ARABIC DERIVATED ELEMENTS
ON THE CHARACTERS’ NAMES OF WAYANG PUNAKAWAN:
A SOCIOLINGUISTIC ANALYSIS

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ABSTRACT

There was an assumption which says that the name of Punakawan characters on puppet (Wayang) are derived from Arabic language. The objective of this research is to prove whether the name of Punakawan characters is derived from Arabic or not. This research uses qualitative method with the literature study approach. This research start from some statements which state that the name of Punakawan characters, like Semar, Nala Gareng, Petruk, and Bagong are derived from Arabic however there is no proof linguistically. These characters began to be played in the beginning of the spread of Islam by Sunan Kalijaga. This thing shows that there was a relation between the spread of Islam with naming these characters as a dakwah to the Java society at that time. After the linguistic analysis, both phonological, morphological, and semantic research, the name of Punakawan characters have evidently derived from Arabic vocabularies. Semar is derived from sammir, Nala Gareng is derived from naala qariin, Petruk is derived from fatruk, and the last Bagong is derived from baagin. Beside, these characters played by Sunan Kalijaga since the spread of Islam in Java reinforces that the name of Punakawan characters are derived from Arabic language.

Keywords: Loanwords; Arabic Language; Punakawan; Islamic History

INTRODUCTION

Punakawan wayang characters such as Semar, Nala Gareng, Petruk, and Bagong, were puppet figures created by Sunan Kalijaga during the spread of Islam in Indonesia. Sunan Kalijaga did not only use traditional puppets (wayang) to invite people to Islam. He also modified these puppets by their physical forms and their concepts of story to conform with Islamic shari’a. Sunan Kalijaga believed that acculturating Islam and the culture of society could make the dissemination of Islam easier, so he acculturated the wayang (Javanese culture) with the teachings of Islam. Even the names of Punakawan figures were believed to be the loanwords from the Arabic languages that was intended as the invitation of Islam to the society.

Based on data that was collected from the article of Nidiya Zuraya, published in republika.co.id, and Ardian Kresna’s book, titled ‘Punakawan: Simbol Kerendahan Hati Orang Jawa’, the name of Semar is derived from اسم سمار / sammir which means to be readily available and اسم إسمار / ismaar which means nail. The name of Nala Gareng is associated with اسم نال قرين / inala qariin which means having many friends and it could be derived from اسم خير / khairun which means good. The name of Petruk is derived from اسم فترك / fatruk which means leaving. The name of Bagong comes from اسم باغى / bagal which means rebellious.1

However, the assumption that the names of Punakawan figures are loanwords from Arabic language has not been proved scientifically, especially from the linguistics point of view. In fact, according to Ramadan Abd. Tawwab as in Mut’a’ali, at least phonological, morphological, and semantic analysis must be done in order to determine whether an element in a language may have been derived from other language.2

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Therefore, this study aims to describe Punakawan wayang characters and describe the analysis phonologically, morphologically, and semantically on Punakawan wayang characters. Both purposes can prove whether the names of the Punakawan figure are indeed derived from Arabic.

**METHOD**

This Research uses qualitative methods with literature study approach. Sudaryanto explained that there are three essential steps in linguistic research. There are (1) data collecting, (2) data analysis, (3) explanation of results. Those methods must be done consecutively to obtain perfect results.  

In the first step, data was collected based on news published by republika.co.id on September 11, 2012 titled ‘Wayang Character and Syi’ar of Islam’ dan ‘Punakawan: The Symbol of Humble of Javanese’ written by Ardian Kresna. Data was collected based on Encyclopedia of Indonesian Puppet from first up to sixth edition published by Senawangi. Based on obtained data, there are four characters in Punakawan Wayang. They are Semar, Nala Gareng, Petruk, and Bagong. Those four characters which their names are assumed to have been derived from Arabic language. The following two tables show the details.

### Table 1. List of Punakawan Character Names and Assumption of Its Origin

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Origin (Assumption)</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Semar</td>
<td>سمّر - سَمَّر</td>
<td>Be available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>إسمار - إسمار</td>
<td>Nail</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Gareng/Nala Gareng</td>
<td>خير - خَيْر</td>
<td>Good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>نال قرين – naala qariin</td>
<td>Number of Friends</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Petruk</td>
<td>فاترك - فَاتِرَك</td>
<td>Leaving</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Bagong</td>
<td>بغي - بَغِي</td>
<td>To rebel</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

An addition of research data is given as a contribution to revise previous assumptions and to add other possibilities as well. This was done to answer the topic of the research. The following table is the additional data I have contributed.

### Table 2 List of Punakawan Character Names with Researcher Assumption

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Origin (Assumption)</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Semar</td>
<td>مسمار - مسمار</td>
<td>Nail</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>rasama - رسم</td>
<td>To Describe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Bagong</td>
<td>ياغ - يَعَج</td>
<td>Rebel</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Furthermore, the data from both tables was analyzed in the second step. The four Punakawan Wayang names are analyzed by using phonological, morphological, and semantics approaches. Those three approaches are necessary to answer whether Punakawan Wayang names are truly loanwords. For semantic analysis, specifically, this research uses Al Munawwir Arab-Indonesia dictionary 14th edition (1997), Arabic-English Dictionary by Hans Wehr (1976), and explanation of Punakawan characters philosophy in the book titled ‘Punakawan: The Symbol of Humble of Javanese’ written by Ardian Kresna. The use of meaning character for each figure is preferred because the loanwords of Punakawan figures are related to Islamic dakwah (invitation to Islam) adapted to the character of each figure.

The final step is the explanation of results. After the data is analyzed, I will conclude the research results. The conclusion in this thesis is the answer from the topic of this research.
ANALYSIS

1. **Punakawan Wayang Figures**

Before heading to the discussion about Punakawan wayang figures, it is necessary to conduct a research about puppet itself. *Wayang*, or traditional puppet in Indonesia, actually means shadow. *Wayang* is a drawing that made on *Tal* leaf surface. As time went on, *wayang* changed into a human-like picture painted on the skin of an ox. The show of *wayang* is played by a director called *Dalang*.

*Wayang* is an art of act, music, crafting, speech, and literature. *Wayang* is not only a spectacle and entertainment. It is a media, religious invitation, education, and an understanding of the philosophy of people’s life.\(^5\) In this case, wayang is not only a show. It is a guidance for the society which contains philosophical teachings of human social life.

Along with the development of social life in the Java community, especially during the dissemination of Islam, the existence of Wayang is still maintained. The dissemination of Islam by nine Wali (scholar) or *Wali Sanga* was the second phase of dissemination of Islam. Previously, the first phase of Islam dissemination was done by *Mubalig*.\(^6\) *Sunan Kalijaga*, one member of Walisongo is the wali who used wayang show to spread Islam. Sunan Kalijaga acculturated Islamic teachings with culture of Wayang by the consensus with other walis. This led to alterations and additions made in wayang.

Various changes are made in wayang in order to be acceptable in Islam. The picture of wayang was made more similar to animals than a human and its point of view was changed to the side rather than upfront. The adjustments to the wayang were done as Islam prohibits a picture, image or painting about creature in a whole shape. In addition, there were modifications on the stories or plays to become more suitable in Islam. Story of Jamus Kalimosodo which tells about the *shahada* expression (the expression of submission to God and acknowledgment of the Messenger) is the example of the modification. Sunan Kalijaga added some new characters who acted as the companions of heroic soldiers, also as teachers, advisors, and true friends of the heroes. These figures are included in the Punakawan Wayang. Those figures are Semar, Nala Gareng, Petruk, and Bagong.\(^7\)

Semar is a Punakawan figure who acts as a companion, teacher, role model, and example to the heroes. His character is as calm as a still water when he faces problems. Other positive characteristics of Semar are smart, clever, and bold so he can strengthen principles of heroes. His criticism is sharp, he is a guard and always supervises the policies made by heroes. His life experience is very profound. He sometimes gives advice in a very strict language for the heroes. Semar has ‘Ki’ or ‘Kyai’ for his nickname in some plays. Semar always depicts or symbolizes good characters and advises the heroes to righteousness.\(^8\)

Next figure is Nala Gareng or Gareng. He is Semar’s adopted son very faithful to Semar. His roles are not so different with Semar. He always reminds other figures including heroes to act righteously. He plays as an advisor and a teacher, similar to Semar. On the other hand, what distinguishes Gareng with Semar is the number of friends that belongs to Gareng. Gareng has many friends and very little enemies. Gareng becomes a model for the heroes to always do the right thing, therefore he has many friends, not enemies. This makes Nala Gareng always brings peace in each story.\(^9\)

Another figure is Petruk which also Semar’s adopted son. The role of Petruk is dominant in wayang stories. Humorist characteristic of Petruk is the thing that wayang audience always waits for. Although Petruk is humorous, Petruk is still an unyielding figure in determining decisions and solutions of a problem. His firmness can be seen in Petruk Dadi Ratu story. His character as a figure is the one who commands the heroic soldiers to do righteousness and leave evil deeds. Even though in

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that story Petruk’s role was as an abuser of Jamus Kalimosodo, a message brought by Petruk for the audience is human should leave evil deeds by clinging firmly to the Shahada expression.\textsuperscript{10}

Last figure is Bagong. His character is known rebellious. If he sees an evil act, then he will not hold himself back to throw sharp critics. Its speaking style is bold, brave and gives the impression of selfishness. Bagong will criticize other wayang figures if he sees actions or events that not in accordance with rules and teachings.\textsuperscript{11}

2. Arabic Loanwords in The Naming of Punakawan Wayang Figures
   a. /sammir/- سمّر derived become Semar

   The word Semar, if it is derived from Sammir, has undergone a change in sound. Phonologically, this change occurs because some adjustments towards the difference of dialect between both native speakers. The adjustments that occur are from vowel words /a/ to /ǝ/ and /i/ to /a/ due to dialect differences and the elimination of germination (shaddah) due to Javanese language does not have germination.

   Moreover, there is a morphological change. This change automatically occurs following by the phonological changes. The deriving process of sammir or سمّر into Semar morphologically changes in its syllabic pattern. Sammir word has KVKKVK syllabic pattern. It changes into Semar which has KVKVK syllabic pattern. Moreover, there is a change of category from imperative-verb to noun.

   Semantically, there is a change of definition in the loanword Semar derived from Samir. The change of definition in this loanword is expanding. Previously, the definition of /sammir/- سمّر is to strengthen and to guide. Then it is derived into Semar whose character is as an advisor, teacher, and mentor. Strengthening could be considered as firm characteristic. A teacher or mentor certainly has a firmness in determining something and has the ability to direct anyone.

   b. /ismaarun/- إسمار derived into Semar

   There is phonological change if Semar’s name was derived from ismaarun. The change that occurs is metathesis or the change of order on /i/ phoneme in prefix which moves next to /s/ phoneme. Afterwards, /i/ phoneme changes into /ǝ/ due to dialect adjustment. Furthermore, there is a change on vowel which is /aa/ into /a/ due to adjustment towards Javanese language as it does not have long-read vocal. Lastly, there is elimination of suffix sound [-un] or tanwin as Arabs do not pronounce i’rab, therefore Javanese native speakers derive the word from its ismaar pronunciation instead of ismaarun.

   If Semar was derived from /ismaarun/- إسمار then it is a morphological change. Metathesis process has occurred and the tanwin sound is not pronounced, then it changes the pattern from VKKVKVK to KVVKV. Moreover, there is a category change from verb-noun into verb.

   Semantically, there is a change of definition if Semar was derived from ismaarun. This change of meaning occurs extensively. Ismaarun can be interpreted as a nail and this changes the meaning extensively due to Semar’s character as a critic. It shows one of the nature of nail which is sharp. In addition, the nature of nail is strengthening other objects as well as Semar who also strengthens other figures such as the soldiers. The nature of nail is sharp and strengthening, although the object that is sharp and strong is not necessarily a nail and could be another object.

   c. /naala qarin/- نال قرين which derived into Nala Gareng

   Nala Gareng’s name experienced a phonological adjustment if it was derived from naala qarin. This adjustment causes vowel changes. The /al/ vowel changes into /ǝl/, and /ii/ into /i/. Furthermore, /i/ vowel changes into /ǝ/ due to dialect differences. In addition, there is change in /g/ consonant into /g/, /e/ vowel into /ǝ/ due to the possibility of loanwords of /ǝ/ vowel into /ǝ/. There is also nasalization process (the process of the emergence of nasal sounds) that occurs on /l/ consonant into /n/ due to dialect differences.

   Morphologically, the adjustment only occurs on the category of the words naala from perfect-verb into noun. There is no category adjustment on qaarin words. Qaarin in Arabic is a noun as Gareng in Javanese as well.

\textsuperscript{10} Ibid, page 75—80
\textsuperscript{11} Ibid, page 81—84
There is no change of definition on the loanword Nala Gareng from /naala qariin/ - نال قرين which means many friends. Furthermore, both of them are combined and the definition becomes ‘he obtained many friends’. The definition has a strong relation with Nala Gareng’s role in each story. Nala Gareng is the figure who has many friends in every story. Nala Qariin and Nala Gareng share the same definition, that is obtaining many friends, thus that there is no change of definition in this loanword.

d. /fatruk/ - فاترك derived into Petruk

Petruk’s name experienced a phonological adjustment if it was derived from fatruk. The adjustments that occur are consonant /f/ become /p/ because Javanese language does not have /f/ consonant and vowel changes from /a/ into /e/. In addition, there is no phonological change if Petruk was derived from fatruk.

The loanword Petruk from fatruk experienced two category adjustment. Fatruk consists of a particle and imperative verb. Particle of ف which means ‘so that’ and اترك which means ‘to leave’. This shows a change of origin definition in Arabic and with definition of Petruk in wayang shows. The definition in Arabic is more general than the definition after it was derived which means ‘leave it and do righteousness’. Therefore, the loanword Petruk experiences a narrowed meaning change.

e. /baga/ - بغى derived into Bagong

There is a phonological change if Bagong was derived from baga. The changes occur due to dialect differences. The changes are consonant /g/ into /g/, vowel /i/ into /o/, and the emergence of nasal sound in suffix. Morphologically, this loanword has two changes. Baga is a perfect-tense verb and is derived into Bagong which is noun. In addition, nasalization process changed KVKV syllabic pattern into KVKVK.

Semantically, this loanword occurs a narrowed meaning changes. /baga/ - بغى could be defined as a rebellious action. It is related with Bagong figures which has a rebellious nature. Bagong’s personality of daring to criticize soldiers with sharp words when they do wrongdoings. This shows a narrowed meaning change due to rebellious action is more general than sharp criticism.

f. /khairun/ - خير which derived into Gareng

There are some phonological changes if Nala fareng or Gareng were derived from Khairun. The changes are /kh/ consonant into /g/ due to the same articulation area which is dorso-velar or the back of the tongue touches soft palate. Monophonization process on /ai/ diphthong into /a/ monophthong, and the emergence of nasala sound (nasalization) in suffix. However, the phonological reason of the change from /u/ into /e/ until now has not been discovered. Morphologically, tanwin sound disappears because i’rab is not usually pronounced. Thus, it turns into nasal sound. Furthermore, this loanword does not experience the change of category as both of words are noun.

Semantically, this loanword occurs a narrowed meaning change. /khairun/ - خير words means goodness.12 Afterwards, it was derived into Gareng with Nala Gareng as its full name. He is known as a figure who has many friends in world of wayang. Goodness is the nature that leads a person to have many friends. The change of meaning of this loanword is a narrowed meaning change due to the origin meaning is goodness and it is changed into a figure who has many friends. Having many friends is more specific than goodness. Having many friends definitely means having a good personality as well.

g. /mismaarun/ - مسمار which derived into Semar

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It is assumed that Semar was derived from *mismaar*. This is a revision for the assumption that Semar comes from ismaar as I could not find the lexical definition (word from dictionary based on Hans Wehr Arabic-English Dictionary and Al-Munawwir Arabic-Indonesia Dictionary) of ismaar.

If Semar was derived from mismaar, it is changed phonologically although the change is still not much different from the change if Semar is absorbed from ismaar. The changes are metathesis process in prefix, change of vowel from long to short, vowel changes, and the elimination of tanwin in suffix.

There is a morphological change if Semar was derived from *mismaar*. The change is from KVKKVKVK syllabic pattern into KVKVK. Meanwhile, there is no change in the category as both of words are noun.

Semantically, this loanword experienced expanded change of meaning. The meaning of /mismaar/ - مسمار is a nail, the nature of nail is certainly to strengthening and cementing. This is also the nature of Semar itself. Its role as a soldier’s advisor describes Semar as a firm figure and source of power for soldiers. The nature of nail is sharp and strengthening, although the object that sharp and strength not necessarily a nail, it could be another object.

### h. *rasama* - نسم which derived into Semar

It is assumed that Semar was derived from *rasama*. This is based on the proximity of meaning (will be further explained in the next paragraph). This loanword has some phonological changes, such as metathesis process in which /t/ consonant is moved from prefix to suffix. Moreover, there is a vowel change from /a/ into /o/ due to dialect adjustment.

Morphologically, this loanword has some changes in its category and pattern. Syllabic pattern of rasama is KVVKVK and it turns into KVKVK which is Semar. The change of category is from perfect-verb into noun.

Semantically this loanword experienced expanded change of meaning. Semar’s role as a teacher or advisor should become a model for soldiers. He is a good role model for soldiers. Therefore, the change of meaning on Semar figure if it was derived from /rasama/ - نسم is an expanded change of meaning.

### i. /baagin/ - باغ which derived into Bagong

It is assumed that the loanword Bagong was derived from *baagin* due to its proximity of meaning (will be further explained in the next paragraph). This loanword has some phonological changes, such as vowel change from long /aːg/ to short /a/, vowel change from /i/ to /o/ due to dialect differences. The consonant changes from /g/ to /g/, and there is an emergence of nasal sound from /n/ to /ŋ/ due to dialect differences.

Morphologically, there is no change of pattern in this loanword. Both of words have KVKNK as their syllabic pattern. There is no change in their category. Baagin in Arabic and Bagong in Javanese are categorically a noun.

Semantically, there is no change of meaning if Bagong was derived from baagin. /baagin/ - باغ which derived from /bagan/ - باغ means a rebel. The meaning from the origin word is a rebel and the meaning after it was derived is still same, which is ‘a soul who has rebellious nature’. Therefore, there is no change of meaning on the Bagong loanword from /baagin/ - باغ.

### CONCLUSION

The conclusion of this research is Punakawan wayang figure names (Semar, Nala Gareng, Petruk, Bagong) are loanwords from Arabic language. The name Semar could have been derived from *sammir*, *ismaar*, *mismar*, dan *rasama*. However, based on phonological, morphological, and semantic analysis, Semar is most likely derived from *sammir*. The name Nala Gareng could have been derived from naala qarin. The name Petruk could have been derived from *fatruk*. The name Bagong could have been derived from baga or baagin. In this case, Bagos is most likely derived from baagin based on phonological, morphological, and semantic analysis. Gareng’s loanword from khair is not a loanword from Arabic as the change that occurs is not in accordance linguistically, especially phonology.

The naming of Punakawan wayang figures in the world of wayang was done due to the acculturation between Javanese culture and the teachings of Islam made by Walisongo, especially
Sunan Kalijaga in order to invite people to Islam. Sunan Kalijaga was a clever and smart director (dalang). He acculturated the teachings of Islam and Javanese society cultures such as wayang to spread Islam so that the dissemination of Islam did not face any difficulty. Therefore, the naming of Punakawan wayang figure derived from Arabic is a proof that the dissemination of Islam in Java was done by acculturating two different cultures.

Up till now, there are still some figures beside Punakawan wayang and terms in world of wayang which are also assumed as loanwords from Arabic. This means the research by socio-linguistic analysis is necessary to check the accuracy of similar hypothesis that may have been made.

REFERENCES:


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