



THE SUITABILITY OF JAVANESE PROVERBS FOR THE PRESENT SOCIETY ACCORDING TO THE PERCEPTION OF THE JAVANESE YOUNG PEOPLE

Nurhayati

Diponegoro University

INTRODUCTION

Human beings were born not in emptiness but in a certain cultural setting of a society. They continuously use their mind to think, to learn, and to act in order to survive. So, they perform development from a generation to the next generation. They also use their mind to control their emotion in order to perform the relationship with other people or with nature. All of those activities create what people call culture.

It is very difficult to make a limitation to define the concept of culture. However, there are some definitions of culture that are frequently cited by researchers. One of them is defined by Kroeber and Kluckhohn (1952). According to them,

“Culture consists of patterns, explicit and implicit, of and for behavior acquired and transmitted by symbols, constituting the distinctive achievements of human groups, including their embodiments in artifacts; the essential core of culture consists of traditional (i.e. historically derived and selected) ideas and especially their attached values; culture systems may, on the one hand, be considered as products of action, on the other as conditioning elements of further action” (Kroeber and Kluckhohn 1952:181 cited from Baldwin et al. 2006:188).

According to the definition, culture is a system that covers a value system and a reality system. Masinambow (2004:10—11) argues that culture as a system that lives in a society can be studied through the verbal or kinetic behavior of the society which is manifested in the forms of utterances, texts, artifacts, modified and unmodified natural environment.

During their life, people have been exposed by the manifestations or product of cultures that exist from time to time. The Javanese young people also face the same phenomenon. Their life is exposed by the Javanese cultural manifestations that have existed. One of them is a collection of proverbs that manifests the Javanese way of life. The proverbs generally function as guidance for the society on how to be civilized people (Rahyono 2009:82—83). The proverbs regulate many aspects of life such as the relationship between human beings and God, human beings and nature, parents and children, men and their community. It is clear that the proverbs have a very important role for the Javanese society. Therefore, their existence must be preserved and bequeathed to the young generation..

This paper aims to explain how the Javanese young people perceive their culture, especially in the form of proverbs inherited from their predecessor. The perception is identified by asking twenty six young people as respondents by sending them a questionnaire. They were asked to identify the meaning of twenty proverbs and to give their opinion about the necessity of the proverbs. Their answers will inform us whether they don't understand the meaning of the proverbs, understand the semantic meaning literally, or understand the intended meaning contextually. The proverbs are cited from the secondary sources written by Rahyono (2009) and Santosa (2010). The respondents were also asked to complete the questions related to the information of their cultural background. The information is important to understand the general description of their identity.

The theoretical approach for understanding the Javanese proverbs

Javanese proverbs, as cultural data, can be approached from some different scientific points of view, such as semiotics, hermeneutics, and linguistics. In this paper, I use the linguistic approach that treats the Javanese

proverbs as a text. According to the approach, a text, in this case is a verbal text, is produced by a speaker to convey meanings to the hearer. In the process of communication, the hearer has to decode the text and then interpret it, in order to understand the meaning or the message that is encoded by the speaker. There are three stages of interpretation: (i) finding a literal meaning, (ii) finding an explicature, and (iii), finding an implicature (Griffiths 2006:6—7). Literal meaning is in the semantic domain, while explicature and implicature are in the pragmatic domain.

Finding a literal meaning of a text is a foundation for the next stages. It is done by relating the semantic and grammatical information of the text. The literal meaning of a proverb *aja dumeh*, for example, is found from the meaning of *aja* 'don't' and *dumeh* 'boastful/feeling more than the other'. The literal meaning doesn't say more than the meaning. The meaning has been informative yet. Based on the meaning, the second stage is processed. Griffiths (2006:6) says that finding explicature is a basic interpretation that needs contextual information and world knowledge of the interpreter. Explicature is meaning that is explicitly expressed. Doing the stage will find the information that the proverb is usually said by someone to warn or to advice someone else not to behave boastfully. It is usually said by older people to the young people or by the people who have power. The explicature is a foundation of the third meaning or implicature. Finding the implicature of a text means finding out "what what is hinted at by an utterance [a text] in its particular context, what the sender's 'agenda' is" (Griffiths 2006:7). The proverb *aja dumeh* in the utterance of "*aja dumeh sugih, banjur lali karo kancane*" that literally means "even though you are rich, don't forget your friends" may have an implicit meaning that friendship must be long lasting.

Cultural background of the respondents

As being said before, in this research I use twenty six young people as respondents. They are from eighteen to twenty three years old and all of them are university students. They have Javanese parents who live in Semarang, Demak, Kudus, Pati, Jepara, Surakarta, Jogjakarta, Banjarnegara, Purworejo, and Temanggung. All of the places are included the Javanese region. Before entering a university, some of the respondents who don't come

from Semarang had lived with their parents in their home towns. They had to move to Semarang as soon as they became university students and have lived there until now. Meanwhile, the other respondents have lived in Semarang since they were born. The background shows us that all of the respondents are Javanese. I assume that by living in the Javanese region together with Javanese society, the respondents have been familiar with Javanese culture.

The second cultural background can be seen from the language they use. All of them use both Javanese and Indonesian language during their activity. I only asked the languages they use when they communicate with their families, neighbors, and friends because I assume that they use Indonesian language when they communicate in the formal situation, such as in university, government office, and other public areas. Most of the respondents, those are sixteen persons, use Javanese language at home, whereas six respondents use Javanese and Indonesian languages alternately and four respondents use Indonesian language only. It means that most of their families support the young people using the Javanese language. The condition makes us proud because a family is a domain in which people interact in a high frequency. The second domain in which a certain language used in a high frequency is a friend domain. Young people usually spent their time with friends. In the context of university students, friends may be the friends in their campus, in their boarding house, or in their social activities. So, the use of a certain language in the domain can be an encouraging factor to preserve the language. The result of the questionnaire shows that in the friend domain, most of the respondents, those are seventeen respondents, use Javanese and Indonesian languages alternately; seven respondents use Javanese language; and two respondents use Indonesian language. The calculation means that both Indonesian and Javanese language have the similar position in the domain. It may be caused by the heterogeneity of its members. Usually, students of a university came from several places with the different mother tongues. That is why the member of the domain should choose a language that is understood by them. The choice is the Indonesian language. The use of the Javanese language in the domain, together with the Indonesian language, shows that the friends of the respondents are mostly from Java. The third domain is the neighbor domain. The influence of the domain in preserving the use of a language is not as

dominant as the two previous domains. However, the description of using a language in the domain can be used as a linguistic profile of a community. In the neighbor domain, twelve of the respondents use the Javanese language; eight respondents use the Javanese and Indonesian language alternately, and six respondents use the Indonesian language. It describes that most of the respondents live in the Javanese community.

The third cultural background of the respondents is related to cultural works they learn. Actually, by using the questionnaire, I intended to find the information whether the respondents, as the Javanese people, consciously learn Javanese cultural works such as arts, philosophy of life, and the others. Among the respondents, twelve respondents reported that they didn't learn the Javanese cultural works and fourteen respondents said that they had learnt the cultural works, such as Javanese dances, traditional songs (*macapat*), traditional music (*campursari*), Javanese puppet (Wayang kulit), ways of life, honorific in language, and Javanese proverbs. The latter claimed that they have learnt the cultural works at school, through their family and environment, by autodidact, and by entering certain informal course (*sanggar*). Actually, Javanese language, as one of the cultural works, is a compulsory subject for schools in Javanese region, from an elementary school to a senior high school. The material of the subject includes three major levels of language, traditional songs, proverbs that have the relationship with the daily life, etc. It means that the former group of the respondents also learnt certain cultural works both consciously and unconsciously, at least when they were at school. Based on the argument, therefore, I conclude that all respondents are still familiar with some Javanese works. The claim of the respondents that they have learnt some cultural works, as being said before, shows that up to now, there are some young people that consciously preserve the Javanese culture.

The fourth cultural background is the respondents' perception of their culture. Almost all respondents, except one, claimed that they are proud of their Javanese culture. There are some reasons they expressed related to their feeling proud:

- (i) Javanese culture is various and unique;
- (ii) Javanese culture upholds etiquette and tolerance behavior,

- (iii) Javanese culture teaches many ways of life.
- (iv) Javanese culture teaches its society to behave politely.

Those opinions reflect that the generation feels interest for its culture. This can be used as an important asset to heritage and develop the Javanese culture to the young people.

ANALYSIS

The interpretation of the Javanese proverbs by the young people

In this part, I will discuss how the respondents identify the meaning of the proverbs and explain their opinion about the suitability of the proverbs in the present society. As being explained before, they have to answer twenty proverbs. I choose the proverbs which use daily vocabularies, hoping that the respondents would be familiar. I categorized the proverbs based on their contents. Each category will be discussed separately.

Proverbs that are elated to the act of restraint

The first category is the proverbs that advice people for restraint. The category consists of two proverbs, those are *aja dumeh* and *aja rumangsa bisa nanging bisa rumangsa*. Literally, *aja* means don't and *dumeh* means act feeling more than the others. Some people who have more power, more wealth, or intelligence than the others tend to use them to suppress the others. They become arrogant. It is not the Javanese character, so the Javanese people create the proverb as a warning. The proverb contains an explicature: 'do think, behave, and act wisely' (Kistanto *et al.* no year) This proverb is usually followed by other phrases that express the misuse of the power, the wealth, and the intelligence, such as *aja dumeh sugih banjur migunakke duwite sakgeleme* 'don't be arrogant, you may not use your wealth at your will' *aja dumeh kuasa banjur ngakon wong sakgeleme* 'don't be arrogant, you may not use your power to suppress other people', *aja dumeh pinter banjur ngakali wong* 'don't be arrogant, you may not use your intelligence to deceive other people' (Santosa 2010:115; Rahyono 2009:160). The second proverb, *aja rumangsa bisa nanging bisa rumangsa* approximately means 'don't consider yourself that you are able to do something, but be aware of

your position'. In the Javanese society, to be confident that we are able to do something is not a good character because it tends to act boastfully (Santosa 2010:10). It is better that we are aware of our position (*bisa rumangsa*).

Twenty respondents understand the meaning of the first proverb and eighteen respondents understand the second proverb. They answered that the proverbs teach everybody not to be arrogant. It means that the respondents may interpret the content of the proverbs pragmatically. In other word, they are able to identify the explicature of the proverbs. They share world knowledge about the way of life. However, the rest of the respondent didn't answer the questions or answered incorrectly. The respondents who answered the question incorrectly wrote that *aja dumeh* means 'don't be easily satisfied', 'don't complain frequently', 'don't be exaggerated', and 'don't have desire to possess something illegally'.

The respondents that understand the proverbs mostly argued that the proverb are still necessary today, even for ever, with the various reasons as follows.

- (i) The proverbs symbolize the character of eastern society.
- (ii) Arrogance makes someone not to be honored.
- (iii) There are many arrogant people.
- (iv) The proverbs teach someone to avoid being individualist.
- (v) The proverb *aja rumangsa bisa nanging bisa rumangsa* teaches someone to think before doing.

Beside the above arguments, there is one interesting answer explaining that the proverb *aja rumangsa bisa nanging bisa rumangsa* is not always true. In a certain situation, showing ability in order to achieve a positive goal (to be a leader, for example) is necessary. If someone hides their ability, she/he will lose the opportunity. It describes that the respondent interpret the proverb using a context that is different from the other respondents. It is also proven that the proverbs are an opened text.

The result of the questionnaire also implies that the two proverbs are relatively popular among the Javanese young people. The proverbs can be used as a guidance to build the character of keeping a low profile for the

Javanese young people. It is important because they will be the leaders of this country. Therefore, continuous efforts to make the proverbs more popular among the people are needed. Anyone has a duty to carry out the efforts, for example: teachers in schools, parents in home, public figures in their environment, even the youths themselves in their community. However, it is necessary to interpret the proverbs in the right context, so the proverbs still accommodate the behavior of being self confident.

Proverbs that are related to honesty

There are four proverbs related to the honesty that are asked to the respondents. The proverbs are (i) *sabegja-begjaning kang lali isih begjo kang eling lan waspada* with the literal translation 'even though an unaware person is lucky, the aware and careful person is luckier'; (ii) *bener ketenger, becik ketitik ala ketara* that more or less means 'the truth will always prevail'; (iii) *Gusti Allah ora sare* with the literal translation 'God never sleeps'; and (iv) *sapa jujur bakal luhur* that more or less means 'an honest man is a noble man'. Generally, that proverbs reflect that the Javanese society upholds the honesty. People will honor someone who is honest. On the contrary, if someone is found out that he is dishonest, people will leave him. Therefore, everyone must do everything honestly, even though no one watches his doing because Javanese people believe that God always keep watching them everywhere and every time.

Among the four proverbs, the second proverb is the least popular. There are only fifteen respondents who answer the meaning of the proverb correctly. Four respondents didn't answer it and seven respondents answered it incorrectly. On the other hand, almost all respondents understand the intended meaning of the first, third, and fourth proverbs. There is only one respondent that don't understand the meaning of the third proverb and there three respondents who don't understand the first and fourth proverbs. The fact may be caused that the second proverb sounds archaic whereas the other three proverbs, up to now, have often been said by parents or elder people to advice someone.

Most of the respondents that understand the intended meaning of the proverbs or explication of the proverbs argued that the four proverbs are still

necessary for the current situation because, according to them, the proverbs can be used to control someone's habit and life style. The content of the proverbs is still valid. The truth will always prevail as long as we try to prove it. It means that the truth can't be gained passively. They also have an opinion that the proverbs lead people to realize that they can't hide their dishonest acts from God eyes. However, there are other claims that the proverbs are suitable only in a certain situation or even out of date. The reason of the first claim is that sometimes not telling the truth is better than telling the truth. In a certain situation, telling the truth may hurt someone's feeling. Therefore, white lies are preferable. The second claim has a reason that generally, the government officials, political leaders, or very important persons act dishonestly but they are not imposed a law or social sanction. Their life are success and happy with their dishonest acts. It makes a perception that dishonest acts are acceptable.

Based on the result of the questionnaire, I conclude that the Javanese young people perceive honesty as an important part of their life. Most of them acknowledge that the proverbs can be used as a guidance to act honestly. They can also identify the potential implicature of the proverbs. We can follow up the condition by making the proverbs more familiar in their daily life. The more important thing is that we have to encourage them to apply the intended message of the proverbs into their life. We can use the spirit of the proverbs to persist in maintaining the honesty and in fighting against the dishonesty.

Proverbs that are related to patience

Javanese people are known for their patient character. In the research I chose three proverbs related the character, those are (i) *Alon-alon waton kelakon* (*gremet gremet waton slamet*) that in a free translation means 'slowly but surely'; (ii) *Manungso mung sadermo nglakoni* that is similar to the English proverb *Man proposes God disposes*; and (iii) *Narimo ing pandum* that literally means 'having to accept to what is given'. The three proverbs have ambiguous interpretations, according to my opinion. Decoding the proverbs literally, out of context, may build an interpretation of a passive character. It means, following the guidance of the proverb will produce people

who take it for granted. On the other hand, understanding the proverbs critically leads to the patient character. It is the explicature of the proverb, if we use an appropriate context to interpret them.

Twenty five respondents understand the literal meaning of the first proverb. It means that only one respondent who doesn't understand it. The facts implies that this is a popular proverb among the young people. Among them, eleven respondents interpreted the proverb critically. It can be shown through their opinion that the proverb is suitable not in any context. Doing something slowly is needed if the job needs high accuracy. On the contrary, there are many jobs that require quick handling, such as curing a dying person. Therefore, according them, the proverb is still necessary, but it depends on cases they must handle. Seven respondents thought that the proverb is still necessary and other seven respondents argued that the proverb is not suitable in the present situation. The former group has a reason that doing slowly is needed to get an optimal result. Meanwhile, the reason of the latter is that nowadays people are demanded to do anything quickly as well as accurately. Following the proverb causes people lazy.

Compared to the first proverb, the second and third proverbs are less popular. There are only fifteen and sixteen respondents who understand the second and third proverbs respectively. They relate the proverb to the concept of religion, or their relationship with God. According to their perception, *manungsa mung saderma nglakoni* is related to people fate. Human being is not able to fight against his fate, so what happened to him is God's decision.

Proverbs that are related to a social relationship

A social relationship, for the Javanese society, is an important part of their life. That way of life is taught through proverbs, stories, traditional songs, etc. Some of the proverbs that are related to the principle of building the social relationship are (i) *rame ing gawe sepi ing pamrih* that is used to refer the situation of 'helping sincerely'; (ii) *dudu sanak dudu kadang, yen mati melu kelangan* that literally means 'when someone dies, even if he/she is not our best friend/acquaintance, we can have the feeling of grief'; and (iii) *tega larane ora tega patine* that literally means "we have the heart to see

someone in pain, but we don't have the heart when he/she passes away'. The content of these proverbs describe considerate characters that must be owned by the Javanese people. The proverb (i) contains an advice that people must help each other sincerely. It is important to build the close relationship among neighbors, members of a clan, or certain communities. The close relationship will arouse in them a sense of being faithful. It is expressed in the second proverb, that every member of a community has to feel what happens to the other. As a member of a community, someone has to consider others' feeling. That is why, the Javanese people are advised, through the content of the third proverb, not to hurt the other excessively.

Not all respondents understand the intended meaning of the three proverbs. There are only fourteen respondents who understand the meaning of the first proverb. The other respondents either answered incorrectly or didn't answer the question. The respondents who understand the proverb thought that the proverb was still necessary in the present time because it functions as a guidance to avoid a selfish action. However, they also argued that we have to consider the kind of a case or a problem when we want to apply the proverb. They said that sometimes we have to be professional. When we have done our duty and then we don't ask for our right, someone may assume that we are not professional. This is not commensurate with the present demand that everyone must be professional.

The second proverb can be interpreted literally from the semantic aspect or pragmatically connected to the context. Literally, we will have the feeling of grief when there is someone dies. That is the meaning understood by almost half of the respondents. Most of them gave illustration of the situation by stating that when a famous person died, the former presidents for example, most people in Indonesia had feeling of grief. They argued that it was the Javanese character. However, people with the character have decreased. It also depends on the personality of the person who died. Pragmatically, the word *mati* 'die' refers not only to die but also to the state of having problem or difficult situation. That is the intended meaning. There are nine respondents who have such interpretation.

Among the three proverbs, the last proverb *tega larane ora tega patine* is the least popular. There are only seven respondents who understand the meaning of the proverb, either literally or contextually. The other respondents didn't answer the question because they didn't understand the meaning of the proverb. According to my opinion, it is necessary to spread this local wisdom more to the young people because the proverb contains the doctrine not to act sadistically. It is suitable with this present condition that we saw or read sadistic behaviors almost every day from televisions or other media.

Proverbs that are related to the parent-children relationship

Parents have a central role in the Javanese family. Children have to obey them forever in whatever condition. It has several interpretations. One of them is that being parents needs some requirements such as: they have to be wise and responsible for all their children; they have to be a model for their children; and they have to be able in uniting all of their children. Another interpretation is that instead of being egalitarian, the Javanese parents are authoritative. The relationship between parents and their children is one way, that is parents have more power than children. The description of the parents-children relationship can be found through some proverbs such as (i) *kacang mangsa ninggala lanjaran* that literally means 'long beans will not go away from the place they creep'; (ii) *anak polah bapa kepradah, bapa kesulah anak kapolah* that more or less means 'parents are responsible to their children misbehavior, whereas if the parents have difficulty, their children will also have it'; (iii) *mikul dhuwur mendem jero* that has the intended meaning 'whatever happened to your parents/families/relatives, good or bad, you must always honor and protect for them'; (iv) *kebo nyusu gudel* that is used to say 'elder people/ parents make use of living with their children or their offspring'.

The close relationship between parents and their children is expressed in *kacang mangsa ninggala lanjaran*. The Javanese people, through the proverb, assume that children are the reflection of their parents. Whatever children do, good or bad, people always relate it to their parents. However, the negation of the proverb: *kacang ninggal lanjaran* 'long beans go away

from the place they creep' is used to refer the condition in which a person behaves extremely different from his/her origin. So, according to the Javanese way of life, a good person is a person who always remember his/her origin, in this context origin refers to parents. The proverb is used as an advice to avoid being arrogant. *Anak polah bapa kepradah* is usually used to warn parents to be able to educate their children or is used to refer a condition in which parents get a problem because of their children attitude. Otherwise, *bapa kesulah anak kapolah* is used to encourage children who have difficulty caused by their parents. The proverb explains the responsibility of a person either as a parent or as a son/daughter. As a son/daughter, someone also has another responsibility to honor his/her parents as being expressed in the proverb *mikul dhuwur mendem jero*. According to the proverb, someone must both uphold the status of his/her parents and conceal his/her parents' weakness. The last proverb, *kebo nyusu gudel* refers to the ironic condition. *Kebo* means buffalo and *gudel* means young buffalo. Naturally, a young buffalo sucks milk from its mother. So, if there is a buffalo sucks milk from its baby or *kebo nyusu gudel*, the condition is ironic. The Javanese society has an ideology that parents have duties both to take care of and to educate their children until their children become independent. The condition that parents depend their life on their son/daughter or that parents learn something from their son/daughter or from other young people reveals an anomaly condition. The Javanese parents try to avoid being in the condition.

Actually, not all respondents understand the intended meaning of the proverbs. There are only a half of the respondents who understand the first three proverbs. The rest of them either really don't understand or misunderstand them. Some of the respondents who understand the proverbs argue that the proverbs are still necessary in the present days because they are their ideology that have been learnt from their parents and society. Some of them said that the usage of the proverbs should be placed on the right context. The proverb *kacang mangsa ninggal lanjaran*, for example, is not always suitable in the present situation because there are many children that are influenced by their environment and then they become extremely different from their parents, either in good or bad attitude. *Anak polah bapa kepradah*, according to them, is not suitable if the children have been

independence. They should be responsible for their own behavior. The last proverb, *kebo nyusu gudel*, is the most popular proverbs among the four. There are twenty one respondents who understand the meaning of the proverb. Four respondents didn't answer the question and one respondent answered it incorrectly. Among the respondents who understand the meaning of the proverb, there are eight respondents who thought that the proverb is still necessary. They thought that Javanese people have an ideology that treat parents as honorable persons, so using the proverb to explain the ironic condition is correct. For them, the proverb is a warning for parents to avoid the condition. On the other hand, there are four respondents who said that the proverb is not suitable anymore and seven respondents who said that the proverb is suitable in certain contexts. The former has a reason that all generations have their own strength. Therefore, the condition in which the old generation learns from or depends on the young generation is not an ironic phenomenon. Meanwhile, the latter has the reason that in the modern era, there are many young people who are smarter and have more experience than their parents or the older persons. In the condition, the respondents suggest that it is very common if parents learn something from their children or the young people. They also thought that today the relationship between the old and the young generation must be more flexible.

Proverbs that are related to fuzzy thinking

There are proverbs expressing that Javanese culture teaches its society to preserve living together in perfect harmony. In a certain situation not to tell the truth is allowed as far as it aims to create the harmonious condition. *Dora sembada* 'white lies' is a proverb that refers to a situation in which someone is forced to tell a lie in order to avoid the unpleasant atmosphere (Santosa 2010:199). The example of *dora sembada* is not telling the true if I am disturbed by cigarette smoke because I don't want to hurt someone who is smoking behind me. However, the interpretation of the proverb is often exploited to gain a certain goal. For example, a political leader didn't tell that his undergraduate certificate is illegal in order to win a legislative election. The similar proverb is *ewuh aya ing pambudi* that literally means 'be in a difficult position in a certain circumstance'. It describes a condition in which a person

has difficulty in making decision. Whatever he decides will cause problems. Generally, the Javanese people, in the condition, will choose to decide something that can create a harmonious situation even though they have to tell a lie. Another proverb that also has the relationship with the attitude is *ngono ya ngono ning aja ngono* that means 'don't be exaggerated'. According to that proverb, doing exaggeratedly, even though it was true, will cause someone else annoyed. The example is a condition in which a rich person lives in a slum area. When he lives glamorously, someone else may warn him by saying *ngono ya ngono ning aja ngono* because his life style can make the others jealous. Another example is the way someone warns the other. Warning is an act that cause someone else feel ashamed. Even though what we warn is true, we have to try not to do warning directly to avoid disharmonious situation. The other purpose of the proverb can be similar to the proverb explained in the first discussion, that is *oyo dumeh*. Both of them are used to prevent the character of boasting of themselves.

The three proverbs are not so popular among the respondents. There are only nine respondents who understand the meaning of the proverb *ngono ya ngono ning aja ngono* either literally or pragmatically. Some of them said that the proverb is necessary to make people under control and some others said that generally the Javanese people have not applied the proverb anymore. Unfortunately, there is only one respondent who understands the meaning of *ewuh aya ing pambudi* and none of the respondent can understand the meaning of *dora sembada*.

It was concluded, based on the answers from the respondents, that it is necessary for the old generation to make the proverbs known more especially among the young people. However, it is very important to interpret the proverbs appropriately, so they can function as a means to express the local wisdom. The young people have to be able to apply the guidance of the proverbs positively, so they become the generation who are wise but not doubtful.

Proverbs that are related to the character of hardworking

Actually, the Javanese society have many proverbs related to the hardworking character, such as *wani nggetih bakal merkulih* that means 'if

someone works hard, he will get what he wants'; *sapa ubet bakal ngliwet* that means 'whoever is smart and hard working, he will be able to survive; and *ana dina ana upa, ora obah ora mamah* that means 'if someone doesn't work, he/she cannot get food'. However, in this research I just asked the last proverb to the respondents. The result is that eighteen respondents understand either the literal or the pragmatic meaning of the proverb, seven respondents don't understand it and one respondent answered incorrectly. Most of the respondents who know the proverb have opinion that the proverb is still necessary for the present society because it can drive people to work hard. They believe that there is no success that come automatically.

CONCLUSION

The analysis shows that according to the perception of the young people, the Javanese proverbs in general are still necessary for the present society. However, some of them have to be interpreted by using appropriate context, so their essential contents are still valid. The example of the proverbs that need to be reinterpreted are the proverbs that contain a doctrine of being patient. The doctrine of receiving what God gives to us is applied when someone has tried hard to achieve something but the result is unsatisfied. It is used to avoid feeling frustrated. On the other hand, the doctrine of slowly but surely, according to the respondents, is not valid anymore because now we must act fast but accurately.

The fact that not all of the respondents understand the meaning of the proverbs implies that the old generation should consider how to bequeath the local wisdom effectively to the young generation. They can start teaching the proverb in schools and applying them into the daily life. To make the proverbs popular among the young generation needs hard working because the generation has been exposed by some popular cultures.

REFERENCES

- Baldwin, John R. *et all.* (Eds.) 2006. *Redefining Culture: Perspective Across the Disciplines*. London: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Publishers.
- Griffiths, Patrick. 2006. *An Introduction to English Semantics and Pragmatics*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press Ltd.
- Kistanto, Nurdien H. *et all.* No year. *Pesona Budaya Jawa Tengah*. No publisher.
- Masinambow, E.K.M. 2004. "Teori Kebudayaan dan Ilmu Pengetahuan Budaya" in *Semiotika Budaya*, Christomy and Yuwono (eds.). Depok: Pusat Penelitian Kemasyarakatan dan Budaya Direktorat Riset dan Pengabdian Masyarakat Universitas Indonesia.
- Hoed, Benny H. 2004. "Bahasa dan Sastra dalam Tinjauan Semiotik dan Hermeneutik" in *Semiotika Budaya*, Christomy and Yuwono (eds.). Depok: Pusat Penelitian Kemasyarakatan dan Budaya Direktorat Riset dan Pengabdian Masyarakat Universitas Indonesia.
- Rahyono, F.X. 2009. *Kearifan Budaya dalam Kata*. Jakarta: Penerbit Wedatama Widya Sastra.
- Santosa, Iman Budhi. 2010. *Nasih:at Hidup Orang Jawa*. Yogyakarta: DIVA Press.