

## **STUDENTS' UNDERSTANDING ON PROVERB: A STUDY OF LEARNING IN SCHOOL**

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### **Abstract**

A proverb which can be maxim, parable, fame, contains deep implicit meanings. The meaning contains in proverb implies values to become life guidance. The purpose of this study was to determine the ability of students to understand proverbs and students' perceptions on proverb learning. Descriptive method was used in this study. The variables were ability to understand proverbs and perceptions on proverb learning. The research respondents were 59 students of Junior high school of Sriwaja Negara Palembang. Test and questionnaires were used in this study. The results showed that the average score of the students' comprehension tests was 41.53. There were four types of percentage levels of respondents' understanding, which were very good, sufficient, poor, and very poor. Students' perceptions of knowledge and learning of proverbs in schools, proverb knowledge, proverbial teaching material, and proverb learning strategies were quite adequate. Therefore, it is needed to promote proverb learning in schools.

**Keywords:** Understanding, proverb, learning.

### **1. Introduction**

One type of old literature which is currently lacking of interest, especially young people, is a proverb. Proverbs contain unique expressions that contain the values of life. Proverbs in expressions are expressed indirectly by the addressee. To understand its meaning we need cultural knowledge that surrounds it. This condition causes young people or students to be less interested in proverbs because it is difficult to understand clearly.

In school the proverbs learning is not explicit, but this material is implied in literary learning, such as in short story, novels, poetry, and fairy tales. These material are rarely touched by the teacher. Though many proverbs contain values of wisdom or character values. In the proverb there are elements of character such as tolerance, honesty, patience, perseverance, not arrogant, polite. Therefore, proverbs need to be studied to find out about students' knowledge and understanding.

Proverbs are expressions in the form of phrases or sentences that describe a particular purpose. Proverbs can be a saying, cheat, and parable. The proverb is a proverb that contains advice or teachings. Parables are proverbs that contain advice that uses comparative expressions. Pemeo is a type of proverb that contains the slogan for life.

In daily life proverbs are very important. Proverbs are very useful in everyday life. This because the proverb is used to give advice, praise, innuendo, and diplomacy. In addition, the proverb is used to clarify writing and conversation, to convey a sense of politeness in acting speech so that it can be a guideline in language (Annisa, 2017).

Proverbs are closely related to character education. The meaning expressed in proverbs reflect the value of character (Kustina, 2014). The proverb “going to hill is the same incline as well as going to valley is the same decline” has the value of “solidarity” character. The meaning of that proverb is someone who always be there, both in pleasure and in distress. We should always help each other, or always care.

Character building in schools is highly encouraged nowadays. From elementary to college, character building is needed. Character building mandated in the curriculum is guided by the character that comes from thought, heart, sports/kinesthetic, taste and intention (Samani & Harriyanto, 2012). With character building that pays attention to the four processes, it is expected that the graduates who are not only intelligent but also have personality. If this is realized, the goal of national education to form a complete human being can be achieved.

Proverb learning needs to be done optimally. Sunarni (2017) explained that today the students rarely understand proverbs. This phenomenon is caused by the proverbs only inserted in the subject or certain subjects. The parents also do not use proverbs in daily life. Such symptoms will have the effect of losing the knowledge of proverbs among students. The loss of understanding of the proverb will have an impact on the formation of student character.

In connection with the description above, it is necessary to study the proverb. The reluctance cause to learn proverbs needs to be examined. The problem in this study is how the ability of students to understand proverbs and how students perceive toward proverb learning.

## 2. Literature Review

Proverbs usually consist of short, dense sentences, which are expressions of comparison, parables and contain the principle of life (Wijaya & Rohmadi, 2011 p. 98). A proverb is an old oral literature that contains a figurative expression that contains cultural or character values. There are various types of proverbs namely proverb, thimbles, imagery, parables. In these proverbs there are values that need to be explored.

Anton and Marwati (2015) investigate phrases in Bajo culture. The study concluded that there is a proverb expression that contains educational value in expressions spoken in Bajo marriage customs. In addition, another study was conducted by Rambitan and Mandolang (2014). They studied about the structure and function of proverbs in the Momondow language. They concluded that there are a cultural values in the proverb of the Momondow language namely cooperation, hard work, exemplary, patience, diligence and faith. The proverb structure in Momondow consists of phrases, clauses, and sentences.

Some previous studies such as Utari, et al. (2016) stated that proverbs need to be taught to students. Through proverbs noble values, character could be instilled. The planting of values is important to realize Indonesia’s human development with character. Moreover, according to him now graduates from both the secondary and university levels are only

knowledgeable but weak in personality. This is also reinforced by the opinion of Adhani (2016) which states that in proverbs contain advice and expressions contain the slogan of life. In addition, the proverb also contains the value of character education, such as religious, honest, tough, caring, creative, communicative, and nationalist.

### 3. Research Method

The research method was descriptive. The variable of this research was the perception of proverbs and the ability to understand proverbs. The research respondents were 60 students of Junior High School Sriyaya Negara Palembang. However, only 59 people attended on the data collection. The following table describes the research respondents.

**Table 1.** Research respondents.

Class	Total
VIII.A	28
VIII.B	31

The research instrument used the proverb comprehension test and questionnaire. The test of the ability to understand proverbs consists of 20 questions in the form of matchmaking. The questionnaire contains 15 questions about students' perceptions of knowledge and attitudes towards proverb learning. Data analysis techniques were carried out by the following steps: (1) tabulating the test result about the ability to understand proverbs and questionnaires, (2) analyzing the test result about the ability to understand proverbs by reviewing each sub group of character education elements, (3) analyzing questionnaire result about student perceptions towards language learning, (4) interpreting data results, and (5) concluding data.

### 4. Results and Discussion

Based on the results of data analysis on test of ability to understand proverbs, the average score was 41.53. When viewed from the average score obtained the ability to understand proverbs was relatively low. However, there were differences when they were analyzed by using a percentage of each item. There was a very good percentage, good, enough, and less. To find out more clearly about the ability to understand proverbs, see Table 2 below.

**Table 2.** Percentage of ability to understand proverbs.

Item	Proverbs	Character value	The number of students	Percentage
1	The golden rain in the land of people, it is better to rain stones in their own country 'Hujan emas di negeri orang, hujan batu di negeri sendiri'	love the country	56	94.99
2	Above the sky there is another sky 'Di atas langit masih ada langit'	vanity	43	72.88
3	There are no tigers who eat their children 'Tak ada macan yang makan anaknya'	affection	42	71.18
4	Dead tiger leaves striped, elephant dies leaving ivory 'Harimau mati meninggalkan belang, gajah mati meninggalkan gading'	morality	36	61.01
	The peg is bigger than the pole 'Besar pasak daripada tiang'	frugality	35	59.33

6	You eat the jackfruit, but iam the one who get the sap ' <i>Orang makan nangka, awak kena getahnya</i> '	alertness	28	47.45
7	When the sweetness is gone, the pulp is thrown out ' <i>Habis manis sepah dibuang</i> '	morality	28	47.45
8	An empty barrel sounds loud ' <i>Tong kosong nyaring bunyinya</i> '	pride	25	42.37
9	Another is another grasshopper, another hole in the fish ' <i>Lain padang lain belalang, lain lubuk lain ikannya</i> '	tolerance	24	40.67
10	Provide an umbrella before it rains ' <i>Sedia payung sebelum hujan</i> '	preparedness for everything'	24	40.67
11	Like eating simalakama fruit ' <i>Bagai makan buah simalakama</i> '	firmness	23	38.98
12	There are shrimps behind the stone ' <i>Ada udang dibalik batu</i> '	vigilance and honesty	22	37.28
13	There is no ivory that is not cracked ' <i>Tak ada gading yang tak retak</i> '	forgiveness	21	35.59
14	Like the science of rice, more ducked ' <i>Bagai ilmu padi makin berisi makin merunduk</i> '	humility	16	27.11
15	Winning becomes losing charcoal to ashes ' <i>Menang jadi arang kalah jadi abu</i> '	self-control	12	20.33
16	To learn in half-hearted, like a flower fail to blossom ' <i>Berguru kepalang ajar, bagai bunga kembang tak jadi</i> '	persistence	9	15.25
17	Quick hand light fee ' <i>Cepat kaki ringan tangan</i> '	mutual help	8	13.55
18	Because of one drop of indigo, the milk is damaged ' <i>Karena nila setitik rusak susu sebelangga</i> '	circumspection	8	13.55
19	Smart at oil water ' <i>Pandai berminyak air</i> '	honesty	5	8.47
20	Like the back longing for the moon ' <i>Bagai punggung merindukan bulan</i> '	elbow grease	4	06.77

Based on Table 2 above it can be seen that the ability of students to understand proverbs varied. The percentage of 86-100% classified as very good, 76-85% classified as good, 56-74% classified as sufficient, 10-55% classified as poor understanding (Nurgiyantoro, 2011, p. 253). Referring to the opinion of Nurgiyantoro, the acquisition of 94.99% for item 1 or proverb the golden rain in the land of people, it is better to rain stones in their own country '*hujan emas di negeri orang, hujan batu di negeri sendiri*' is quite good. Almost all respondents can understand the character values contain in the proverb, namely love of the homeland. Based on the results of the analysis that the vocabulary or choice of words contain in the proverb is still easily understood by respondents. The choice of words does not contain connotations. In terms of the proverb pattern there are jokes that consist of 10 words, 5 words at the beginning and 5 words at the end with the repetition of words. In addition, the use of repetition of words in one suggestion makes it easy to understand (Adhani, 2016, p. 102).

In addition, there are 4 proverb items that are classified as sufficient (59.33%-72.88%). The first is the proverbs above the sky there is another sky '*di atas langit masih ada langit*' or item 2. In this proverb, 43 respondents (72.88%) were able to understand the character value of arrogance. In this proverb, the value of the character was not to be an arrogant. Other proverbs which were also quite sufficient were item 3 or the proverb there was no tiger who eats its own cubs '*tak ada macan yang makan anaknya*'. This proverb means compassion and was understood by 42 respondents (71.18%). The next proverb (item 4) was the dead tiger striped leaves, elephant dies leaving ivory '*harimau mati meninggalkan*

*belang, gajah mati meninggalkan gading*'. There were 36 respondents (61.01%) who answered that the character value of the proverb was morality. The moral message in the proverb was that good deeds or someone's language were always remembered. The fifth proverb was the peg is bigger than the pole *'besar pasak daripada tiang*'. The meaning of this proverb was frugality. There were 35 respondents (59.33%) who understood it.

Then, there were 13 proverbs which classified as poor understanding (13.55%-47.45%). Of that number, the proverb you eat the jackfruit, but the other who get the sap *'orang makan nangka, awak kena getahnya*' or item 6 was answered by 28 respondents (47.45%) correctly. The moral message in the proverb was that awareness must be given to someone. The next proverb was when the sweetness is gone, the pulp is thrown out *'habis manis sepah dibuang*' or item 7. There were 28 respondents (47.54%) who comprehended the proverb. The moral message was bad attitude at thanking someone. The next item was the empty barrel sounds loud *'tong kosong nyaring bunyinya*' (item 8) which contains the character value of snobbery. There were 25 respondents (42.37%) who answered correctly. Therefore, it was necessary to be careful or alert to someone who was talkative (arrogant) but the content of the conversation was not useful.

Proverbs that were classified as poor understanding were also in item 9 or another proverb was another grasshoppers, another hole in the fish *'lain padang lain belalangnya, lain lubuk lain pula ikannya*'. In that proverb the expected character value was the students were able to place themselves in accordance with the environment where they were and be tolerant of other cultures. Students' understanding of that proverb reached 40.67% or 24 respondents. The same number of respondents 24 people (40.67%) was also found on item 10 or the proverb provide umbrella before it rains *'sedia payung sebelum hujan*'. Proverbs imply the value of readiness for everything that will be done. There is also an understanding of proverbs of 23 respondents who are poor (38.98%), namely item 11 or the proverb like eating simalakama fruit *'bagai makan buah simalakama*'. Even though the character they contain is quite important, namely a firm attitude in making decisions, don't be indecisive.

Besides the proverbs above, there were also the following proverbs which were classified as poor. In item 12 or the proverb there are shrimp behind the stone *'ada udang di balik batu*', only 22 respondents (37.28%) answered correctly. The character value was the awareness of someone's behavior that would harm us. Therefore, it is also recommended that honesty in speaking and acting be necessary. The proverb there is no ivory that is not cracked *'tak ada gading yang tak retak*' (item 13) has a character value that no human being is perfect. Therefore, it is necessary to instill forgiveness values for mistakes made by someone. Understanding of these proverbs was obtained from 21 respondents (35.59%). Another proverb, like the rice, more value more ducked *'bagai ilmu pada makin berisi makin merunduk*'. The value contained in this proverb was humility (honesty). This proverb was only comprehended by 16 respondents (27.11%).

Understanding of less than 12 respondents or 20.13% found in the proverb the winner is charcoal the loser is ashes *'menang jadi arang kalah menjadi abu*'. The character values contain in this proverb are self-control and not to do vain actions. The next proverb was like to learn in half-hearted *'berguru kepalang ajar, bagai bunga kembang tak jadi*'. The character value was persistence in achieving ideals or seeking knowledge. For this proverb, only 9 respondents (15.25%) understood. In the proverb the quick hand light free *'cepat kaki ringan tangan*' is only understood by 8 respondents (13.55%). The value of the character was togetherness in doing something. Insufficient understanding (13.55%) was also included in the proverb because of one drop of indigo, the milk is damaged *'karena nila setitik rusak susu sebelanga*'. The character values contain in this proverb were careful when working or acting.

Besides, there was also a very poor understanding or <10.00%. The proverb on item 19 was smart at oil water '*pandai berminyak air*'. The value of the character is to be careful about someone who speaks dishonestly. In other words, honesty needs in everyday life so that our lives are safe. Against this proverb, only 5 respondents (8.47%) answered correctly. Another proverb is found in item 20, which is like the back longing for the moon '*bagai pungguk merindukan bulan*'. Its character value was the principle of hard work in achieving goals and not just dreaming. Respondents who understood the proverbs were very low (6.77%).

In addition to proverb comprehension ability data, questionnaire data analysis was also conducted to determine respondents' perceptions on proverb learning in schools. Data analysis of students' perceptions of knowledge and proverb learning in schools is divided into three components, namely knowledge of proverbs, proverb teaching, and proverb learning strategies. In the first point, students' knowledge of proverbs could be concluded that 59.65% population tend to like proverbs. A low percentage was found in the knowledge component, 39.41% of the students was happy if people use the proverb in greeting. So, the students didn't like people who use proverbs in speaking.

Students' perceptions of proverbial learning material was 62.91%. They argue that the proverb material needs to be started from the elementary school level. Proverbs can help to improve character education. In addition, proverbs can be done in reading, writing, listening and speaking skills. Proverbial learning material should be carried out in language activities. However, there were opinions among the students which state that they were happy if the proverbial teaching material was designed in a separate subject.

The average percentage of students' perceptions on proverb learning strategies was 70%. Proverb learning can be done in literary learning. Learning strategies can be done with the game. The learning strategies in teaching proverbs also can be done through storytelling using interesting media.

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Based on the result of this study it can be stated that the low level of students' proverbs understanding is due to ignorance of proverbs. This is due to a poor of introduction to proverbs. Proverbs are not taught from the lower class. Therefore, it is necessary to try learning design that introduces proverbs.

Proverb learning could be done by integrating writing skills. The learning process in the classroom was low, for example when writing smooth rough. They were asked to write a proverb. After writing, the teacher explained the meaning or through pictorial games like the research conducted by Ridzuan (2018). The results of his research proved that proverb learning by using the Pisatum (permanence through images) could motivate and improve the ability to understand proverbs. The study conducted by Octavianus (2013, p. 73) was also interesting. According to him, early childhood learning process of character education could be done through acquisition. The learning process of character education such as discipline, tolerance, honesty, patience needs to be done through real examples. The process of giving examples should be done both inside and outside environment. In the lower level school (elementary school), the teacher would mix the proverbs with rough-soft writing skills. The students were asked to write simple proverbs. Or in this learning, there would

be a game, like providing pictures and after that the students were asked to find statements related to the pictures.

In addition, the learning process of character learning could be done through audio-visual media (film). Students are introduced to character education through film media which contain a lot of character education. This is like what Nugrahani (2019) did. Character education enables also be done through literary learning, such as fairy tales and novels. The study of character value analysis in novels had been carried out by Utari et al. (2016). The research that he conducted was an analysis of character education through proverbs in Sutan Sati's *Sengsara Membawa Nikmat* novel. In literary learning it was not always necessary to analyze intrinsic elements, such as plots, themes, and backgrounds. Students can be directed to analyze character education through the use of speech.

## 5. Conclusion

Based on the results of the analysis it can be concluded that the ability of students' understanding of proverbs was low. From 20 items given, there were 4 levels of mastery of the comprehension of proverbs, namely 1 piece of proverb classified as very good, 4 proverbs classified as sufficient, 13 proverbs classified as poor, 2 proverbs classified as very poor. There were differences in mastery of proverbs caused by knowledge, both structure or pattern and meaning of the respondents. In addition, based on the results of the questionnaire, the lack of introduction of proverbs in schools was one of the factors causing the low mastery of respondents.

Some proverb learning strategies can be done by combining them in literary learning. One step is to analyze the use of proverbs in fairy tales, novels, short stories, dramas. In addition, proverb learning can be integrated into language skills, such as writing, reading.

Proverbs are one of the cultural heritages that need to be preserved. There are a lot of character elements contained in proverbs. The noble values in our culture contain in proverbs. Values of character such as love of the homeland, love, frugality, tolerance, honesty, determination, humility, caring can be instilled through proverbs. Therefore, proverbs need to be applied in language learning from elementary to college. This is due to the robustness of students' character which can be a shield to face globalization.

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