate a fairly comprehensive philosophy of life of the Filipino.

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. According to UNESCO, every mother tongue deserves to be known, recognized and given greater prominence in all spheres of public life unfortunately, this is not the case for most of the indigenous language. Indigenous languages face the threat of dying as they slowly diminish due to dwindling use of the language.

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.

The *Itawes* as a language also faces the threats of being endangered which may to its devaluation as a language, worse, to its ultimate disappearance. The researcher fears that the languages she grew up with may soon be forgotten altogether by the next generation. With this, the compilation and the analysis of the *Itawes* proverbs locally known as *Unoni* or *akkakahi* is the researcher's share in the preservation and documentation of the *Itawes* language.



STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

This study focused on the analysis of Itawes proverbs. Specifically, it sought to answer the following questions:

1. What are the classifications of the Itawes proverbs?
2. What are the forms of the Itawes proverbs?

METHODOLOGY

The study made use of the qualitative research method. Qualitative design was used in order 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 employed to draw and ascertain the values of the ethno-linguistic group under study.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

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	
<i>Mappasensiya ka lamang palad, Kanya atto-tolem kan ya gukab; Lumabbet pela sangaw ya dawun, Nga ikaw pay umutun</i>	Be patient with your life Though how miserable it is Time will surely come When you will be on top.
<i>Nu aru ya ammun Bissut ya attalom.</i>	The more you know The less you fear
<i>Ya abbing nga mari makitabarang, mebara-barang.</i>	A child who does not heed to advise goes astray.
<i>Naganas ya mangwa kan napia Kanya kasittolem ira Tase nu tannawan da ikaw Kanya ya pangozzan.</i>	It is always best to do good For you shall be remembered in the end
<i>Nu dakal ya batunis Dakal pay ya uhalis.</i>	Big buttons need big buttonholes
<i>Monna ya pakkaliwat Maapozzan ya pakalippawat.</i>	You only realize your mistake After an act is already done
<i>Mas nafuyut ya da ngem ya danum Nga makkarela kanya kallat na.</i>	Blood is thicker than water.)
<i>Mas napia laya makkiddaw Ngem ya makkokot.</i>	It is better to ask than to steal.
<i>Awan na serbi ya kaddat Nu ya angat ya kabayu ngin e nagattat.</i>	The grass is useless If the horse is dead
<i>Ya makaliwat, masuffri kan ziyat.</i>	Whoever is at fault, Suffer in recompense



<i>Nakkalay ka kan ata - nang Agga umuttad ka yan.</i>	You have to get down Whenever you climb
<i>Ya gukud nga iddan mu Iggina pay ya gukud nga malak mu.</i>	The extent of help you give Determines the extent of help you receive.
<i>Ya napia nga inka nemula Napia nga inka pusitan.</i>	The kindness that you sow Is the kindness that you will reap
<i>Mofut ya kanan, Mari ya passiringan.</i>	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	
<i>Pakarenuan mu labit ya balem, Liye ya levut ya kassittolem</i>	Check inside your own house first Before you check the house of other's
<i>Maski panuan mu kan vulawan ya baggim, Ammuk lamang ya ginafa-gafum.</i>	Even if you camouflage yourself with jewelry You will never conceal you ancestry.
<i>Ya mari mallipay kan ya nagggfuanan na Mari makakaddet kan ya annggayan na.</i>	He who does not look back to his ancestry Can hardly reach his destiny
<i>Masingan mu ya ifut ya karrubam, Ngam marim masingan nga mas anaddu ya kwam.</i>	You notice the tail of your neighbours But not yours which is even longer.
<i>Marim mappalagupug Dakat nu yan ya inka paddungkug.</i>	Do not be too proud For you might be humbled

Proverbs expressing a system of values

A coherent set of values which guides the a 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 honouring 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	
<i>Nalampaw nga akkatan ya balay, Nu aru ya mangakkat nga kuramay.</i>	The house becomes light When carried by many hands
<i>Manguffun ka kan ya ziyyat ya kavulun mu Tasenu anyan mangulffun kan ya ziyyat mu.</i>	Help others who are in trouble or in need So that they will also help you when you bleed
<i>Alalistu balatla ya trabahu nu aru malangan</i>	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	
<i>Maski bistian mu kan vulawan ya ayong Magga ayong la yan.</i>	Even if you dress a monkey with gold Still it will remain a monkey.
<i>Ya , mekarrela, meddufu</i>	He who runs, stumbles
<i>Innam mu liem nga mallatu</i>	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	
<i>Naganas ya mangwa kan napia Kanya kasittolem ira Tase nu tannawan da ikaw Kanya ya pangozzan.</i>	It is always best to do good For you shall be remembered in the end
<i>Mappasensiya ka lamang palad, Kanya atto-tolem kan ya gukab; Lumabbet pela sangaw ya dawun, Nga ikaw pay umutun</i>	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	
<i>Nu dakal ya batunis Dakal pay ya uhalis.</i>	Big buttons need big buttonholes
<i>Ya tollay nga nalappat e massappat, Ya tolai nga nalatac, e makkapag</i>	An person who is industrious has something to eat; A person who is lazy has nothing to eat
<i>Pakarenuan mu labit ya balem, Liye ya levut ya kassittolem</i>	Check inside your own house first Before you check the house of other's
<i>Monna ya pakkaliwat Maapozzan ya pakalippawat.</i>	You only realize your mistake After an act is already done
<i>Maski panuan mu kan vulawan ya baggim, Ammuk lamang ya ginafa-gafum.</i>	Even if you camouflage yourself with jewelry You will never conceal you ancestry.
<i>Maski bistian mu kan vulawan ya ayong Magga ayong la yan.</i>	Even if you dress a monkey with gold Still it will remain a monkey.
<i>Nalampaw nga akkatan ya balay, Nu aru ya mangakkat nga kuramay.</i>	The house becomes light When carried by many hands
<i>Ya mari mallipay kan ya nagggfuanan na Mari makakaddet kan ya annggayan na.</i>	He who does not look back to his ancestry Can hardly reach his destiny
<i>Mas nafuyut ya da ngem ya danum Nga makkarela kanya kallat na.</i>	Blood is thicker than water.)
<i>Ya atawa matalyan Ngam ya manak awan.</i>	One may forget his spouse But not his parents.
<i>Mas napia laya makkiddaw Ngem ya makkokot.</i>	It is always better to ask than to steal.
<i>Awan na serbi ya kaddat Nu ya angat ya kabayu ngin e nagattat.</i>	The grass is useless If the horse is dead
<i>Masingan mu ya ifut ya karrubam, Ngam marim masingan nga mas anaddu ya kwam.</i>	You notice the tail of your neighbours But not yours which is even longer.
<i>Ya makaliwat, masuffri kan ziyat.</i>	Whoever is at fault, Suffer in recompense
<i>Nu aru ya ammun Bissut ya attalom.</i>	The more you know The less you fear
<i>Ya nataggatan nga pasingan, Nariyat ngin nga tunungan.</i>	A crooked bamboo could hardly become straight when it's already old.
<i>Ya gukud nga iddan mu Iggina pay ya gukud nga malak mu.</i>	The extent of help you give Determines the extent of help you receive.
<i>Marim mappalagupug Dakat nu yan ya inka paddungkug.</i>	Do not be too proud For you might be humbled
<i>Nakkalay ka kan ata - nang Agga umuttad ka yan.</i>	You have to get down Whenever you climb
<i>Ya napia nga inka nemula Napia nga inka pusitan.</i>	The kindness that you sow Is the kindness that you will reap
<i>Manguffun ka kan ya ziyat ya kavulun mu Tasenu anyan mangulffun kan ya ziyat mu.</i>	Help others who are in trouble or in need So that they will also help you when you bleed
<i>Mofut ya kanan, Mari ya passiringan.</i>	Food may perish But not friendship.
<i>Napatu kanya dalan Nalammin kanya darafugan.</i>	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	
<i>Sappatan mu balalla ya sappat mu.</i>	You will reap what you sow
<i>Marim mamapa-lat nu baw nga la nga nappayak</i>	Do not be very arrogant if you just reach success
<i>Ya , mekarrela, meddufu</i>	He who runs, stumbles
<i>Mammula ka tase nu anyan inka pusitan.</i>	Sow and you shall reap
<i>Kuam sangaw, kuak naddan.</i>	Today is yours, tomorrow will be mine.)
<i>Ya abbing nga mari makitabarang, mebara-barang.</i>	A child who does not heed to advise goes astray.
<i>Innam mu liem nga mallatu</i>	Look before you leap.
<i>Alalistu balatla ya trabahu nu aru malangan</i>	Work is easier when more hands help.)
<i>Maski ya vuvun e mabbatan</i>	Even the well gets dry

Three (3) liner

Ytawes Unoni/Akkakahi	
<i>Ya anak nga mangulolapa kan ya manak na</i>	A child who defies his parents
<i>Maski ikokkob na ya siku na</i>	Is cursed to suffer
<i>Awan progreso kanya attole na.</i>	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 akkakahi)* 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 chose 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. There is a need to document the proverbs because the younger Itawit may not know the proverbs well since proverbs are oral literature.



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. 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 language during school events.
3. School publications should maintain a section devoted to the use of the local dialects so the younger generation will have an articles in the dialect to read.
4. More researches on the indigenous languages focusing on the other literary genres should be conducted.
5. A similar study on the other indigenous language is encouraged.

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