



A PRELIMINARY INVESTIGATION TO ABUI LANGUAGE PROVERBS: TYPES, MEANINGS AND FUNCTIONS

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ABSTRACT: Considering the significance of proverbs in Abui communities in Alor island, this study aimed at 1) identifying the types of proverbs found in Abui language, 2) discovering the meaning conveyed by the proverbs and 3) investigating the functions served by the proverbs. The research employed qualitative case study by conducting the in-depth interview with five informants from West Welai Village, Teluk Mutiara Sub district, Alor Regency. The data were collected by using open ended questions. The data were then translated and transcribed to be analyzed by using thematic analysis. The findings and discussion led to three conclusions. First, there were thirty proverbs found in Abui language which consisted of twelve aphorism (40%), eleven idioms (36,67%) and seven parables (23,33%). Second, the majority of the proverbs (80%) conveyed proverbial while only six proverbs (20%) expressed idiomatic meaning. Lastly, regarding function, twelve proverbs (40%) in Abui language served as advices, nine of them showed the notion of sarcasm (30%), five proverbs gave warnings (16,67%) and the rest functioned as expressions (13,33%).

Keywords: *Abui language, functions, meanings, proverbs, translation, types.*

INTRODUCTION

Abui language is one of the twenty languages spoken in the islands of Alor and Pantar (Klamer, 2017). The language belongs to the family of *Trans Guinean languages*. Regarding the position of Abui as a local language, it is widely known that the language also includes cultural entities such as proverbs, songs, and poems. Turning into the notion of proverbs, Abui language is enriched with varieties of proverbs inherited from the ancestors. Currently, there is not significance number of studies related to Abui language. The previous researches only focused on linguistic features such as phonological, morphological, semantic and syntactic elements of Abui language. Therefore, this study was conducted to fill the gap with the previous studies.

The aims of the study reported herein were 1) identifying the types of proverbs found in Abui language, 2) discovering the meanings of proverbs in Abui language and 3) investigate the functions of proverbs in Abui language.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Proverbs are expressions or sentences that contains comparisons, has more than one meaning and also meaningful and a group of words which usually explains something by figurative meaning (Poerwadarminta as cited in Tarigan, 1990:156). Proverbs can be divided into 3 types based on different views. They are parable, idiom, and aphorism.

Parables are proverbs that contain comparisons of human life. The main characteristic of the parable is the existence of words like, as, such as and etc. Idioms are words or groups of words that are specific to express something by figurative meaning that describes a person's behavior or natural conditions with a few words (Poerwadarminta in Tarigan, 1990: 164). Aphorism is a type of proverb that contains advice given by ancestors (Poerwadarminta in Tarigan, 1990: 157).

Translation techniques

Aiming at finding out the meaning and functions of Abui language proverbs, it is necessary to employ appropriate translation techniques. According to Catford (1974: 16) there are three types of translation, namely: 1) *word for word translation*, 2) *literal translation*, and 3) *free translation*. But in practice, the translation process applies various types of translation. That is caused by 4 factors, namely; 1) There are differences in the source language system with the target language system; 2) The different types of translated text material; 3) the assumption that translation is a communication tool, and 4) there are differences in the purpose of translating a text. In the actual translating activity, the four factors do not always stand alone in the sense that it is possible that we apply two or three types of translations at the same time in translating a text.

Types of meaning

According to Chaer (1990: 61) meaning divided into several types, namely:

1. Lexical Meaning
2. Grammatical Meaning
3. Contextual meaning
4. Referential Meaning
5. Non-Referential Meaning
6. Denotative Meaning
7. Connotative Meaning
8. Conceptual Meaning
9. Association Meaning
10. Word Meaning
11. Terminology Meaning
12. Idiomatic Meaning
13. Proverbial Meaning

The functions of proverbs

Proverbs had and still have a didactic function and as a guide to life’s problems by using them to teach people, help them in difficult situation, show people what are the most important things in life, and show the proper way in life and to show people, to bring out the essence of a given phenomenon, warn of danger, to tell people how to behave and how to not behave. (Poerwardarminta in Tarigan, 1990:156).

According to Poerwardaminta in Tarigan (1990:156) proverbs are divided into three types and each of them has their own functions and the function of proverb can be seen from each meaning in types of proverb. There are four functions of proverbs. Those are advice, warning, sarcasm and expression.

First, advice is an opinion, recommendation or teaching offered as a guide to action contains in proverbs. Second, warning is a statement to warn people about danger and how to behave and how to not behave contains in proverb. Third, sarcasm can be used for many purposes. However, in most of the cases, it is utilized as a mask or a scathe. Others use it as a defensive mechanism. It is used when bitterness is hard to express in a pleasant way, or the objective is to say something without hurting somebody directly. The basic purpose of sarcasm in literally works is to bring a flavor in order to make the stories seem real to the readers contains in proverb. Fourth, expression meaning the act of saying what you think or showing how you feel using words or actions and a word or group of words used in a particular situation or by particular people.

MATERIALS AND METHOD

Qualitative research is intended to explore important social phenomena by immersing the investigator in the situation for extended periods (Mukhtar, 2003:10). The writer mainly used qualitative case study method to answer the questions related to the problems in this research. The in-depth interviews were conducted to identify the types of the proverbs in *Abui* language, discover the meanings of proverbs in *Abui* language, and investigate the functions of proverbs in *Abui* language (Creswell, 2013).

The subjects of this research were five farmers from a community of *Abui* people. They were recruited under the following criteria: 1) age above 40 years old, 2) speak fluent *Abui* language, 3) originate from *Abui*

communities, 4) inherit the knowledge of proverbs in *Abui* from their parents or ancestors, and 5) have participated in traditional ceremonies in *Abui* communities.

The data were collected by initiating in depth interview with open ended questions. The raw data were recorded and noted then transcribed and translated. Following that, The data were then coded under thematic analysis (Richards, 2009) to organize them based on certain categories leading to types, meanings and functions of proverbs in *Abui* language.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The data collected from the in depth interview with the five informants of *Abui* communities are presented in Table 1 along with the English translation. Regarding the findings, the table shows that there are thirty (30) different proverbs in *Abui* language given by the informants. Adding to this, the data analysis results concerning the types, meanings and functions of the proverbs are also portrayed in the table.

Table 1: Proverbs found in *Abui* language

No	Proverbs In <i>Abui</i> Language	English Translation	Type	Meaning	Function
1	E mokilak e kafakaimiti e kafakailak e mokimiti.	No mill no Meal.	Aphorism	Proverbial	advice
2	Lollaktotoktatang paengrowa.	It’s better to be safe than sorry	Aphorism	Proverbial	advice
3	O kamolbelenihabah omi la petang.	Dressed like a rich person but don’t have money.	Aphorism	Proverbial	sarcasm
4	Yakangyabekalan g to but naha.	Do not mix goodness with wickedness.	Aphorism	Proverbial	advice
5	Latukaisapadabek atadianahako a tang hariki.	Who lives by the sword dies by the sword.	Aphorism	Proverbial	advice
6	E do limatakunariamah otilaka do.	A parasite cannot live alone	Aphorism	Proverbial	sarcasm
7	Ma da arahabobilko da hatanghatafakal	Whoever dug a hole, he also dipped into it	Aphorism	Proverbial	advice
8	Wadamupu to ayak to mahitinghabayal do naha	Blood is thicker than water	Aphorism	Proverbial	advice
9	Nukunala do wan bating di	It’s no use crying over spilled milk	Idiom	Idiomatic	Expression
10	Kai kuok da kaikuokhamangka i filing da kai filing hamanghuda.	Pride is the beginning of destruction.	Parable	Proverbial	advice
11	Tuol taka huda da mujafokabeka	Empty case has louder sound	Parable	Proverbial	sarcasm
12	Hawaruoltamadah abahatangboiati	Water which dirty not signs in	Parable	Proverbial	sarcasm
13	La kaikafiey ho paneng	A person who didn’t have an attitude because they have bad behavior	Parable	Proverbial	sarcasm
14	O kamai ho asihinglakhuda	Unexpectedly problems	Parable	Proverbial	Expression
15	Fileiayakhanainat eyahuda	Tares among the wheat	Parable	Proverbial	warning
16	Kai dokhafu di hudayo	Lick his/her own spit	Parable	Proverbial	sarcasm
17	Tatanghakilangf akhuda	Bite the hand that feeds one	Parable	Proverbial	Expression
18	Ayakhudaisimuhomimia be da maliki.	Be like the rice stalk, as it is laden with ripening grains, it bows down.	parable	Proverbial	advice
19	A	Another on the	Parable	Proverbial	Sarcasm

	nomiwalaktilehar hudahabatabak da kolangmia	lips of the other in the heart			
20	La kaikuokaholhuda	Barking dog seldom bites	Parable	Proverbial	sarcasm
21	Uo aka tamadatahabasam anaha	Wolf in sheep's clothing	Idiom	Idiomatic	warning
22	Hatangsierai	Dangerous person	Idiom	Idiomatic	warning
23	Hatangupihuda	Stingy person	Idiom	Idiomatic	sarcasm
24	Bung hieokraalokai soling huda	Between the devil and the deep blue sea	Idiom	Idiomatic	expression
25	Homi la utangpai	Spiteful person	Idiom	Idiomatic	warning
26	Siengkaimoimakani	Sluggard person	Idiom	Idiomatic	warning
27	O Mama hiengFalaka mu a hafonri he	Don't forget Your God	Aphorism	Proverbial	advice
28	Tikepangsoritei la hap it taka tai firai	keep your head above water	Aphorism	Proverbial	advice
29	Tomidotebilenite	Knowing yourself is the beginning of all wisdom	Aphorism	Proverbial	advice
30	Tapai da kalonritemelralong ne	No Pain no gain	Aphorism	Proverbial	advice

Types of Proverbs in Abui Language

Turning into the types of proverbs, the description in table one shows that Abui language proverbs fell into three different types namely aphorism, idioms and parables. First, there were twelve proverbs from aphorism category (40%). These are the proverbs which express advices. Following this, eleven parables (36,67%) were also found. The eleven proverbs were categorizes as parables since they depict comparisons to human life by using the word *huda* which means like, such or such as. However, only seven idioms (23,33%) in Abui proverbs were identified. The last seven proverbs were used to describe human behavior or natural conditions using figurative language, thus, they belong to idioms.

Meaning of Proverbs in Abui Language

Regarding meanings, the information provided in table 1 indicated that there were two meanings conveyed by the proverbs in Abui language, proverbial and idiomatic meanings. Obviously, the majority of the proverbs in Abui language fell into proverbial meanings which means the proverbs can be understood from the meaning of each element even though this may not be the true meaning. This can be seen by the 80 percent of the proverbs which belongs to this category (24). However, only six proverbs (20%) express idiomatic meaning.

Function of Proverbs in Abui Language

As can be seen from Table 1, each proverb in the findings employs different function. Generally, there were four functions executed by the proverbs in Abui language. The functions are advice, sarcasm, warning and expression. First, nearly half of the proverbs (12) functioned as advices. Next, 30% of them aimed at being sarcastic (9). Then, five proverbs (16,67%) played the role of warnings followed by four proverbs (13,33%) which served as expressions.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results and discussion, the writing comes to three conclusions. First, the findings revealed that there were 30 proverbs in Abui language found from the field. Moreover, these proverbs are put under three types namely aphorism (12), parables (7), and idioms (11). Second, the analysis also showed that the meaning of these proverbs fell into two kinds namely proverbial (24) and idiomatic meanings (6). Third, it is obvious that all the 4 functions were employed by the proverbs. This means the proverbs function as advice (12), warning (5), sarcasm (9) and expression (4).

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