



Ninorte Samarnon Proverbs: Retrieval and Translation into English

Maria Alfe Gordo-Banawis, DALL

Faculty, College of Arts and Communication
University of Eastern Philippines

ABSTRACT

This study focused on the ethnolinguistic exploration of proverbs in the province of Northern Samar focusing in the Capul and Gamay communities. The aim was to categorize and analyze the proverbs of the Inabaknon and Gamaynon people based on various factors such as their subject matter, form, style, and the cultural elements they reflect. The study collected and examined a total of 160 proverbs, which were then classified into different categories including attitudes toward life, ethical principles, values, general observations, humor, and miscellaneous topics. The structure of the proverbs was found to be in the form of prose statements arranged in couplets, lacking both rhyme and meter in both the original language and their English translations. Figurative language played a significant role in these proverbs, with the use of conditional constructions, analogies, similes, metaphors, hyperboles, contrasts, comparisons, and parallelism. The proverbs served various functions, such as offering advice, setting boundaries, regulating behavior, and providing a sense of balance. In terms of extra-linguistic features, hand gestures and facial expressions were observed to emphasize the wisdom and spirit conveyed by the proverbs. The study revealed that the dominant worldview reflected in the proverbs is one of religious devotion and spirituality among the Capul and Gamay communities. The translation techniques employed included free and word-for-word translations, as well as functional and descriptive equivalents and paraphrasing, in order to capture the essence and meaning of the original proverbs in English.

Keywords: *Ethnolinguistic exploration, Cultural Elements, Ethical Principles, General Observations*

DOI: 10.48047/ecb/2022.11.12.007

INTRODUCTION

"The only true wisdom is in knowing you know nothing." – Socrates

Understanding a language goes hand in hand with understanding the culture it represents. Proverbs serve as valuable resources for language learners as they not only reflect the language itself but also provide insights into the culture from which they originate. The island of Samar in the Philippines has long been recognized as a fertile ground for indigenous art and literature, with the people of Leyte and Samar demonstrating exceptional skill in proverb making. Although the collection of these proverbs began somewhat accidentally, they have become a treasure trove of wisdom.

The power of brevity and wisdom is evident in proverbial sayings. From the most primitive of societies to modern times, people have coined sayings based on common experiences and observations. These sapiential pronouncements, when compiled, embody the wisdom and philosophy of a people. Proverbs have been used by Filipinos since long before the arrival of the Spaniards, and they have managed to withstand the test of time through continuous transmission from one generation to another.

Proverbs are known for their wit and brevity, making them an

effective means of transmitting folk wisdom to future generations. However, the preservation of such oral literature has received limited attention in Northern Samar, where studies often focus on other forms of vernacular literature such as riddles, folksongs, legends, and folktales. Despite occasional claims that proverbs are becoming outdated or cliché, they continue to maintain popularity as humble commentaries on life and reminders of the wisdom inherited from ancestors. Early collectors recognized the value of proverbs, ensuring their continued dissemination as a source of relishing the essence of ordinary speech.

Given the importance of preserving oral and vernacular literature, particularly in remote areas, it becomes evident that Northern Samar is a fertile ground for such rich cultural expressions. The Inabaknon language, distinct from the Samarnon dialect, possesses a unique and intriguing quality. This research emphasizes the urgency of integrating Inabaknon into the mainstream of Filipino literature by collecting and translating Inabaknon proverbs into English, making them accessible to non-native speakers of Ninorte-Samarnon. This collection aims to present a comprehensive understanding of the people of Capul, Northern Samar – their lives, appreciation, expressions, observations, and values. It is hoped that this bilingual compilation of Inabaknon maxims and proverbs will appeal to a wide readership and prove particularly valuable to

students and translators of major languages.

Similarly, Gamaynon, a Ninorte-Samaron vernacular spoken in the eastern part of the province, possesses its own unique qualities due to its location and the influence of the ninorte and estehanon dialects. The culture and diversity of the Gamaynon people have contributed significantly to a vast collection of proverbs that symbolize the struggles and challenges of life in the eastern part of the province.

In light of the aforementioned reasons, the objective of this research is to collect and translate popular proverbs among Capuleños and Gamaynons, offering insights into their lives as individuals, as Samareños, as Filipinos, and as global citizens who share commonalities with other cultures.

OBJECTIVES

The researcher aimed to retrieve and translate into English the proverbs of the people of Capul and Gamay, Northern Samar.

Specifically, it is intended to:

- (1) collect Inabaknon and Gamaynon proverbs and translate them into the English language;
- (2) categorize the proverbs according to the nature and range of subject matter, as well as form and style;
- (3) ascertain the structure of the proverbs;
- (4) take note of the extra-linguistic features accompanying the Inabaknon and Gamaynon proverbs;
- (5) examine the figurative language used in the proverbs;
- (6) analyze the situations in which these proverbs are commonly used;
- (7) explore how the culture or worldview of the people is reflected in the proverbs; and
- (8) understand the techniques employed in the translation of Inabaknon and Gamaynon proverbs into English.

METHODOLOGY

This ethnolinguistic study was conducted in the municipalities of Capul and Gamay, located in Northern Samar.

Capul, situated in the northwest part of Northern Samar, holds historical significance as the first town established and evangelized by the Spaniards. It served as a docking point for galleons from Mexico en route to Acapulco. The name "Capul" is believed to be derived from Acapulco, and the presence of Moro vintas passing through the island on their way to Manila, Luzon, and Mindanao further influenced the local culture and language. Inabaknon is the primary language spoken in Capul, although Tagalog and English are also understood by the majority.

Gamay, located in Northern Samar, presents an ideal setting for literature studies due to its cultural heritage, natural beauty, and diverse population. The municipality offers a rich tapestry of languages and cultures, enhancing the literary landscape. The captivating landscapes and resilient communities of Gamay

provide an intriguing backdrop for narratives that delve into rural life struggles, cultural preservation, and the multifaceted human experience.

The study selected thirty-seven informants who met specific criteria: Northehanon individuals aged sixty and above, known as tradition bearers, with limited formal education to ensure minimal influence from printed sources, and who resided primarily within their respective municipalities. Professionals who were also tradition bearers were included to enrich the folkloric aspect of the collected proverbs.

The research closely examined the words and actions of the participants through narrative and descriptive approaches to accurately represent their experiences. Ethnolinguistic and participant observation methods were employed, supported by informal conversational interviews and an interview guide. Personal interviews were conducted, audio recordings were made of the proverbs, and photographs were taken of the informants. The researcher also noted any accompanying extra-linguistic features observed during the interviews. A total of 80 proverbs were collected from 22 informants in Capul and 80 proverbs from 15 informants in Gamay, representing various barangays in both municipalities.

The fieldwork took place from October 2019 to December 2019. To authenticate the proverbs, E. Arsenio Manuel's test for folkloricity was utilized, ensuring that the proverbs were recited, had no identifiable authorship, were transmitted orally, and had variants.

Great care was taken to record the proverbs exactly as recited by the informants, along with detailed notes on the extra-linguistic aspects observed during the interviews. In the translation process, the research aimed to faithfully convey the meaning of the proverbs to ensure comprehension by readers. The proverbs were categorized using Damiana Eugenio's classification system. The translations were provided as closely as possible, taking into account the meaning, structure, and arrangement of words. The original terms were retained to preserve the essence of the proverbs. For convenience, the original Inabaknon and Gamaynon proverbs were followed by their English translations.

FINDINGS

The Collected and Translated Inabaknon and Gamaynon Proverbs

A. General Attitudes towards Life and Laws that Govern Life

1. Patience and Perseverance

*It nagsasakripisyo, may-
ada maupay na
kinabubuwason.*

S/He who sacrifices.

Will have a better
tomorrow.

2. Cautiousness

Gana ' sagdonngamara 'at.
There is no advice that leads to evil.

3. Gratitude

*It dire na nalingi sa iya gintukdan,
dire makakaabot sa iya karadtuon.*
S/He who does not look back at
his/her past cannot go where s/he
desires.

4. Resentment

*Ako i magtapa, ako i
magsugna '*
Katahak la 'in magkakan.
I pounded, I cooked, when
finished, other reaped the glory.
Or
I was the one who cooked it,
another ate it.

5. Death

Sa kamatayon tanan waray takas.
From death alone there no escape.

B. Ethical Proverbs Recommending Certain Virtues and Condemning Certain Vices

1. Cautiousness

*I makusoglakang-
na*
*Malalom i ontug-
na.*
The heavier the
step
The greater the fall.

2. Loyalty

*Kun may-ada ka
duwa na asawa,
Ibalik it usa.*
If you have two
spouses
Return the other.

3. Promptness

I magkallattulos
Mahayagrasya i saala '-na.
The early rises,
Receives bountiful graces.

4. Industry

*Kun sino it mabuligon,
May-ada kakarawton.*

S/He who is helpful
Reaps something in return.

5. Thrift

Dakawagtitibusondimu 'an
Kay aniya ' orasngaagkinahanglankaw.
Don't consume everything
Time will come that you need some.

6. Consideration for others

*Dire anay magsinugad it mag-
raot.*
*Basi dire mangisog an mga
igkasi.*
Don't say bad words
So that people will not be mad
at you.

7. Humility

Konbinalitokkawbatobulusongapas
Ngaga 'ikawakapapaddisiigkasia 'amo.
If some throws you a stone, throw back cotton
So that you will not hurt him/her.

8. Patience

Diretsu la, ayaw paglingi,
Dire ka maabat ada ka na sa imo karadtuon.
Look straight, don't look back
You will find you're already there.

9. Respect

Konmahalappagtratar-mosila 'ina 'a,
Mahalap may lat i pagtratarsika 'aw.
If you treat others well,
You will be treated well too.

10. Charity

It mga tawo na kablas,
Ato dapat igintatagan sin bulig.
A person should love those people
Who do not have by being generous.

C. Proverbs Expressing a System of Values

1. Honesty

Kon ay i sa 'ad-mo
Iya I tinumanon.
What you promised
You should fulfill.

2. Good Reputation

Kun mayda aso
Mayda it kalayo.
If there is smoke
There is fire.

D. Proverbs Expressing General Truths and Observations About Life

1. Adaptability

*Dakawagdadahulokay i dahuloiya i nagtestingan
Dakawmay
latagpadamurikawka 'awmakabawasikadaa 'an.
Neither be the first for you will be tested;
Nor be the last for you will bear the old.*

2. On the Attitude of the Young and Present Generation

*An kahapon ngan yana,
Dako it deperensya.
Between yesterday and today,
There is a great difference.*

3. On the Attitude of Human Beings

*Konniya ' mahalapbinuhatan-moga 'i
Lugodkina 'intumanI mara 'atlugodiyapirmi i
nagparatigamanan.
People do not look on the good deeds of a person
Rather they look into their defects.*

4. Obedience

*Tikadu ka pala,
Pabalik na ak.
You are still going there,
We are already returning.*

5. Judgment

*Myintraskawaghusgasiditangnga '
Husgahindahulo i kalugaringon-
mo.
Before you judge others,
Judge yourself first.*

6. Sensitiveness

*Malamma 'ngani '
a 'a
Makudatngani '
kayo.
If it is soft then it's
human.
If it is hard then it's
wood.*

7. Talkativeness

*Wara matatangpos,
Kung puro la bagaw.
Nothing is
accomplished
By talking always.*

8. Love of Pleasure and Relaxation

*I a 'angamapinaturihon, makaliamatay.
S/He who sleeps always dies early.*

9. Modesty

*Ga 'ipadugok i paraysimanok.
Palay never comes near the chicken.*

10. Contentment

*Basta nabubusog, nahihingaturog.
Each one who gets full is weaned.*

11. Wooing

*Sikreto pa hamok
Baliskadna i
lamisa.
It is still a secret;
But the table has
already been turned
upside down.*

12. Fame and Power

*An gahum san tawo nawawara,
Pero an gahum san Ginoo dire.
The power of man fades
But the power of God does not.*

13. Ability

*An kolor san tawo nakikita dayun,
Pero an abilidad dire dayun
nususukat.
The color of man is on the outside;
But the ability lies in the quality.*

14. Courage

*I
a 'aakonakasamaran
Agdugang i kusug-
na.
A person when
wounded
All the more s/he
becomes brave.*

15. Repentance

*Abungolakosikapapamati 'ina 'anto.
Mahalap i kabubuwasan-na.
I've been deaf but I listen now.*

16. Perseverance

*It oras nalupad,
An trabaho nahulat.
Time flies.
The job awaits.*

17. Inheritance

*Kon ay i tatay-mo, kaydadi '-na may
Kaw; iyakawliwat.
Like father, like son.*

E. Humorous Proverbs**1. On Emotions**

*Sa 'ilub-mo i paddipero i katul-naga 'i.
You can stand the pain but not the itch.*

2. On Jokes

*Kun waray tiaw,
Waray tawa.
No jokes,
No laughter.*

F. Miscellaneous Proverbs

*Igi'ossipagkadadi' abawasi
Kamaktong.
Childhood disposition is
carried to maturity.
Gana' sapagga'-mosigana'.
You can't squeeze something out of nothing.*

A total of 160 Inabaknon and Gamaynon proverbs were collected and classified using Damiana Eugenio's categorization. The proverbs were grouped based on the range and nature of their subject matter. Under general attitudes towards life and governing principles, 41 proverbs were translated, focusing on patience, perseverance, cautiousness, gratitude, resentment, and death. In terms of ethical proverbs promoting virtues and condemning vices, 45 proverbs emphasized cautiousness, loyalty, promptness, industry, thrift, consideration for others, humility, patience, respect, and charity. Regarding proverbs that express a system of values, 9 proverbs centered around honesty and good reputation. Life-related proverbs covered 49 proverbs discussing adaptability, the attitudes of different generations, human behavior, obedience, judgment, sensitivity, talkativeness, love of pleasure and relaxation, modesty, contentment, courtship, fame and power, abilities, courage, repentance, perseverance, and inheritance. There were 6 humorous proverbs focusing on emotions and jokes, and 10 miscellaneous proverbs addressing nature and confidence. All these Inabaknon and Gamaynon proverbs are presented in prose statements.

Proverb Structure

Most of the translated Inabaknon proverbs were presented as prose statements in couplets, lacking a discernible rhyme scheme or consistent syllable composition in both the original text and the English translation. Additionally, some proverbs were presented in quatrains and three-line stanzas without a discernible rhyme scheme or syllable composition.

Accompanying Extra-Linguistic Features

The Inabaknon proverbs were often accompanied by hand gestures, which enhanced their intended functions, coupled with facial expressions that conveyed a sense of seriousness in relation to the wisdom and spirit of the proverb.

Figurative Languages Used

The Inabaknon proverbs made use of various figurative languages, including conditional constructions, analogies, similes, metaphors, hyperboles, contrasts, comparisons, and parallelism.

Situation When Proverbs Are Used

The Abaknon and Gamaynon people primarily use proverbs to provide advice, deliver sermons, and issue warnings, particularly to the younger generation. Proverbs serve the function of restraining, regulating, advising, and tempering, and are utilized when applicable and necessary.

Culture or Worldview Reflected in the Proverbs

The collection and translation of Inabaknon proverbs reflect the dominant culture and religious beliefs of the Capuleños and Gamaynon people.

Translation Techniques Employed

The translation of Inabaknon and Gamaynon proverbs into English employed various techniques, including free translation, functional equivalence, descriptive equivalence, word-for-word translation, and paraphrasing.

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

After conducting a thorough analysis and evaluation of the data gathered in this study, the following conclusions and implications can be drawn:

Proverbs are still commonly heard and recited by the people of Capul and Gamay, as observed by the researcher. The collection of Inabaknon and Gamaynon proverbs showcases their close connection to human nature and fundamental human traits. These proverbs play an indispensable role in guiding, advising, and influencing people's behavior. They are treasured possessions, passed down from generation to generation by folk bearers, despite the influence of foreign cultures.

The gathered proverbs were categorized based on their subject matter, encompassing various aspects of life. These include general attitudes towards life and the principles that govern it (such as patience, perseverance, cautiousness, gratitude, resentment, and death); ethical proverbs recommending virtues and condemning vices (such as cautiousness, loyalty, promptness, industry, thrift, consideration for others, humility, patience, respect, and charity); proverbs expressing a system of values (emphasizing honesty and good reputation); proverbs reflecting general truths and observations about life (covering adaptability, attitudes of different generations, human behavior, obedience, judgment, sensitiveness, talkativeness, love of pleasure and relaxation, modesty, contentment, courtship, fame and power, abilities, courage, repentance, perseverance, and inheritance); humorous proverbs (related to emotions and jokes); and miscellaneous proverbs (addressing nature and confidence).

The structure of Inabaknon and Gamaynon proverbs predominantly consists of prose statements, often presented in couplets. However, there is no discernible rhyme scheme or consistent syllable composition. When translated into English, the number of syllables in each proverb generally decreases compared to the original language.

Alongside the proverbs, extra-linguistic features such as hand and head gestures enhance their impact. These gestures, combined with facial expressions that convey a sense of seriousness, further emphasize the wisdom and spirit embedded in the proverbs.

Figurative language plays a vital role in these oral proverbs, enhancing their message. The usage of conditional constructions, analogies, similes, metaphors, hyperboles, contrasts, comparisons, and parallelism adds a powerful effect to the proverbs. Metaphors are particularly prevalent, although variations in expression are also present. Rhyme is not a consistent feature among the proverbs.

The analysis reveals that the functions of these proverbs include restraining, regulating, advising, and tempering. They are acquired from various sources, such as parents, grandparents, relatives, friends, and respected individuals within the community. These proverbs find their place in everyday conversations, settling arguments within families, and interactions among neighbors and friends.

The proverbs reflect the values instilled by parents and elders, emphasizing the importance of hard work, careful consideration in one's actions, maintaining a good reputation, keeping promises, adaptability, proper behavior, and acknowledging the will and power of God.

They impart virtues like patience, promptness, perseverance, industry, loyalty between spouses, honesty, charity, thrift, humility, respect, obedience, courage, and contentment. Additionally, the proverbs reflect the dominant religiosity present in the Capul and Gamay communities. The wisdom and spirit conveyed in the proverbs encompass people's attitudes towards life, guiding principles, general observations, work ethics, value systems, and even humor.

Through the utilization of free translation techniques, the proverbs have been made accessible to non-native English readers.

These proverbs serve as manifestations of people's daily activities, emotions, attitudes, and encounters with life's realities. They vividly portray the indigenous oral literature of Cap.

REFERENCES

- [1] Ashanner. B. 1990. "Folklore and National Development". Waray Proverbs: A research Forum. Vol. XIII, No. 2. Tacloban: Divine World University Publication.
- [2] Balanon, V.G. 1994. "A Worldview of Laoang Community as Reflected in Their Folk Speech". Unpublished Master's Thesis, University Eastern Philippines.
- [3] Banagbanag, R. A. 2019. "Lexical Differences Among three Generations of Inabaknon Speakers". Unpublished Master's Thesis University of Eastern Philippines.
- [4] Best, J. and Khan, J. V. 1998. Research in Education. Eight Edition. Singapore: Prentice Hall, Inc.
- [5] Brunvand, J. H. 2019. "The Early Bird Is Worth Two in the Bush", Captain Jack Aubrey's Fractured Proverbs in Contemporary life. Utah, USA: Utah State University Press.
- [6] De La Rosa, L. 1978. "Community Values Reflected in the Folktales of Barrio Salvacion, Bobon, Northern Samar". Unpublished Master's Thesis, Centro Escolar University, Manila
- [7] 1993. "20th Century Ninorte-Samaron Siday: A collection and Translation". Unpublished DALL Dissertation, De La Salle University.
- [8] Dominguez, E. B. 2010. The function of proverbs in Discourse. Berlin, Germany: De Gruyter Mouton.
- [9] Ember, C. and Ember, M. 1999. "Folklore". Anthropology. Singapore: Prentice Hall, Inc.
- [10] Eugenio, D. 1992. Philippine Folk Literature: The Proverbs. Vol. 4 Quezon City: The University of Eastern Philippines folklorist, Inc.
- [11] Haas, H. A. 2011. "The Wisdom of Wizards, Muggles and Squibs: Proverbs Use in the World of Harry Potter". Journal of American Folklore.
- [12] Luangco, G. 1982. Waray Literature: An Anthology of Leyte-Samar Writings. Tacloban: Divine Word University Press.
- [13] Manuel, A. E. 1975. "Methods of Folklore Investigation" Guide to the study of Philippine Folklore.
- [14] McKenna, K. 2009. "Proverbs and the Folk Tale in the Russian Cinema: The Case of Sergei Eisenstein's Film Classic Aleksandr Nevsky". The Proverial „Pied Piper" A Festschrift Volume of Essays in Honor of Wolfgang Meider. New York, USA: Peter Lang.
- [15] Meider, W. and Dundes, A. 1994. "The Wisdom of Many". Essays on the Proverbs. New York, USA: Garland Publishing House, Inc.
- [16] Owens, R. E. 1996. Language Development: An Introduction. New York, USA: Simon and Schoster Company.
- [17] Palmer, G. B. 1996. Towards A Theory of Cultural Linguistics. Texas, USA: University of Texas Press.
- [18] Panopio, I., et al. 2001. General Sociology Focus on the Philippines. Fourth Edition. Quezon City: National Book Store, Inc.
- [19] Ridout, R. and Writing, C. 1969. English Proverbs Explained. Second Edition. London, UK: Pan Book, Ltd.