
RESEARCH ARTICLE

Bayok Sa Kandatu: Stylistic and Content Analysis of Meranaw Poetic Chant

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ABSTRACT

Bayok is a spontaneous poetic chant that embodies the Meranaw oral tradition, cultural and social values. *Bayok Sa Kandatu* is recited at coronations and enthronements ceremonies for Sultan, Datu and Bae-a-Labi. It is held primarily for social entertainment, yet in grand festivities. The language in *bayok* consists of many layers of meaning. Hence, in this study, the researcher analyzed the *bayok* using stylistic and content analysis. This study seeks to analyze *bayok* in phonological and lexical levels, and determine specific elements (i.e., metaphor, imagery, rhyme, code-switching, and rhetorical questions) which attempt to clarify how words connect to the entire system such as analyzing and interpreting language, literature, and culture. Moreover, the researcher analyzed the dominant themes emerging in *bayok* to see how the structure of a chant can affect its whole meaning. Findings revealed that *bayok sa kandatu* expresses various alliteration (for phonological level), and metaphors (for lexical level) emerging as the prominent one. The content of the *bayok sa kandatu* revolves around three (3) main themes: (1) Empathy, (2) Unity, (3) Kinship. Study concludes that elements in the chant have a role in the process of understanding the leadership values embedded in *bayok*, which serves as a vital function of language as a transmitter of the identity of the Meranaw.

KEYWORDS

Bayok, Bayok sa Kandatu, Chant, Stylistic Approach, Content Analysis

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1. Introduction

The Meranaw people, an ethnic group indigenous to the region of Mindanao, Philippines, are known to have a very rich culture and this is deeply rooted in native folklore, cultural traditions, values of peace, and a long history of resistance against external influences. It is also elaborated by Cabrera (2016) who asserts, "the indigenous Philippine cultures that are most successful in resisting foreign influences are in the south (Muslims)". Therefore, the researcher analyzed one of the oral traditions of Meranaw which is often practiced. Along with analyzing the structures of poetic chant, the role of traditional music, such as *bayok*, is hoped to be revitalized and preserved.

Moreover, *bayok* is a key part of Meranaw cultural practices, highlighting the significance of music in community gatherings, celebrations, and rituals. *Bayok* is a stylized form of singing or chanting (Hadji Daud, 2014), a folk song characterized by a formal, dignified and, elaborate and stylized language of Meranaw (Sarangani, 2010). The *bayok* of Meranaw have different terminologies for songs sung on various occasions such as *bayok* for *Kandori* (thanksgiving/celebration), *bayok* for *Kandato-dato/Oragis* (stage play), *bayok* for *Kambitiara/Ka-Khawing* (engagement/wedding), *bayok* for *Kandatu* (enthronement), and *bayok* for *Kandiaga/Kapatay* (funeral wakes/death) (Alonto, 2005). The *bayok* tells the audience about the ancestors, family genealogy, marriage, customary law, religious belief, and traditional practices.

In the *bayok sa kandatu*, the chant is addressed to the Meranaw tribal leaders who are the Sultan, Datu, or Bae-a-Labi who will be enthroned either on that particular day or the next day. The *bayok* is usually very lengthy, which can run hours, usually from

6 o'clock in the evening until midnight. The theme of the *bayok* is about the genealogy, lineage, and leadership qualities or traits of the to-be-enthroned Sultan, Datu or Bae-a-Labi. The event is attended by the whole community and significantly, more than its lavish and sumptuous, feast and prestige the occasion showcased, many times the *bayok* settles conflicts (Benito, 2002).

Moreover, it is also important to describe in the study the one who performs *bayok* known as *Onor*. *Onor* refers to a storyteller who carries the responsibility of passing down these traditions to younger generations. An *Onor* is someone who may mediate in cultural or social matters within the community (Tahir, 2012). *Onor* is derived from the Meranaw word for a "respected person" and is used to refer to someone who is highly regarded for their wisdom, knowledge, and expertise in cultural practices (Cadar, 1995). An *Onor* is typically someone who has deep understanding and experience in traditional Meranaw ways of life, including their language, history, music, and societal norms. This person is often seen as a cultural guardian or oral historian (Alonto, 2005).

Notably, several studies have been conducted about Meranaw *bayok* such as the study of Panggaga (2009) who surveyed the knowledge, attitude and practice levels of the Meranaws students, faculty and staff in MSU-Marawi on the *bayok* as a folk medium, and found that respondents only heard the *bayok* during an occasion of enthronement and feast, majority of them could not understand the content of the *bayok* and do not appreciate it. But surprisingly, 95% of the respondents agreed that they want the *bayok* to be preserved. The study of Tawano (2016) also explored the preferences of Meranaw students on pop songs over *bayok*, and she found that the majority of the Meranaw students preferred mainstream music or songs over *bayok*. A major reason for this is because they have limited accessibility to *bayok*. And that is exactly one of the gaps of the study as *bayok* is less studied because rendering transcription to it is very difficult. Hence, reflecting on these results, *bayok* seems to be decreasing in popularity and is not appreciated because Meranaw youths cannot understand the language used in *bayok*. Hence, it establishes strong evidence that a study to analyze the stylistic of *bayok*, providing translations and meaning must be pursued.

Hence, this paper analyzed the content and linguistic elements of *bayok* performed in Butig, Lanao del Sur on September 24, 2024. Specifically, it seeks to answer the following research questions:

1. What are the linguistic elements present in the *bayok sa kandatu*?
2. What are the prevalent themes in *bayok sa kandatu*?

2. Literature Review

Bayok as a traditional verbal art form of Meranaw is a kind of entertainment. However, more than this enchantment, this literary form is not excused with the endangerment of *bayok* discourses and cultural practices of Meranaw. The *bayok* or chant talks about ancestral heroes, customary law, religious beliefs and traditional practices, and reflects the importance of lineage. The narrators, mainly elderly women, hold a key position in the community, both as historians and preachers (Alonto, 2005).

However, many Meranaw events no longer invite *Onor* to perform *bayok* but a modern singer who can sing Meranaw songs to entertain the audience. This dying verbal art may be attributed to modernization such as generations of today preferred K-Pop and rock songs. These manifestations were revealed in Sarangani's (2010) study on the Meranaw *bayok* and popular songs.

According to Sarip (2018), of the endangered traditional art forms of the Meranaw people, their literary heritage much of which in oral form thus forming part of their rich oral tradition, is, perhaps, the most fragile and vulnerable. Changes in fashion, taste and practices wrought by the modern times that Sarangani (2010) described as an age of ruptures or discontinuities and liquidations have not spared this part of the Meranaw oral tradition. Metamorphosis or evolution of art forms seems inevitable and may be the best defense against complete extinction. According to the popular hypothesis, it is from the *bayok* that the *rinarinaw* and other innovations on Meranaw music like *banda* have originated. These new emerging forms are read as mirroring changes in the Meranaw culture and character. A noticeable change is evident between the refined and elegant language of the *bayok* and the plain, direct, and even vulgar words or expressions noted in some Meranaw popular songs (Cayongcat, 1984). Ostensibly, the frenetic experimentation with changes or innovations, cults, and fads, seems to presage the blurring of the distinctions and boundaries between the native original heritage and the new innovative forms. The two might no longer be distinguishable from each other (Sarangani, 2010).

Sarip-Macarambon (2021) studied and analyzed the Meranaw proverbs called "pananaroon" and discover, through the signs incorporated in them, what they express and reveal of the Meranaw people's culture, and character. Sample proverbs were classified and described according to context in the culture, that is, situations for which they are designed or meant to be used, based on appropriateness or fittingness and relevance. They were next subjected to semiotic and intertextual analysis, with cultural semiotics as the approach, focusing on how the signs are utilized for meaning making, and what these reveals of the Meranaws as individuals and as a socio-cultural group. From the analyses of select pananaroon, through the lenses of the natural and cultural signs that conveyed them, the foundational ideals were also drawn: patience and prudence, avoidance of acting or deciding on impulse; belief in calculated boldness and arduous journeys; finding procrastination or vacillation as a fault; allowance and forgiveness for falling short of one's expectations; humility; awareness of one's station, revealing an ingrained and internalized class system; sensitivity, and; an overarching wish for clearness, harmony, order and peace in all things. The depths that the results this study achieved not only strengthens semiotic analysis as a viable approach to a proverb and linguistic/folklore studies, but also opens new avenues or paths for fresh inquiry on Meranaw pananaroon, oral tradition, and folklore, and culture in general.

Moreover, the study of Tahir (2012) on the morphological analysis of the five (5) Meranaw bayok: *Kapranon*, *Kapagarimaonga*, *Kambongbong*, *Katarintang*, *Mamayog*. Using content analysis, she presented the morphemic lexical categories of the five Meranaw bayok. It was significant that Tahir's study contributes to the study of Meranaw language structure, however, did not revealed the source of the data (Meranaw bayok), hence, the present study hopes to provide an actual documentation of bayok as form of Meranaw literature. Further, *bayok* of Meranaw is the same with the majority of the ethnic groups, particularly indigenous people, that utilizes oral traditions as an instrument to enrich cultural and social norms, which stories embedded open a window into the culture by highlighting the significance of settings and situations, problems, and solutions, to that culture.

Further, the practices surrounding oral poetry recitation have much to teach, from the way the stories are told, to the initiation and instruction of the next generation of taletellers. Just like the study of De la Cruz (2018) themes nested in the indigenous Ilocano songs in the Northwestern part of Cagayan province, Philippines are focused on being proud, happy and thankful for the quality of life they have, for any beautiful thing, for the love of family, and for the gift of nature. The dominant virtues traced include faithfulness, idealism, optimism, industry, humility, unity, pride, love and respect.

From the previous studies conducted on *bayok*, common recommendations of the researchers were: Meranaw teachers in Lanao del Sur may be provided with a seminar on language translation to preserve the culture and tradition of the Meranaw especially *bayok* and that a book in Filipino or Aralin Panlipunan subject may integrate the types of *bayok* (Alonto, 2005). Also, reception studies on bayok may be advocated as well as a case study about an *onor's* life may be considered (Panggaga, 2009).

3. Methodology

This study employed a qualitative study that used stylistic analysis of the Meranaw *bayok*. Stylistics is defined by scholars through different perspectives. Short and Leech (1981), defined stylistics as the study of style. It describes what is used and how is used to make of language, while Short and Candlin (1988) defined stylistics as an approach which helps to study literary text. Carter and McCarthy (2014) have the same considerations that stylistics function as bridge between linguistics and literature. Moreover, for content analysis, the researcher used an inductive coding process which was useful in determining categories. An inductive analysis strategy was employed by the researchers to generate descriptive categories of data. This strategy was used to identify the salient themes within the data.

The corpus used in this study was audio recording of the actual performance of *bayok* personally observed in Butig, Lanao del Sur. Further, the transcribed *bayok* (which has a total of 52 lines) and translations were then compared to form more general themes that captured larger aspects of data. Having to identify emergent categories and themes, data sets looked back to identify specific excerpts that signaled these groupings to ground the analyses. It must also be noted that there was a validator who examined the data, especially its translations. The validator holds a doctorate degree, a full-blooded Meranaw and well-versed in speaking both Meranaw and English language. The validator checked the translations for accuracy or fidelity to the scripts provided by the *Onor* and the available interpretations for their sensitivity or sharpness.

Moreover, the participant of the study is the *bayok* performs by an *Onor* from Butig, Lanao del sur. A female, 38 years old, has been trained by her mother who is also an *Onor*. She is a well-known *Onor* in one of the Barangays in Butig, Lanao del Sur as she can perform both *kakulintang* and *kambayok*. Further, the said municipality was chosen because it is believed to have practiced traditional wealth of both cultural and literary values. People in Butig often invite *Onor* on traditional occasions or gatherings in the municipality, thus, oral traditions of Meranaw thrive and live in society delivered from generation to generation. Also, during the schedule to conduct the study, it happened that there was also a scheduled enthronement ceremony in Butig, Lanao del Sur.

Furthermore, to conduct the study, the researcher pre-surveyed some municipalities in Lanao del Sur, and visited municipal halls to ask about the schedule of activities in which an *Onor* is invited. The researcher also asked friends living in nearby municipalities to easily get feedback regarding events with an invited *Onor*. Fortunately, after weeks of pre-surveying, the schedule of *Bayok sa Kandatu* was held in Butig, Lanao del Sur, and it was well-matched with the availability of the researcher. Moreover, the researcher ensures that ethical protocols were considered such as:

1. *Obtaining Informed consent from participant and community elders*: The researcher provided an Inform Consent Form (ICF) not only from the *Onor* but also from community leaders or elders who may hold guardianship over the tradition. Informed consents were obtained for them to fully understand the nature of the research and to be aware of any potential risks or benefits to their community.
2. *Clarifying the use of recordings*: The researcher ensures that all recordings (audio, video, or text) are done with the explicit consent of the *Onor*, and that she knows how the *bayok* will be shared or utilized solely for academic purposes .
- 3.

4. Results and Discussion

The *bayok*, a traditional chant of Meranaw, often carries deep cultural significance, encapsulating not just artistic expression but also rich with linguistic elements.

4.1 Phonological Level

Ofuya (2007) has the view that phonology is the study of the organization of sound patterns in a very language. Lodge (2009) has the opinion that phonology is the study of linguistics organization. Phonological devices may entail rhyme, rhythm, and pattern assonance, consonance, alliteration. These devices can be ascertained by foregrounding repetition.

Lexical Items	Meaning	Linguistic Elements
<i>Dipsosorotaan ago di pagayonayonan (Line 11)</i>	Conflict and tensions	Rhyme
<i>Ipapagundod akun a romba o ladan akun (Line 8)</i>	I gave my feelings and the depths of my soul	Rhyme
<i>Ino mangaday o merano-ranon ako? (Line 2)</i>	What if I share my empathy?	Rhetorical Question
<i>Paladingka sa adat, paladingka sa tamok (Line 46)</i>	Approach it with understanding, approach it with wealth.	Alliteration
<i>Lumilingi sa diwang na lumingi sa kawananan (Line 42)</i>	Shift eyes to the left, shift eyes to the right	Alliteration
<i>Anda e rasay na ranonen? (Line 4)</i>	Where is the burden to be empathized?	Rhetorical Question
<i>Kasama o langon a milulumba imanto (Line 10)</i>	I am with the people present here today.	Code-switching

A. Rhyme

Rhyme is the repetition of similar sounds, usually at the end of lines in poetry. In the chant, the rhyme scheme is structured in a way that adds rhythm and flow to the chant. For instance, in the *bayok sa kandatu*, the line *dipsosorotaan ago di pagayonayonan* (Conflict and tensions) which makes the chant more melodic and easier to remember. It also serves to link ideas, reinforcing the imagery and emotional tone of the chant. Hence, the use of rhyme creates a cohesive sound that enhances the chant's impact. It keeps the audience engaged by providing predictability and a sense of harmony.

Rhymed chanting can make the analysis more accessible to a wider audience, especially in oral or performative contexts. The rhythmic structure of rhymes can help reinforce the significance of each data point, making it more engaging for listeners. According to (Wibowo, n.d.), tone is the speaker's attitude towards the subject, audience, or himself. Tone can be determined by analyzing the contribution of the other elements such as rhyme, rhythm, figurative language, and pattern.

B. Alliteration

Alliteration is the repetition of consonant sounds at the beginning of words in close succession. In the chant, alliteration appears in some lines of the *bayok* such as *paladingka sa adat, paladingka sa tamok* (approach it with understanding, approach it with wealth). Hence, alliteration adds a musical, rhythmic quality to the chant. The repetition of the word "*palad*" repeated twice which emphasize a call to action to Sultan, Datu and Baes, enhancing the chant's powerful and motivating tone. The phrase *lumingi sa diwang na lumingi sa kawananan* creates a gentler, more flowing feel, contrasting the stronger calls to be aware of the people as your constituents, thus adding dynamic texture to the chant.

C. Rhetorical Questions

A rhetorical question is a question asked for effect, where the answer is either obvious or not expected to be answered directly. In the Meranaw chant, it includes *Ino mangaday o merano-ranon ako?* (What if I share my empathy?) *Anda e rasay na ranonen?* (Where is the burden to be empathized?). These rhetorical questions engage the audience and make them reflect on the significance of having a well-rounded leader such as one who has empathy and can see the problems and needs of his people. These rhetorical questions do not require direct answers, but they invite listeners to contemplate their role or response. In the context of a chant, this creates a more interactive, thought-provoking experience, urging listeners to mentally engage with the message of action and awareness.

D. Code-Switching

Code-switching is the practice of alternating between two or more languages or dialects within a conversation or piece of communication. In the context of a poetic chant, code-switching can also refer to shifting between different styles, tones, or even languages, depending on the emotional tone or context. In the *bayok*, we could interpret code-switching as a shift in tone for instance, the word "*kasama*" is a Filipino word means "with" (preposition) or "companion" (noun). *Kasama o langon a milulumba imanto* (I am with the people present here today) has a tone of softer and more introspective language shifts. It creates contrasts in how the audience perceives the message because the Onor may also use "*pud ako niyo*" (I am with you); however, it is more

empowering and inclusive if the word used is a Filipino term “kasama” given also that there were listeners who were not so familiar with all these “archaic” Meranaw terms. This variance keeps the chant dynamic and ensures that it captures the audience’s attention through changing rhythms and moods.

In this poetic chant of *bayok sa kandatu*, rhyme, alliteration, rhetorical questions, and code-switching work together to create a rhythmic, engaging, and thought-provoking chant for the audience and the Sultans, Datus and Baes. The rhyme provides structure and harmony, making the chant catchy and memorable. Alliteration adds a musical element and emphasizes the key actions or ideas within the chant. The rhetorical questions engage the listener on a deeper level, prompting reflection without expecting a direct answer, which helps to foster a sense of connection with the message. Finally, code-switching keeps the chant dynamic, providing variety and enhancing the impact of the chant’s progression.

These devices together enhance the power of the chant, making it more than just a series of words — they create a dynamic, resonant experience for the audience.

4.2 Lexical Level

The term lexis means vocabulary which is used in a language for particular purpose. It is the study in which single word or idiom is used in diverging linguistics context. Lexical levels can be ascertained through simile, metaphor, oxymoron, hyperbole, personification, etc.

Lexical Item	Meaning	Linguistic Feature
<i>...oba badn ka-ranoni o kaliwanag sa darum... (Line 7)</i>	...it might be the reason of empathy and lights in this village...	Metaphor
<i>...di pakaogaid sa rantangan a rangkono. (Line 16)</i>	...it cannot be like an entirety of emotions.	Simile
<i>da a rasay na da a ranon (Line 5)</i>	There is no burden without empathy.	Metaphor
<i>Itogalin so ranon ka paphanotol ako. (Line 6)</i>	Transfer the empathy as I story tell.	Personification
<i>Aya iran sangkadan sa arkat si Pasandalan (Line 22)</i>	Their role model in leadership is Pasandalan	Metaphor
<i>Kompas angka so ingud. (Line 40)</i>	See the core of your community.	Metaphor
<i>Taritib angka so tao. (Line 41)</i>	Grasp the customary law of the people.	Metaphor
<i>...piyaka papangkata o kandadatuan ka (Line 39)</i>	...the hierarchy of your jurisdiction.	Metaphor
<i>Ipapagundod akun a romba o ladan akun (Line 8)</i>	I gave my feelings and the depths of my soul.	Hyperbole

A. Simile

A simile is a figure of speech that compares two things using "like" or "as." In this chant, the simile appears in the second line of bayok *di pakaogaid sa rantangan a rangkono*. (it cannot be like the entirety of emotions). The line above uses the word "like" to compare the Onor’s ideas to the actual message of *bayok*. She explained through chant that her ideas are not enough to convey what is the entire status or concern of the audience and the context of the event itself.

B. Metaphor

A metaphor is a figure of speech that directly compares one thing to another without using "like" or "as." In this chant, we see dominant metaphors such as *...oba badn ka-ranoni o kaliwanag sa darum...* (might be the reason of empathy and lights in this village), *da a rasay na da a ranon* (there is no burden without empathy). *Aya iran sangkadan sa arkat si Pasandalan* (their role model in leadership is Pasandalan). *Kompas angka so ingud*. (See the core of your community). *Taritib angka so tao*. (Grasp the customary law of the people). *Piyaka papangkata o kandadatuan ka* (the hierarchy of your scope).

For instance, the first line contains a metaphor that compares the Onor’s empathy to the lights in the village which significantly provides hope for the audience that the leaders to be enthroned are full of empathy and will give light to the community. The light represents empowerment, and hope—qualities often attributed to strong leadership. This metaphor emphasizes that just as light endures darkness, so a leader should remain resilient and grounded, providing support and direction.

C. Personification

Personification is the attribution of human qualities or characteristics to non-human things. In this chant, personification is used in *Itogalin so ranon ka paphanotol ako*. (Transfer the empathy as I story tell). The word “transfer” gives human-like qualities

to the empathy that you can transfer like a fluid. The Meranaw term “itogalin” is used if you one is going to transfer a liquid like water. This implies that it possesses a source of life and emotional depth, just as a leader's heart is the source of compassion, empathy, and care. Additionally, the “*itogalin so ranon*” suggest that a leader's actions should consistently give to others and radiate warmth, much like how a river continuously flows and nourishes life.

D. Hyperbole

Hyperbole involves exaggerated statements that are not meant to be taken literally but are used to create emphasis, evoke strong emotions, or convey a sense of power or importance. In this *bayok*, we see hyperbole in *Ipapagundod akun a romba o ladan akun* (I gave my feelings and the depths of my soul). This is a classic example of hyperbole. The phrase “I gave my feelings and soul” is an exaggeration, emphasizing the power and impact of a leader in giving his all and best for its people. It magnifies its strength and influence beyond realistic limits. It also suggests that the image of leadership is something incredibly powerful and transformative. Hence, the hyperbole, when combined with the metaphor, simile, and personification, creates a comprehensive and compelling portrayal of leadership. It transforms the leader into a larger-than-life figure whose influence is limitless and capable of affecting dramatic change in the world. This exaggeration serves to elevate the leader's role and qualities, making the chant inspirational.

Through these literary devices, the chant not only defines what it means to be a leader but also amplifies the idea of leadership as something with vast, almost mythical power.

4.2 Prevalent Themes in Bayok sa Kandatu

The *bayok*, a traditional chant of Meranaw, often carries deep cultural significance, encapsulating not just artistic expression but values of leadership, identity, and harmony within a community. There were nine (9) themes found in *Bayok sa Kandatu* which represents the leader's role in uniting its diverse constituents for a common purpose. The leader's ability to harmonize the voices of the community reflects their leadership in fostering peace and cohesion with great concern in making family bonds stronger. Below are the prevalent themes present in the analysis of *bayok*.

Empathy

The primary theme revolves around *bayok sa kandatu* is empathy as the *bayok* is achieved through shared empathy. *Bayok* is often a medium for storytelling. Stories, according to Narrative Theory, have long been recognized as powerful tools for building empathy. *Bayok* tells stories of struggle, triumph, love, and loss, which are universal human experiences. Through these shared stories, listeners can connect emotionally with the listeners as emphasized by the *Onor* of the *bayok*, “...*da a rasay ranon'n ino?* (...*there is no burden without empathy*) fostering a deeper understanding of the what the context is about. The *Onor*, through *bayok* cultivates empathy, which is a vital issue in leadership gathering. From this, the *Onor* was able to connect with the audience.

Unity

The second theme found in *bayok* is unity as the *bayok* served as a vehicle for fostering unity and collective identity. The *Onor* through her *bayok* tries to bring individuals together as she emphasized... “*Na go siran dun malimod langowan a Mga Datu ago so langon o Bae magayon ayon siran*” (and they come in gathering all of the datu and all of the Bae, in unity”, thus, inspire collective interest among attendees, essential for the context of the event—*Bayok sa Kandatu*. According to Rodriguez (2022), understanding what the people stand for can also offer an understanding of how artists can present by their way of being and their art a powerful reminder of the just society they must live with. *Bayok*, like other forms of Filipino indigenous performance, plays a central role in preserving historical narratives and affirming cultural identities as stated in the *bayok*. Hence, *bayok* is a tool that bridges the past with the present, ensuring that traditional values and leadership structures are respected and carried forward.

The *Onor* through its *bayok* tries to enlighten the leader's *bangsa* or lineage that it is a collateral for someone holding a position of enormous responsibility. A leader must be wise in resolving the conflict. The *Onor* preaches on the necessity of self-sacrifice such as giving up one's comfort and even wealth, all for the common weal (Sarangani, 2010).

Kinship

The third theme is kinship as *bayok* fosters kinship and strong family ties. *Bayok* serves as a reminder of the interconnectedness of people within the community, emphasizing shared kinship and family ties. As stated in the excerpt “...*so tonganay na obangka sasambiya ko matag salakaw a tao...*” (*do not exchange your relatives to other strangers*) this allows individuals to feel connected to a broader network of familial relations, reinforcing interpersonal ties and fostering cooperation among families, clans, and even tribes. According to Velasco (2017), being close to the family is one characteristic that describes the Meranaw. Love for kind goes beyond everything, as a matter of fact, Meranaws are ‘clannish’. Whenever family feuds happen, and achievements and success are earned, they are there taking sides and very supportive (Saber and Madale, 1975).

The prevalent themes found in *bayok* were Empathy, Unity, and Kinship. *Bayok sa Kandatu* is a powerful form of cultural expression that goes beyond mere artistic performance. Interestingly, the context of *bayok* reflects leadership, which is not only about authority or power, but about fostering unity, empowerment, responsibilities and collective action. The *bayok*, as both a

cultural practice and a literary expression, embodies the values of leadership that are deeply connected to the well-being of the people, encouraging both personal and shared responsibility toward a common goal of peace and harmony, where the rhythm and tone of the *Onor* are central to guiding the community towards harmony.

Hence, this study is a testament to the significance of oral traditions that carries wisdom from the past, often encapsulating teachings, values, and stories passed through generations, more particularly honoring the ancestors who were role models of the present generation. Olko et al. (2022) emphasized the importance of retaining indigenous languages as a protective factor for both the indigenous speakers (i.e., chanter) and the audience. Indigenous languages not only serve as means of communication but also carry cultural knowledge and worldviews.

5. Conclusion

This study analyzed the linguistic elements found in *Bayok sa Kandatu* using a stylistic approach. It can be concluded that *bayok* is very rich with linguistic elements such as alliteration and metaphor. These exemplify the power of language to convey profound cultural values and ideas about leadership. By using alliteration, the chant reinforces rhythm and musicality, creating a sense of flow and unity that mirrors the steady, continuous influence of a great leader. By weaving these linguistic devices together, the chant becomes more than just a statement about leadership; it transforms into an evocative, artistic portrayal of the qualities that make a leader truly impactful. The metaphors provide vivid imagery that draws on nature's most enduring symbols of strength, while the alliteration adds a rhythmic, almost hypnotic quality to the chant, further reinforcing the chant's central message of steadfast, nurturing leadership.

Thus, the Meranaw chant not only celebrates leadership but elevates it, turning it into a timeless, powerful force that transcends the ordinary and touches upon the extraordinary, much like the elements of nature it draws from.

6. Recommendations

Future studies could investigate how chants like the *bayok* impact people in the community and how it contributes to a strong sense of community. They may also do comparative study of different types of *bayok* such as *bayok sa ka-khawing*, *bayok sa ka-khanduri*, etc. Lastly, inclusion of traditional chants and songs, such as *bayok*, at government events symbolizes a return to cultural roots and reinforces the stability of leadership; hence, a municipal ordinance may be crafted stating that a *bayok* event must be embedded once a year in one of the significant events of the municipality or city in Lanao del Sur. The researcher believes that there are many lessons embedded in the chant that could help in creating lasting peace, foster unity, and most importantly, it is not just an enrichment of cultural artifacts, but as living principles that can help shape better individuals and more harmonious communities.

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