

## **The Manifestation of the Malay Intellectual Mind and Thinking in the Malay Proverbs**

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### **ABSTRACT**

The manifestation of the Malay intellectual minds and thinking is channelled implicitly and explicitly via proverbs. The thinking and intellectual minds in the Malay proverbs has been manifested as social, moral values and functions of the tradition in the social life which portray the philosophy of the Malay ethnic. These interlinks with the notion of metaphysics, epistemology, ethics, logic as well as aesthetic values to the nature and the world of flora and fauna around them. Hence, this paper intends to substantiate the manifestation of the intellectual minds and thinking of the Malays society within the context of its proverbs. The collection of the proverbs is taken from the Utusan Complete Collection of Proverbs Dictionary. The findings show that the Malay proverbs exhibit the Malay thinking in the existence of metaphysics, knowledge thinking, human moral, notion on the nature dan the aesthetic value. In conclusion, the study on the Malay proverbs has highlighted the true manifestation of the intellectual mind and thinking of the Malay society in formulating proverbs related to the environment and nature.

**Keywords:** Manifestation, intellectual minds, thinking, Malay proverbs.

### **INTRODUCTION**

Proverbs in the Malay language is an important element in revealing the level of one's intellectual mind in communication. Proverbs have been widely used ever since and emerged from a close observation of the previous community which linked closely to the nature, human's behaviour, social norms, customs and culture. Hence, the Malay proverbs is said to be the reflection of the Malays courtesy, wisdom and the intellectual while communicating. The Malay proverbs are also closely linked with the manifestation of the intellectual and the thinking of the Malays. As in one of the oldest poem, the construction of the Malay proverbs is strongly connected to the old Malay customs and traditions. Therefore, the old Malay social structures, intellectual minds, attitudes, thinking, social activities and the life philosophy can be understood through proverbs

Therefore, the Malay proverbs were designed based on one's life experiences which highlighted the Malays value and courteous. Wilkinson (1907) advocates that the Malays' character and personality are easily revealed from the proverbs. In fact, proverbs function as customary law as well as moral advice in governing the social behaviours of the Malay community. Hamilton (1974) believes that the Malay proverbs are invented based on the actual phenomenon of the society with enlighten the thinking of the Malays on the nature of their life. As being suggested by Za'ba (1965) proverbs are the arrangement of short phrases which are spoken for years due to the beauty and goodness of the expressions. Proverbs are also used for comparison, exemplary and lesson learnt. Meanwhile, according to Indrawati (1998), proverbs possess interesting function where proverbs are used to relay meaning in a subtle and elusive manner. Likewise proverbs also function either as a reminder, an advise or a criticism for someone. The underlying meaning of a proverb carries fundamental advice without offending one's feeling. As a matter of fact, there is a specific objective of using a proverb where the person who hears or reads it will not be easily upset.

The Malay proverbs also transmit the relationship between language and the thinking of the Malays. The way the Malays see the world is mingled within the proverbs they designed. This has indeed proven the Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis in Sapir (1921) which stated that the language determines

the minds of the speakers. The way the speaker thinks in his/her language is illustrated through the widespread of the words. Hence, it can be said that the language is an integral part of human life. Language immerses in the thinking and the way the speaker see his or her world. In fact, there seems to be a close relationship of the community, language and culture as been stated by Von Humnoldt (1907)

Besides, the intellectual minds of the Malay community can also be observed via their daily activities. According to Kamus Dewan (1984), an action can be referred to as an act of doing something. In the daily life of a the Malay community, it can be seen that the Malay community is rich with decent and polite behaviours. The intellectual mind is manifested in the proverbs as the reflection of the Malay community. Proverbs substantiate the wisdom of it people which proves that there is strong intrinsic link between language and attitude, thinking and behaviour of the race which can be identified through the use of

### **STATEMENT OF PROBLEM**

The work of literature of a community can be perceived as a multi-dimensional life besides being manifested as intellectual mind and thinking. Nonetheless, to what extent has literature really played its role in the community so as to be accepted and fully used whereas certain types of literature is assumed to be owned by a special group of people. Such thinking has somewhat given a negative effect to the work of literature even though the thought and idea in the work are enormous.

In many ways, proverbs are no longer a form of literature that is perceived as a work that manifests the intellectual mind of the Malay community. On the other hand, proverbs are concerned with the form and arrangement of its term as so meaningful which help to the existence of the community's philosophy. The proverbs that are created must not be professed in terms of its underlying meaning per se. When a proverb is not analysed within the underlying context of the belief of the community, it will no longer uphold the manifestation of the intellectual minds that have created it.

Academically speaking, proverbs are no longer being understood merely by analysing its physically pattern. In actual fact, proverbs are rich with its philosophy of the daily life of the Malay community. According to Abdullah Hussin (1977) proverbs are one component of the old literature, not only for the Malay community but for nearly all the other ethnics around the world. Before the existence of the regulations that govern the social behaviour of human, scholars from each ethnic have come up with some guidelines, advices and tips as rules for social disciplines, ethics in socialising and principles of social and human relations. The guidelines, advices and tips are taken from the surrounding such as from human as well as the behaviours of the fauna and flora.

Since proverbs uphold the highest level of values, beliefs and the philosophy, the usage need to be exposed and learnt by today's young generation, especially to school students via the subject of the Malay Language. Hence, it is believed that the sustainability of proverbs can be preserved and students can apply the use of proverbs in communicating their thoughts and ideas in a more interesting and meaningful way. As stated by Abdullah Hassan (2002) when we want to use the language or express our feelings, there are conditions that we are honest and there are times when we may hide the actual meaning within the words. In other conditions, we may make comparison as a means of teasing to enhance our speech. We may include proverbs while communicating. This will enhance our speech intended to the other persons.

However, before this aspect being taught to students, teachers or students teachers, they must first be able to disclaim the implied meaning of the proverbs and explain the meaning of the phrases that make up the proverbs as to what they refer to. Therefore, as the initial stage of this research, the analysis of the manifestation of the Malay intellectual minds within the Malay proverbs and their actual meanings will be highlighted.

## **Research Objectives**

This research proposes 3 objectives which are as follows:

1. to observe the beauty of language in the creation of a proverb
2. to analyse the manifestation of the intellectual minds of the Malay community in proverbs
3. to analyse the thinking of the Malay community which is implied in a proverb.

## **Research Questions**

This research intends to answer 3 questions which are:

1. to what extent can a proverb express the beauty of the language
2. to what extent can a proverb embody the manifestation of the intellectual minds of the Malay community
3. to what extent can a proverb uphold the life style of the Malay community.

## **Operational Definitions**

To clarify the operational definition used in this research, some important terms and phrases will be made clearer so as to avoid the unfairness that may appear from various terms that are rather relative in nature.

### **Proverbs**

According to Asmah Hj Omar (1986) proverbs are used by the Malays as a medium to give advice without trying to hurt someone's feeling. Kamus Dewan (1984) illustrates that proverbs as a phrase or combination of phrases possess somewhat a uniform arrangement of specific meanings which is also called as proverbial saying. The word arrangement of a proverb cannot merely be translated word by word as each word in the arrangement contains meaning. Meanwhile, Luqman Ariffin and Abu Khair Atan (2009) state that proverbs reflect the precision, reflection and the thinking of our elders comparing the reality of life with man and its environment. Sulaiman Zakaria (2011), on the other hand defines proverbs as means of conveying something subtly. Based on these definitions, one can conclude that proverbs are one component of speech art created by the elders which carry clear meanings and truthful. Moreover, proverbs can hide harsh and cruel words such as sarcasm and vulgarity modestly concealed by an effective words. Hence, this has allowed us to understand the richness and the beauty of the Malay proverbs

### **The Manifestation of the Intellectual Mind**

The manifestation of the Malay intellectual mind can be observed in the chain of relationship between man, nature and the Creator. According to Awang Sariyan (2007) the intellectual mind reflects the actions, thinking and attitude of a person which advocate wisdom, the soul and the aesthetic value. Hence, a person's actions, thinking and attitude can be interpreted in various forms.

### **Thinking**

According to Syed Ismail & Ahmad Subki (2012) thinking is a process of manipulating the mind in search for meaning and understanding towards something, exploring various possibilities of ideas and making reasonable consideration for decision making and problem solving and making meta-cognition reflection on the process. From the historical Malay thinking perspective, it will reveal the development (progress) of the cultural aspect of the community in line with the nature of their thinking. The way of thinking of the Malays encompasses the mind, the intellectual mind, the nature and the knowledge shown in the relationship between the nature, the man and the Creator.

### **Limitation Of The Study**

This research adopts the qualitative approach and will analyse the text from the *Kamus Peribahasa Lengkap Utusan* (1993) compiled by Abdullah Hassan dan Ainon Mohd. The proverbs are chosen randomly based on the pattern of the proverbs such as saying, and parables

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Proverbs as a tool to capture the thinking and recording of the Malay civilization has always been the focus of many researchers even though not many have carried out a really serious research about it. Ahmad Fuad Mat Hassan dan Zaitul Azma Zainon Hamzah (2010) in their research “*Pengkategorian Peribahasa Melayu Berdasarkan Aspek Nilai dan Pemikiran: Satu Analisis Pragmatik*” have identified the types of the Malay proverbs which highlighted the aspect of the Malay values and thinking and acknowledges the usage of implicit and explicit languages using the Relevant Theory. The data was collected from the *Kamus Istimewa Peribahasa Melayu dan Peribahasa SPM* (Special Malay Proverbs Dictionary and Proverbs SPM) and the data was analysed using the pragmatic theory. From the research, it was discovered that the Malay proverbs also display the aspect of values and thinking so as to be used as lessons and guides by the speakers of the language. The aspects of values in the proverbs is shown within the 16 moral values of the National Philosophy of Education. The researchers also discovered that proverbs can be used as an important element to build a person identity and hence will enhance the mind. Proverbs also clarifies the lesson learnt and portrays the elevated thinking skills of the Malays.

Mohamad Radzi Salleh (1999) in his study entitled ‘Peribahasa dalam Masyarakat Melayu Satu Analisis Pemikiran dan Cerminan Falsafah’ (Proverbs in the Malay Society: An Analysis of Thinking and Philosophical Reflection) analyses that the thinking of the Malay society has created unique proverbs which carry deep significant meanings. Researchers will also look for the genuine meaning of the proverbs. The findings indicate that the elements of the environment and nature encompass in the creation of proverbs and idioms carry deep moral values, views towards life, aspiration, beliefs and wisdom upheld by the community.

Lim Kim Hui (2003) in his study “*Budi as the Malay Mind. A philosophical of Malay Ways of Reasoning and Emotion in Peribahasa*” has also looked into the notion of the Malay logic and emotions. He has proven that the principles of social logic has been discovered in the Malay proverbs which also incorporates a strong elements of emotions

In addition, P. Rajini dan Che Ibrahim (2015) in their study of the Malay and the Indian proverbs revealed that there are evident that both communities do interact with the nature which is considered as a part of their social life. This involves three elements namely actions and behaviours, thinking and moral values. In the study, the messages are efficiently relayed by manipulating the three elements. This study also shows that both communities have similarities in terms of culture and the underlying meanings of the proverbs especially in the aspect of social.

## METHODS

This research adopts the qualitative approach. The research methodology is text analysis of the *Kamus Peribahasa Lengkap Utusan* (1993). Several proverbs have been chosen as part of the research samples. Some of the chosen proverbs are popular proverbs in the community. The study is based on the philosophical fields that supplement high values to relevant questions or questions of philosophical values. This is due to the fact that such questions have the potential of receiving good relevant answers. For instant, epistemological question such as “*what is truthfulness?*” or “*what is wisdom?*” have indeed improved the field of science and technology. The focus of this philosophical study is epistemology which focuses on the aspect of wisdom. The researchers try to analyse how proverbs can work on high level knowledge in the context of its underlying meanings.



## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Malay civilization is indeed based on the Islamic values. All of these values are closely related to the concept of faith found in Islam. This fundamental values can be observed in Malay phrases such as proverbs and expressions. The influence of Islam into the Malay world have changed the landscape of the Malays culture. Faith and fear of the creator, ALLAH S.W.T is the fundamental element in Islam. This is involved the foundation of life, thought or the philosophy of human life in this world. Obeying what are demanded and leaving what is forbidden by the Al Mighty are the ways how the Malays enhancing their faith and devotion. In this context, the traditional view of the Malay community is adapted to the fundamental view of the Islamic faith.

The history of the Malays is closely linked to the Malay sultane. For generation, it is known that the Malay community are so loyal to the Sultan and Raja which have been followed by the present generation. This is an indicator that the Malay community respects their leaders. The value of obedience and loyalty to the Sultan and King has been imparted into the Malay intellectual mind. In the Islamic context, the leaders are the caliphs (leaders) of Allah and this has been stated in the following Malay proverbs:

- (1) Adat raja adat berdiri, tiada raja adat mati  
(*If there is the king, the tradition will withstand, without it, tradition will die*)
- (2) Hidup dikandung adat, mati dikandung tanah  
(*As long as you live, uphold the tradition*)
- (3) Biat mati anak, jangan mati adat  
(*It is acceptable to loose your heir but not your tradition*)
- (4) Raja adil raja disembah, raja zalim raja disanggah  
(*Respect the righteous king, disrespect the cruel*)

The Malay community upholds the traditions in their daily life. They take great care of the traditions including taboos and customs that have been passed down for generations. Among the traditions that are still being practiced are ceremonies of the birth, marriage and death. The Malays understand the customary rules and regulations of the traditions and still hold tied to them. In one of the Malay sayings indicates that (5) customs are followed, laws are uphold. There are some *rites de passage* rituals which combine the Islamic elements and traditions that take place at stages of one's life. For example, before a baby is born, the mother needs to ensure the do's and the don't's so that the baby will not depict unwanted characters of his/her parents

- (6) Bahasa menunjukkan bangsa (*language signifies the people*)

Proverbs that are based on words of wisdom proves that there are intrinsic relationship between language and attitudes, thinking and intellectual minds of the people which can be identified via the use of proverbs. Nonetheless, to what extent does language including proverbs control the thinking of the speakers towards the world remains to be a question. However, the unquestionable fact is that there is a language connection with the beliefs and values of life of its speakers. As a matter of fact, the language and the concept of thinking of the speakers can be determined by the way the speakers develop understanding of the surrounding by means of language. Meanwhile, the emphasis on the structure of language of the speakers is said to be determined by the concept of the world and its reality. Hence, in any proverbs, perception, the level of thinking of the speakers, intellectual mind and the importance of knowledge to the youngs can be seen in the following proverbs:

- (7) Gajah sama gajah berjuang, pelanduk mati di tengah-tengah

*(The fight between the super-power can cause death and suffering to the communal)*

- (8) Harimau mati meninggalkan belang, manusia mati meninggalkan nama  
*(Leave a good name that people will remember)*
- (9) Melentur buluh biarlah daripada rebungnya  
*(Educate your children when they are still very young)*

Proverbs (7) highlights the perceptions and thinking that the clashes between two greedy leaders or super-powers can cause the death or suffering of the communal and the people. Meanwhile, the perceptions and thinking of one's services and intellectual mind in strengthening the family institution, the society and the nation can be observed from proverb (8) In addition, the perception about education to the young needs to be instilled while the children are still young and this can be seen in proverb (9). The usage of lexical words such as 'elephant', 'tiger', 'bamboo' and 'bamboo shoot' in the above proverbs indicate the meaning being conveyed which signifies the blending of the language that links to the mind of the speakers while communicating.

In addition, language is the means of informing of the thought and intellectual mind of the speakers. Language is the platform that determine human actions on his life. While in the context of communication, language is connected to the complexity of the culture. The essence of the language and culture of the society is scientifically proven and is reflected in the form of socialization or religious adaptation of human beings. The roles of the language is so great to the extent that it is able to foster the traditions, values and norms as well as the thinking of man. The fostering of the traditions, values and norms can clearly be felt in the following Malay proverbs:

- (10) Jangan bawa resmi jagung, makin berisi makin menegak  
*(Do not boast yourself as you have achieved something better)*
- (11) Ikut resmi padi, makin berisi makin menunduk  
*(The more you have, be more humble you should be)*
- (12) Masuk kandang kambing mengembek, masuk kandang kerbau menguak  
*(Adjust yourself to fit your surrounding)*
- (13) Baik membawa resmi ayam betina, supaya tidak ada bencana  
*(If you are modest and humble, you may avoid catastrophe)*
- (14) Baik membawa resmi padi daripada membawa resmi lalang  
*(Better be humble than being arrogant)*

From the five examples of proverbs, it clearly shows the global thinking of the Malay ethnic. Proverbs (10) displays the wisdom of the Malay community which values the importance of humble, unpretentious and modest in community life. The character of arrogant human nature of having acquired knowledge or wealth is compared to the corn tree when it starts bearing fruits. Similarly, proverbs (11) suggests that the Malay people to always be moderate and humble even after they have achieved success in life. Besides, values, traditions and norms of the Malays who are encouraged to be moderate and sensible can also be learnt from the (12), (13) and (14). The level of thinking of the Malays can be implicitly felt which demands every Malay to be virtuous, prudent, clean in the physical and mental aspect while being polite, wise and adaptable to the surrounding. Hence, the Malay thinking seen in the proverbs refers to the values, social system, tradition, culture, religious belief and civilization which are uttered creatively, succinctly and beautifully in the proverbs.

The fundamental philosophy of the Malay thinking is derived from close observation, appreciation of the religion, intellectual mind, traditions and culture as well as the nature which include the flora and fauna and the surrounding that govern their life. Meanwhile, the appreciation

towards Islam by the Malays has also given some impact to the creation of proverbs. This happens ever since the Malay embrace Islam that witness the meeting point of the cooperation and collaboration between the teaching of Islam and the norms and values of life. From this point onwards, the Malay people with all the the potential of the mind will be able to comprehend the different between the provision of natural law expressed in proverbs. This can be observed from the following proverbs

- (15) Adat bersendi syarak, syarak bersendi kitabullah  
*(The tradition must be fundamentally dependent on the words of God)*
- (16) Adat yang kawī, syarak yang lazim  
*(The religious practices must be continuously performed)*
- (17) Neraca palingan Allah, hati palingan setan  
*(The desire can be easily controlled by the evil)*
- (18) Syariat palu memalu, hakikat balas membalas  
*(Religion commandments reminds)*
- (19) Manusia punya asa, Tuhan punya kuasa  
*(Everything is on God's will)*

From the above proverbs, it proves that the belief and ideology of the Malays emerge from the process of deep philosophical thinking. All the above proverbs show a form of appreciation for the religion through the use of Islamic terms such as “*syarak*” (religious law) “*ALLAH*” (The Al Mighty) “*syaitan*” (the evil) and “*syariat*” (Islamic laws). Nuturing the customs and traditions of the Malays in the context of the religion is also embedded in the Malay proverbs as the Malays usually hold tight to the teaching of the religion. Besides, the Malay thinking also deems to the notion that man acts as the *caliph* (leaders) of Allah in this world.

## CONCLUSION

Proverbs as a traditional literature is a beauty that is interesting to venture. This study may not have ventured into the overall dimension of the issue. The samples of the proverbs reveal the deep underlying meaning which indicates the high philosophical value, thinking and intellectual minds of the Malay community. As a matter of fact, the uniqueness of the proverbs allows everyone to have his or her own personal interpretations and views in accordance to the level of one's understanding as well as the field of knowledge one possesses.

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