

A Cultural Linguistic Analysis Of Surigaonun's

FOLKTALES OF HORROR

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Abstract

This paper documents the horror folktales among the cultural communities of Surigao del Sur in the Philippines, using Palmer's Cultural Linguistics theory, to reveal the prevailing themes and symbolism. Guided with the objectives, this study employs a qualitative research design particularly narratology and content analysis using the methods of fieldwork, recording of stories and interviews from the elders of the community who were knowledgeable of these stories. There were fourteen folktales collected from elders that were considered as units of analysis. The themes presented in the collected folktales are mystery, greediness, abuse of power, terror, destruction of the nature, wonder of nature, forgiveness and taking responsibility. Meanwhile, the symbols found are lightning symbolic to punishment, snake for betrayal and temptation, white lady for tragedy, church as a place for worship, fire for destruction, ship for journey and cemetery, rock for patience, pier for wide and abundance, pig for overindulgence, unsanitary conditions, greed, and laziness, folk healing for traditional healing practices, and sigbin for fierceness and danger. It is concluded that Surigaonun's horror folktales, as oral narratives, not only present the mythical background of the cultural community, but also their beliefs as a whole. It is considered to be an important part of Surigaonun customs. It is also a means of preserving this cultural community's edifying unity.

Keywords: folktales, horror, theme, symbolism

Introduction

Human experiences are reflected in literature. People enjoy reading and watching literature because it reflects who they are, what they do, and what they aspire to be. Literature may be of various genres, but it still reveals a great deal about people—their culture, beliefs, traditions, and even aspirations (Velez, 2021). One way of sharing these literature is through oral narratives. Similarly, the people folks in the province of Surigao del Sur enjoy telling spooky stories about the mysteries that occur within their community, particularly during full moons (Camar, 2016). Surigao del Sur, as a cultural community, is rich in folktales like horror stories and others. Some of these stories have been published, but the vast majority

of them have gone unrecorded. Many people believe the aforementioned Surigaonun horror folktales because they have become ingrained in their culture. This demonstrates what Silva and Tehrani (2016) stated in their study that stories were not directly translated from ancestors to relatives or heirs, but were translated to anyone for talking, socializing, trading, and adventure in life. As a result, determining where or from whom a story originated is somewhat impossible. Sims (2005), on the other hand, emphasized literary works such as folklore, stating that people must first pay attention to and experience them in order to fully understand them as part of their living traditions.

Folktales, according to Kitayama (2005) as cited by Salvaleon (2018), reflect

people and their cultures. He went on to say that folktales are stories that have been passed down through generations, thus they are valuable cultural products for examining historical issues concerning people including their problems, and how they can solve them (Kuli, 2012). This what prompted the researcher to investigate folktales with horror elements in the province of Surigao del Sur. Furthermore, folktales reflect the origins of the area based on various discoveries made by other authors. It is critical to pay attention to Surigaonon folktales in order for them to be preserved and enriched so that they can be used to share knowledge with people who can read them.

More than enriching and preserving culture, oral literature may benefit education as well. According to Walbert (2014), oral literature can significantly enhance the classroom experience. It broadens historical knowledge, improves research, writing, critical thinking, and interpersonal skills, connects students to the community, and makes all students feel included. According to Appell (2013), literature is a fundamental component and source of authentic texts in language curriculum. Using literature in a language classroom aids in the development of both basic language skills (i.e. reading, writing, listening, and speaking) and language areas (i.e. vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation, etc.), and is thus widely used in second or foreign language teaching and learning. However, when it comes to teaching English to Filipino students, the majority of the resources available are from other countries, specifically British or English literature. Omosule (2011) observes that due to cultural and linguistic differences, teachers and learners face challenges and difficulties when teaching English using literature in a foreign context. Cultural factors include geography, topography, climate, history, religion, and

so on. Racial difference refers to differences in attitudes and assumptions. Linguistic differences make following the meanings and usages of vocabularies in that work difficult.

The issue of how to reduce cultural, racial, and linguistic differences caused by the use of foreign literature prompts teachers to use literature set in the Philippines so that students have little or no difficulty relating to the literature presented in English class. It is even better if the students discuss literatures that are close to their native roots. Furthermore, very little research has been conducted in the field of oral literature among local cultural communities (Salvaleon, 2019 and Suazo and Macer, 2015).

Being aware of the problem and the importance of literature in cultural preservation prompted the study to collect and document the horror stories in order to develop a comprehensive understanding of Surigaonun life and prevent this well-developed linguistic art from being lost forever. Furthermore, the study is pertinent to discovering and documenting oral literature in recognition of its significance to the academic, social, economic, cultural, and political aspects of the Philippines.

Theoretical Background of the Study

Cultural linguistics is a branch of linguistics that has its roots in several different fields. It examines how language, culture, and conceptualization interact (Palmer 1996; Sharifian, 2011 and 2017). The Cultural Linguistics theory proposed by Gary Palmer served as the foundation of the study. The explicit examination of conceptualizations with a cultural foundation that are both encoded in and transmitted through aspects of human languages was done by Palmer (1996) in his book. The crucial emphasis of Cultural Linguistic on meaning as conceptualization owes much of its importance to cognitive linguistics, a field that it drew inspiration

from in the beginning. In a speech he made in 1994 emphasizing the connection between cultural knowledge and grammar, one of the pioneers in the area of cognitive linguistics, Ronald Langacker, may have coined the phrase "cultural linguistics" for the first time. He claimed that a return to cultural linguistics can be predicted by the emergence of cognitive linguistics. Cultural knowledge was acknowledged by cognitive linguistic theories as the basis for both the lexicon and key elements of grammar.

Palmer's proposal revolves around the notion that language is the play of verbal symbols rooted in imagery and that this imagery is culturally created. According to Palmer, discourse, semantics, grammar, figurative language, and even phonology are all governed by culturally defined images. Palmer's definition of imaging encompasses more than just visual images. He continued, "Phonemes are heard as verbal images heard in complex categories, words acquire meanings related to image schemes, scenes, and scenarios, clauses are image-based constructions, discourse emerges as a process guided by reflexive imagery of itself, and world view encompasses all of this" (Sharifian, 2017).

Purpose of the Study

This study aimed to instill the value of appreciation among cultural communities in Surigao del Sur by highlighting horror folktales. The study specifically (1) documented the horror stories of the province; and (2) discovered and analyzed the community's worldviews as manifested in the themes and symbolism of these stories.

Research Methodology

This study used narratology combined with content analysis, a qualitative research design, to document the horror folktales among the cultural communities in the province of Surigao del Sur. Significantly,

the roots of the words "narrative" and "story" may also be found in the original meaning of the verb "to know." People develop and preserve their knowledge of the world pretty literally through the story (Bruner, 2002 as cited in Suazo, 2015). Raphael (2010) defined narratology as the study of a narrative's structural elements. It is frequently used in research that focus on plot structures. According to Raphael's citation of Gerald Prince's works, the (structuralist-inspired) theory of narrative-narratology- studies the nature, form, and functioning of narrative (regardless of the medium of representation). More specifically, it investigates what all and only narratives have in common (at the level of story, narrating, and their relationships) as well as what distinguishes them, and it attempts to account for the ability to produce and understand them.

The study's key informants were community elders who were considered knowledgeable about the community's folktales. Fourteen horror folktales were narrated by key informants chosen for their specific knowledge of the stories.

In accordance with the Indigenous Peoples Act of 1997, free and prior informed consent was obtained. A written consent was obtained from various offices such as the National Commission on Ingenious People (NCIP) - Provincial Level, Mayors' Office and Barangay Captains' Office. This written consent included recording of videos and cassette tapes, as well as taking photographs.

The Surigaonun's horror folktales were documented using an MP3 recorder and a digital camera to take photographs and videos of the key informants. Furthermore, an interview was used to collect data on individuals' personal histories, perspectives, and experiences, especially when sensitive topics were discussed. The interview was crucial in delving deeper and revealing the authenticity of the stories. The language

barrier was not an issue during the interview because, both the researchers and the key informants were conversant in Surigaonun (local dialect in Surigao del Sur).

After recording the fourteen horror stories, decoding and translating followed. Only the themes, symbolism and cultural implications were the main focus of this paper's linguistic analysis. The interpretation was returned to the community after the cultural linguistic analyses of the collected stories were completed. The goal was to get their feedback and comments for the enhancement of the explanation and interpretation.

The researcher used the engagement method to establish credibility. As defined by Holloway and Wheeler (2002), Macnee and McCabe (2008), and Suazo (2015), credibility is the trust that can be placed in the truth of the research findings. This method ensured that the information gathered was accurate and straightforward. The researcher did not conduct the study during her first visit to the community, but she promised to build camaraderie and gain the community's trust. The researcher explained the purpose of the visit and asked for their willingness to participate in order to achieve such goals during the first visit. A courtesy call was made to the Barangay Captain to seek his approval for the study's conduct. This was followed by four additional visits to survey, collect, document, and interpret the information gathered.

Taking ethical considerations into account, the researcher followed certain

protocols to protect the rights and confidentiality of the participants. The study was also carried out at the convenience of the key informants. Furthermore, the researcher gained prominence by approaching the Brangay Captains in the communities. The researcher assured the community that her presence in the community was solely for the purpose of gathering relevant information on their folktales. In this way, the researcher demonstrated respect for people and the community, which necessitated a commitment to ensuring the autonomy of key informants and, where autonomy was compromised, to protecting people from exploitation of their vulnerability. All research participants' dignity must be respected. To avoid social and psychosocial risks and to maintain beneficence, the researcher ensured that the literature they shared with them was not altered.

Results and Discussion

In this study, fourteen Surigaonun's folktales of horror are collected and documented for analysis.

Surigaonun's Folktales of Horror

The horror folktales are transcribed from Surigaonun to English to provide a better understanding of these stories. Table 1 presents only the the and summaries of the documented folktales. It includes a transcription of the data in its original, unaltered form, followed by a free English translation.

Table 1. Surigaonun's Horror Stories

Folktales		Summaries
F	Tagbaliw	May isa ka tawo noduot sa suba na naghubo, nagdyagan-dyagan sa kakahujan, minkalit paglinti na tuda, inlintian an tawo mimpikit ija lawas sa

O L K T A L E S F O L K T A L E S	“Cursed”	<p>bato na porma ra isab na tawo. Ini ang taglaong na tagbaliw.</p> <p>Someone swims across the river completely naked. He runs joyfully through the woods. Suddenly, lightning strikes him, trapping him in the rock and forming his figure. He is said to be cursed.</p>
	An Buyawan na Kampana	<p>Hamok an gusto na makakuha nan kampana na buyawan pero dili nila makuha kay an kampana taglibutan na dako na hayas.</p>
	“The Golden Bell Tower”	<p>Many people wish to obtain the golden bell tower, but this appears to be impossible because it is guarded by a gigantic snake.</p>
	An Kapun-an nan Lambog	<p>May ila hinkit-an na babaje na nagtindog ila gayuj tagsuyong mintras nagduyog an sakjanan. Puti an baro nan babaje , abot sa lapa-lapa an kahaba an ila inkahadlukan kay wayay wayong na hikit-an an babaje. Taud-taud min-atubang an babaje sa kapun-an nan lambog human nawaya dajon. An ila istorya minsuyod sa kapun-an nan lambog an babaje kay amoy ila huy-anan.</p>
	“ The Lambog Tree”	<p>They notice a woman standing eerily in a white long gown. They are terrified because the woman does not have a face. After a while, the woman appears in front of the lambog tree and then vanishes. According to legend, the woman enters the lambog tree because it is where she dwells.</p>
	Sundon ang Panguyo	<p>Sa panahon nan Hapon, an mga tawo sa baryo Union may ila tinuuhan na an balaod” Follow the Leader “ (Sundon an panguyo), an ini na tinuuhan nan mga tiguyang kun unoy ilaong nan ila panguyo amoy sundon nan tanan. An permi himoon nan mga tiguyang kay an pagtinampayas sa suyod mismo nan simbahan.</p>
“Follow the Leader”	<p>During the Japanese occupation, residents in Barrio Union adhered to the "Follow the Leader" policy. According to legend, this practice requires everyone to strictly follow the leader's instructions. What the elders always do is commit dirty talks within the church.</p>	
Ayok sa Panikian	<p>May naghikog sa karaan na bayay natingaya sila kay nagdalit ra an siki sa sayog, ayok baja jadlo.</p>	

F O L K T A L	“Ghost in Panikian”	Someone hangs herself in the old house to commit suicide. People are scared because her feet do not touch the ground. They believe she is a ghost.
	An Inkantanto “The Spirit”	Aja ra kahuyog nalumos sa suba , mapatay sanan masakit kay taghilabtan nan dili parehas sa ato kay tagkuba nila an ila huy-anan, may makadungog na mga bores na amora nagbibong arang kabujong sila. Someone drowns in the rivers because he is cursed by the spirit for destroying their home. Suddenly, someone notices that there are voices celebrating.
	An Kabayo The Horse	Pag-abot nan panahon ni Mongmong ila tagbaklas jadton bato kay pagtoo nila na buyawan isab an didto naghagdan-hagdan sila. Pagka nabuslot na jadton bato na amora kabayo nolinti, panlinti koman nangahuyog sila. An suyod baja nan jadto mga bato ra isab. During the Mongmong period, they pile ladder and strip down boulders, believing it contains gold. When the boulder is shattered, it forms the shape of a horse. They are struck by lightning and fall. They were disappointed to discover that the boulder only contain rocks.
	Santilmo “Fireball”	Uno man jadto na may suga sa tumoy nan kan bagis nay a may lain na nanuyo kami ra man ni tatay Nonoy, matay taud-taud musutoy dajon an suga, mubukad pa kaw amo ra nan pajong kadako, nandyagan kami kay santilmo man baja jadto. Father Nonoy and I see a fireball while night fishing. It comes at us quickly and spreads out like an umbrella. They run out of fear when they realize it is Santilmo.
	An Inkantanto sa Malitangtang “The Spirit in Malitangtang”	Minlabay an pila ka adlaw, nahibuyong si nanay Pepay kay an ija bata na lyake nasunog an lawas na wayay kyajo na hik-it-an, waya isab kalapwahi sanan waya isab masunog an baro. Grabe an haja nan bata sa kasakit nan ija paso. Nanay Pepay is particularly concerned because her son's body has burned but there is no trace of fire, nor have his clothes been burned. His son sobs in agony.
	Malitangtang	Hikit-an sa lungsod nan Cantilan ini isa ka bukid na puno nan nagkalain-lain na lagku na kahoy

E S	“Malitangtang”	<p>sanang lagku na mga bato. Sa pinakatunga sanang sa pinakataas nan bukid makit-an an pinakadaku na Nunuk. Bagan paraiso kunu kun sudlun ini na lugar kay jauy imo hikit-an na kaliguan sa suyuud.</p> <p>Cantilan has a mountainous area surrounded by lush trees and large rocks. There is a mound at the mountain's peak. According to legend, the location appears to be a paradise with a beautiful fountain hidden away.</p>
	An Inkganto sa Pier nan Consuelo	<p>Naglaong an manyambay na tagkuha si Godella nan ingkanto bajad sa ila pagbujong-bujong. Pagkaduyom nagdamgo an ija nanay na makamata si Godella kun lukaton nila nan isa ka milyon ka pesos. Way mahilukat nan ija nanay ugsa namatay gayud si Godella na an ija lawas payot ra nan saging sa pagtan-aw nan manyambay.</p> <p>Godella, according to the healer, is taken by the spirits as payment for being extremely loud. In a nighttime dream, her mother discovers that Godella will only wake up if they pay a ransom of one million pesos. Because of their poverty, Godella dies, but her body transforms into a banana stem, as witnessed by the healer.</p>
	An Baboy na Wakwak	<p>Pagkanaog nija sa karabaw mindasmag dajon sa ija an dako sanang nagkalaga na mata nan baboy. Marajaw gani kay nakabantay sija ija dajon tagbuno nan tambang. Naigo an baboy sa abaga na kalit nawaya sa dugyum.</p> <p>When he gets out of his carabao, a huge boar with glazed eyes attacks him. Fortunately, he notices the boar and fights back with a dagger. The boar takes a blow to the shoulder. It vanishes into the darkness.</p>
	An Ajam ni Iyo Martino	<p>Si iyo Martino an manyambay sa amo lugar. Hamok an ija mga binuhi na mga mananap o ajam ni Iyo Martino. Sa kahamok nan ija mga tanom na makaon wayay mokawat kay mahadlok sa ija mga ajam. Pero may isa ka bata na inganahan gajod sa ija tanom na tubo na nabali sa may karsada na. Ija tagkuha sanang tagkaon. Pag-abot sa ila bayay, hurot na an tubo. Pagkataud-taud insakitan sija nan tijan, nagsuka sanang nagkalibang wayay pag-undang hangtod tagdaya sa hospital. Tagkuha</p>
F O L K		

T A L E S	“The Witchery of Tiyo Martino”	<p>dajon si iyo Martino , ija dajon tagtambajan an bata.</p> <p>Tiyo Martino is a healer in our neighborhood. He knows witchery and has tamed many fearsome animals. He grows a lot of fruits and vegetables, but no one dares to steal them because they are afraid of his witchcraft. However, one child enjoys his sugarcane that has already bent along the road. He eats this and then goes home. He eventually gets stomach pains, vomits, and suffers diarrhea until he is taken to the hospital. Then, Tiyo Martino has been called in to treat the child.</p>
	An Sigbin sa Suba nan Carac-an	<p>Hawag karajaw an suba nan Carac-an ugsa man kada duyom hamok an manuyuyay kay hamok man isda. Isa ka duyom, nanuyo si Pilot . Wayay ija iban kay taghilantan an ija manghod. Lajo na an ija panaw ya nasija makabatok pag-uli. □Natingaya sija kay kun mopanaw sija muduyog an batang. Tagpaspasan nija ija panaw hangtod apiki na sa ija an batang. Grabe an ija sawan kay an batang nahimo nan is aka hajop na way wayong hampan nagtuwad pasingod sa ija. Bitbit an petromaks, naghindyagan sija sa kahadlok.</p>
	“The Sigbin in the River of Carac-an”	<p>Many people go night fishing on the Carac-an River because the fish are abundant. Pilo goes fishing along the river by himself one night because his younger brother has a fever. He walks for a long time before realizing he is lost and unable to return home. He is perplexed because the timber follows him everywhere. He walks quickly until he is close to the timber. As the timber transforms into a faceless animal and approaches him upside down, he is terrified. In terror, he flees, carrying the petromax with him.</p>

Themes and Symbolism of the Surigaonun’s Horror Stories

The following data present the analysis of the themes and symbolism underlying each documented horror story. Table 2 presents the summary of the identified themes and symbolism.

The theme of the folktale, "Cursed" is "mystery," represented by the symbolism of "lightning", which is used to

punish in the story. A bolt of lightning is a true natural force. Because of its raw power and the fact that it comes from the sky, it is frequently associated with the gods' wrath. As such, it can represent punishment. Many people believe that lightning is a punishment from the Gods for something humans wrongdoings. It denotes a bad omen, a sign that the gods are angry with them and are punishing them (Chris, 2021).

Lightning can also represent sudden illumination, destruction, negativity, and loss of ignorance. Even in ancient times, people believed that lightning was a way for God to punish people on Earth for wrongdoing. And so the many myths and stories about lightning began to emerge. It all started with the Ancient Greeks, who believe that Zeus controls lightning, giving

him ultimate power over the other gods on Olympus. He is the Greeks' highest god, and lightning is his symbol (Chris, 2021). This belief can still be found today. Many people are still afraid of lightning and believe it comes from God. It's a natural force that can't be stopped, and it destroys everything in its path.

Folktales		Themes	Themes and Its Intended Meanings
F O L K T A L E S	Cursed	Mystery	Lightning symbolizes punishment
	The Golden Bell Tower	Greediness	Snake symbolizes betrayal and temptation
	The Balete Tree	Mystery	White Lady symbolizes tragedy
	Follow the Leader	Abuse of Power	Church symbolizes place for worship where people pray in times of problems
	Ghost in Panikian	Terror	Pigs for unsanitary conditions, greed, and laziness
	The Spirits	Destruction of the Nature	Ship symbolizes journey
	The Horse	Greediness	Rock symbolizes patience
	Fireball	Mystery	Fire symbolizes courageousness
	The Spirits in Malitangtang	Mystery	Sweat symbolizes trembling with fear,
	Malitangtang	Wonder of Nature	Ship represents cemetery
	The Spirits in the Pier of Consuelo	Believing in Mysteries	Pier represents a wide and abundance
	The Witched Boar	Terror	Pig symbolizes overindulgence
	The Witchery of Tiyo Martino	Forgiveness	Folk Healing ” symbolizes traditional healing practices
The Sigbin in the River of Carac-an	Being Responsible	Sigbin symbolizes fierceness, scary and danger	

Table 2. Themes and Symbolism of the Surigaonun’s Horror Stories

The theme of "greediness" is present in the story "**The Golden Bell Tower**," as many people want to obtain the golden bell even if it means putting their lives in danger because of a large snake watching over it. Today, there is no news of the discovery of a gold bell; instead, the mining industry is focused on the search for treasures hidden during the Japanese era, known as the Yamashita Treasure. Furthermore, the story contains a "snake" symbolism that

suggests greed and death. In the Book of Genesis, the Snake represents the Devil, who signifies betrayal and temptation. According to the story, it also crawls on legs, a privilege the creature loses as punishment for tempting Eve to eat the apple from the Tree of Knowledge and thus betraying the order God created in the Garden of Eden. This symbolism is still relevant today.

The horror folktale, "**The Balete Tress**" has the theme "mysteries" because of a faceless woman wearing a long white dress who entered the Balete tree and then vanished like a bubble. The tale depicts a mythical creature known as the "white lady," which symbolizes tragedy. A White Lady is a female ghost or apparition who is frequently seen in rural areas and is linked to tragedy. The most common story associated with this legend is that of a woman who commits suicide after being betrayed by her husband or fiancé (Duranti, 2022). In some myths, women murder their own children and then commit suicide after being betrayed by their spouse. These apparitions are frequently thought to be portents of death (Duranti, 2022).

The theme of the horror story "**Follow the Leader**" is "Abuse of Power," because their leader uses his subjects' weakness and ignorance to commit indecent and rude behavior toward them. The leader also takes advantage of his power to order his followers to do whatever he wants. Many people in power want to be followed, according to the news we hear and watch. No one will defy his orders because he is the only one who has complete control over everything.

The theme of "destruction of nature" is present in the horror folktale "**The Spirits**," because people destroyed the spirits' habitat, causing anyone who bathes in the river to become ill and die. In the story, a "ship" represents the journey of the spirits to their abode. Every night, residents in that area reported hearing happy voices. That location is close to Malitangtang, which is thought to be a path to the spirit's abode. Many civilizations have used the image of a ship on headstones for centuries. It is a romantic symbol, a journey symbol, but also a symbol of safety and refuge (Duranti, 2022).

In the horror story "**Ghost in Panikian**," the theme of "terror" is explored because it is frightening to hear

about someone who commits suicide with his foot untouched the floor and later discovers that it is a ghost. "Pigs" are used in the story to represent unsanitary conditions, greed, and laziness. They have various culturally bound symbolism. Pigs are frequently used as insults, they may represent filth, tactlessness, excess, or gluttony in Western culture. Pigs, on the other hand, are associated with much more positive meanings in many cultures, such as Asian. The pig deserves more recognition for being intelligent, sociable, and adorable (Clifford, 2022).

The story "**The Horse**" has the theme of "greediness". Because of human desire and greediness to become rich, they crush the rocks believing they contain gold. They all fell with nothing but crushed stone as a result of human greed. The story depicts "rock" to signify patience. Some of the tallest and biggest natural structures in this world are made up of rocks. Many have tried to climb them and fail. Rocks symbolize patience, because of the patience required to endure such a journey. They are the perfect symbol to remind people that any accomplishment takes time and patience, hard-work, and dedication to completing the goals.

In the theme of "mystery" is conveyed in the story "**Fireball**". This is because it features a mystified story about the father and son witness a ball of fire the size of an umbrella that suddenly soars in the sky and would fell down and spread the fire. People use to believe that if a person died from a stab wound and his blood fell to the ground, it would transform into a santilmo, a burning soul with no face. According to the elders, this soul does not rest in its place, so it returns in the form of a person with no face and flames on the body. When a santilmo attacks someone, the elders advise to sweep it with a broom to avoid the curse that comes with it. The story depicts "fire," which literally and directly represents deconstruction because

anything in contact with fire can be destroyed. The fireball, according to the story, brings curses and bad omens to anyone who comes into direct contact with it.

In the horror story "**The Inkantosa Malitangtang**" with the theme "mystery," to describe a seemingly impossible incident about the burnt body of Mother Pepay's son which is believed to have been abducted by spirits in exchange of a sack of gold. Due to Mother Pepay's refusal, her youngest son is punished and eventually died of no illness, and whose lifeless body turns into banana stem. The spirit world is usually found underground or in a magical other dimension. Legend says that when one is in the realm of spirits, a night can be equal to a lifetime in the human world, so extra caution is required. The "sweat" the size of a fist represents fearful trembling. What happened to mother Pepay's youngest son, who is sweating beads and whining, is not due to any illness, according to doctors, yet he dies soon after because he is seized by spirits.

In the horror story "**Malitangtang**" with the theme "wonder of nature," because the story vividly features the beauty of a hidden fountain comparable to paradise. Legend has it that in the old days, the city of Cantilan was surrounded by large mountains and lush trees where many other elements such as fairies and spirits who are nature's guardians. The beauty of the said location, according to the elders, makes it resemble a paradise. Many people also claim that once captured by the spirits, the joy is limitless, and the food is abundant but tasteless and nearly black in color. It is said that if one asked for salt, he/she will be returned to the human world (Yason, 2012). The "ship" is used to represent a cemetery in the story because, according to the elders, there was a ship that sank in the past and many people died inside. Many wonders occurred in that

place, because they heard horrible cries and saw many living fairies, ghosts, evil spirits, goblins, capers, and others. The healer stated that this is a spirits' home, thus no one should take anything from Malitangtat.

The folktale "**The Inkantosa in the Pier of Consuelo**" also tackles the same theme about "mystery". The story describes the death of a young woman named Godella with her friends who are making noise at noon from the pier of Consuelo. According to the healer, Godella's body is replaced by a banana tree as compensation for disturbing into the spirits' resting place. Spirits are said to live in trees like balete and should not be disturbed by humans. According to the elders, a ritual asking permission should be obtained offered when visiting remote areas or the woods, especially between the hours of twelve noon and six o'clock at night because spirits wander unseen around these times (Camar, 2016). The story uses "pier" to symbolize wide, spacious and abundance. Like the pier located in Consuelo which is full of wonder; the woods are very lush and full of mystery which according to elders causes the death of a young woman from the pier.

Similarly, the horror story "**The Witched Boar**" features the theme of "terror" as it narrates an incident where aswang roams in remote areas like barangay of Carac-an. The aswang may disguise as a pig, a cat, or other animals. In the story, a boar with glaring eyes nearly eats the farmer alive. Fortunately, he easily stabs it with a dagger. The farmer believes the boar is an aswang, so when he gets home, he burns the dagger and later learns that a woman has died from a shoulder wound. After which, no aswang has been wandering around that area. This was featured on Noli de Castro's show Magandang Gabi Bayan, which aired on October 31, 2014. Someone confessed to being an aswang by reciting a latin chant/spell passed down from his deceased

grandfather. The story uses "pig" as a symbol of overindulgence. The aswang in the story chooses to disguise as pig which is associated with people who have violent cravings.

The horror story "**The Witchery of Tiyo Martino**" has the theme of "forgiveness". Despite the wrongdoing committed by the boy against Tiyo Martino, the later chooses forgiveness over hatred, and compassion over grudge. It is shown as he extends his help to nurse the child's serious illness. The story depicts "folk healing" which represents traditional healing practices based on cultural beliefs about body physiology and health maintenance. It promotes a better understanding of health and disease, healthcare systems, and biocultural adaptation by reflecting indigenous heritage. To practice folk healing, healers combine their skills and the gift of healing bestowed upon them by the Supreme Being (Rondilla, et al, 2021).

Finally, the horror story "**The Sigbin in the River of Carac-an**" with the theme of "being responsible" because even though it is dangerous to go night fishing alone and there is a threat of tragedy, Pilo still ignores the danger in order to provide for his family. The story uses "sigbin" to symbolize fierceness and danger. Still in Jessica Soho, on August 20, 2018, GMA Public Affairs featured the news of a sigbin in Kauswagan, Cagayan de Oro, where all twenty-one of their pet chickens died without a trace of blood; and ten of his pet chickens died the next day. The owner claimed that sigbin attacked his pets, and many people believed there was a sigbin in their neighborhood. In Philippine mythology, the Sigbin or Sigben is a creature that appears at night to suck the blood of victims from their shadows. It is said to walk backwards with its head lowered between its hind legs and to be invisible to other creatures, particularly humans. It looks like a hornless goat but

has very large ears that can be clapped like hands and a long, flexible tail that can be used as a whip. The Sigbin is said to have a foul odor. During Holy Week, it is said to emerge from its lair, looking for children to kill for their hearts, which it fashions into amulets (Eugenio, 2007). According to legend, there are Sigbinan families whose members have the power to command these creatures and are said to keep the Sigbin in clay jars. They are said to be kept as pets by the Aswang, along with another mythical creature, a bird known as the Wak Wak. There is speculation that the legend is based on sightings of an actual animal species that is rarely seen; the animal species may be related to the kangaroo based on the description of the Sigbin in popular literature (Yason, 2012).

The horror folktales as oral narratives of the Surigaonuns do not only present the mythical background of the cultural community but their beliefs as a whole. It is considered as the revered part of the Surigaonun customs. It is also a way of preserving the edifying unison of this cultural community. These horror folktales have remarkably similar themes. The themes that emerged was that it are natural for people, particularly the elderly, to believe in these stories because they have personal experience with them. It is indeed regrettable to consider that today's youth only laugh at these stories because they are no longer popular in their generation. It has given way to gadgets and other distractions among today's youth.

Conclusions and Recommendations

This paper revolved around the concept that language mirrors a culture and the folktales among the cultural communities of Surigao del Sur as a linguistic and communicative act, is a product and reflection of that culture – the ideals, beliefs, worldviews and traditions of the people folks in Surigao del Sur. The analysis and interpretation derived from the data in this study are intended to

provide readers with a deeper understanding of the Surigaonun's unique cultural beliefs – the horror folktales. This understanding shall be a springboard to the efforts in promoting awareness and appreciation of the cultural heritage, and hopefully of its preservation for posterity. The themes presented in this paper are mystery, greediness, abuse of power, terror, destruction of the nature, wonder of nature, forgiveness and taking responsibility. Meanwhile, the symbols found in the fourteen folktales are lightning symbolic to punishment, snake for betrayal and temptation, white lady for tragedy, church as a place for worship, fire for destruction, ship for journey and cemetery, rock for patience, pier for wide and abundance, pig for overindulgence, unsanitary conditions, greed, and laziness, folk healing for traditional healing practices, and sigbin for fierceness and danger.

From the findings collected in the analysis of the study, it is recommended that further research should be conducted on the literature of the Surigaonuns, not just on the folktales but to include their other oral literature such as, riddles, songs, poems, myths, etc. Second, conduct more studies regarding to the oral literature if the province, not just studying their folktales and culture but also their language variations. Lastly, language enthusiast supports more studies to stabilize the firmness of Language in Culture field to weight the importance of language not only focus on one tribe but also on the other tribe found in CARAGA Region.

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