

On the Relationships between Words and Melody in Palangihon-Umayamnon Bukidnon *Uwaging*

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Singers of indigenous, long narratives in the Philippines employ a number of tunes in setting the verses. In this paper, I examine the tunes that Datu Sinuhoy Kaligunan utilized in a version of an *uwaging* performance, lasting 11 hours, that I recorded last May. Most of these tunes are named according to: 1) the non-lexical formulaic expressions that constrain the tunes and 2) the geographic places where the tunes are perceived to originate.

A preliminary investigation into the completely recorded Pulangihon-Umajammen *uwaging* performance reveals that some tunes are related to the moods and actions of the narrative but they are not emblematic of the characters in the narrative as in the Palawan *tultul*. Yet, I argue that tunes are quite important in *uwaging* performance for they facilitate the regularization or the formulization of words into verse units and hence assume a crucial function as some kind of a mnemonic device for recalling the words. But like most documented epics in the Philippines elsewhere (e.g., *ullalim*, *gasumbi*, *hudhud*, *kata-kata*, *olaging*, *uwaeging*), Pulangihon-Umajamen Bukidnon *uwaging* is versified, with prosodic features fitting euphioniously with the tunes (e.g., the shapes of the tunes reinforce the sound parallelisms in the words). Moreover, like all the other epic songs of Bukidnon, the Pulangihon-Umajammen *uwaging* can be recited, *mantukaw*, minus the melody. This fact implies an important corollary that the internalization of *uwaging* prosody is acquired separately from the setting of words to tunes. In fact, singers internalize the prosody of the verses by reciting them from the memory of other singers' performances, attempting to intone them (with the formulaic tunes) only after they have mastered and memorized a fair amount of formulaic verses.

In my fieldwork, Datu Sinuhoy dictated a set of textual formulas/epithets called *unturan ne ngaran* (what singers call in Cebuano, the lingua franca of the place, as *tag-as nga pangalan* or "long names") to my linguistic assistant. This was done separately after the complete recording of the *uwaging*. This evidence suggests that Pulangihon-Umajamen Bukidnon *uwaging* performance entails an elaborate, pre-performance compositional activity.