

# The Javanese philosophy behind the *Panakawan* characters: An ethnolinguistic analysis of the play *Semar Mbangun Kahyangan*

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## ABSTRACT

This ethnolinguistic analysis delves into the world of *Panakawan* characters in the Javanese play "*Semar Mbangun Kahyangan*," unveiling the profound tapestry of Javanese philosophy into their portrayal. The *Panakawan*, celebrated for their wit and linguistic artistry, stand as iconic figures in traditional Javanese *wayang* (shadow puppetry) and theater. This study explored their linguistic and cultural dimensions, illuminating their role as carriers of Javanese wisdom and cultural values. Employing ethnolinguistic methods, it examined the linguistic features, discourse patterns, and cultural intricacies interwoven within the dialogues and actions of the *Panakawan* characters. The analysis uncovers language's role in conveying Javanese philosophical concepts, moral teachings, and the interconnectedness of life and society within the play. It dissected the linguistic strategies, humor, and linguistic playfulness of the *Panakawan*, revealing their capacity to impart profound philosophical messages while captivating audiences. Furthermore, this study also revealed the inseparable bond between language, culture, and the embodiment of Javanese philosophy in the play "*Semar Mbangun Kahyangan*." It offers insights into the *Panakawan's* function as cultural emissaries and guardians of the Javanese ethos. This ethnolinguistic exploration extends an invitation to readers to uncover the concealed Javanese philosophy within the eloquent expressions and deeds of the *Panakawan*. It is expected to provide a significant contribution to ethnolinguistics, cultural studies, and philosophy by spotlighting the *Panakawan* characters' pivotal role as conduits for conveying the profound philosophy that shapes Javanese culture and character.

**Keywords:** Ethnolinguistics; Javanese Philosophy; *Panakawan*; *Wayang*

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## INTRODUCTION

Javanese is renowned for its complex politeness system, rich vocabulary, and distinct script (*Hanacaraka*), making it a fascinating subject of linguistic inquiry. However, beyond its linguistic complexity, Javanese is a living testament to the interconnectedness of language and culture. The development of Javanese linguistics in its correlations with culture has undergone significant transformation and expansion in recent years,

reflecting the ever-evolving landscape of linguistic study, cultural studies, and the preservation of Javanese heritage (see Nardiati et al., 2023; Saputra et al., 2023; Sari, 2023). To be precise, Javanese ethnolinguistics explores the intricate relationship between language and culture within the context of the Javanese people, their language, and the rich tapestry of traditions that define their identity. In the realm of ethnolinguistics, the Javanese language serves as a frame for the hearts and minds of the

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Javanese people, reflecting their values, beliefs, and cultural expressions (Pandharipande et al., 2019, p.5).

In recent years, Javanese ethnolinguistics has experienced a resurgence in interest and scholarship. This revival can be attributed to various factors, including the recognition of the importance of preserving linguistic diversity (Vander Klok, 2019, p. 357), the increasing influence of globalization (Rokhman et al., 2022, p. 1), and a growing appreciation for the cultural richness embedded in the Javanese language (Parangu, 2020; Suprpto et al., 2023; Tiani, 2020). Researchers and scholars have embarked on projects to document and analyze the dialects and linguistic variations within Javanese. This not only involves traditional fieldwork but also leverages modern technological tools for recording, transcribing, and preserving spoken and written Javanese in its diverse forms. The documentation contributes to a more comprehensive understanding of the intricate relationship between language and culture.

The intersection of ethnolinguistics and cultural preservation is particularly evident in the efforts to document and revitalize traditional Javanese performing arts, including *wayang kulit* (shadow puppetry) and traditional Javanese theatre. These art forms serve as repositories of linguistic richness, storytelling traditions, and cultural symbolism (Lutfianto & Junaidi, 2022; Sedana, 2019). Researchers and practitioners are actively engaged in not only studying these art forms but also collaborating with communities to ensure their continued practice and transmission to future generations since it also serves as a medium of mental and intellectual enlightenment, the most important aspect in character education (Susilo et al., 2021, p. 239).

The correlation between wayang kulit (shadow puppetry) and ethnolinguistics studies is a profound reflection of the intricate interplay between language, culture, and Javanese philosophy (Arifin, 2018, p. 152). Wayang kulit, a quintessential Javanese traditional art form, can serve as a linguistic treasure trove for ethnolinguistic exploration. The dialogues and narratives within wayang kulit are linguistically rich, often employing the elevated register of the Javanese language, known as *Krama Inggil* (Harahap et al., 2023). It is within this linguistic stylization that the depth of Javanese cultural and philosophical concepts is unveiled. The characters act as carriers of these cultural values and wisdom, using language as a medium to transmit them to the audience. This symbiotic relationship between wayang kulit and ethnolinguistics enables scholars to delve into the linguistic intricacies of the performances and, in turn, better understand the profound philosophy that underlies Javanese culture.

Furthermore, the collaborative efforts in preserving wayang kulit contribute significantly to character education, a core component of Javanese philosophy (Siringo-ringo et al., 2022, pp. 69-84.). Wayang stories often revolve around moral dilemmas, ethical choices, and the consequences of actions, offering valuable life lessons. The characters, their dialogues, and the narratives serve as vehicles for conveying profound philosophical messages while entertaining the audience. It is through these captivating performances that Javanese youth are introduced to the importance of compassion, interconnectedness, and the broader ethos of Javanese philosophy. In this way, the study of wayang kulit within the realm of ethnolinguistics not only enriches linguistic studies but also aligns with the enduring cultural values and philosophies that shape Javanese character and identity.

Despite the profound significance of studies on wayang kulit from an ethnolinguistics perspective, the field remains relatively underexplored, with only a limited number of comprehensive studies conducted to date. Previous studies in this domain have primarily focused on specific aspects of wayang kulit, such as linguistic features (Prakosa, 2019; Widagdo et al., 2020), dialectal variations (Harahap et al., 2023), and cultural symbolism (Hadzantonis, 2022; Utomo, 2020). Only a few of them offer holistic investigations that encompass the intricate relationship between language, culture, and character development within the context of Javanese philosophy, such as Siringo-ringo et al. (2022) and Nuswantoro et al. (2022). These earlier studies have laid the foundation for the understanding of the linguistic and cultural dimensions of wayang kulit, shedding light on its linguistic richness and cultural symbolism. However, there is still a significant gap in the exploration of the philosophical underpinnings and character education aspects embedded within wayang kulit performances. To comprehensively unravel the multifaceted interactions between language, culture, and philosophy, more extensive and integrated ethnolinguistic studies are needed. Such studies could provide valuable insights into how wayang kulit serves as a repository of linguistic and cultural traditions, carrying the profound philosophy that defines Javanese culture and character. In this context, this study seeks to contribute to the growing body of work in this field by providing a more holistic ethnolinguistic analysis of wayang kulit, with a particular emphasis on its role in conveying Javanese philosophy and character education.

This paucity of comprehensive ethnolinguistic studies is not only confined to wayang kulit but extends to the broader context of Javanese traditional performing arts, including the study of Panakawan characterization and character education in the play *Semar Mbangun Kahyangan* (SMK). The

Panakawan characters in Javanese culture, renowned for their linguistic artistry and cultural significance, share notable commonalities with wayang kulit in terms of their roles as carriers of cultural values and philosophies (see Muthoifin et al., 2022, p. 252). They, too, act as messengers of Javanese wisdom, employing language as a medium to transmit profound philosophical messages while simultaneously entertaining and enlightening the audience (Hidayah & Waluyo, 2019, pp. 43-47). Therefore, it becomes increasingly evident that the ethnolinguistic exploration of Panakawan characterization and character education in the play SMK is not only warranted but can significantly contribute to bridging the existing gap in our understanding of the linguistic, cultural, and philosophical dimensions of Javanese traditional performing arts. This study aims to provide a more comprehensive analysis that aligns the intricate interactions between language, culture, character development, and philosophy within both the panakawan characters in wayang kulit and SMK, offering fresh insights into the profound cultural and philosophical dimensions that shape Javanese character and identity.

## **METHOD**

This investigation constitutes an ethnolinguistic inquiry that employed a descriptive-qualitative approach, as outlined in prior works (Darmawan, 2023; Komara & Pujasari, 2019). Data for this study were extracted from the transcription of a wayang performance accessible on YouTube. The specific wayang kulit performance under consideration in this online broadcast was made available on June 13, 2017. The staging of the puppet show, featuring the *Semar Mbangun Kahyangan* play, predates 2008, marking the year when the puppeteer, Ki Hadi Sugito, passed away. Notably, Ki Hadi Sugito was an esteemed maestro in the Yogyakarta-style shadow puppetry. The YouTube channel presenting this video is Wayang Kulit Live, boasting 21.7k subscribers, with the video itself garnering appreciation from 2.5k viewers.

## **Data Collection**

In the pursuit of a nuanced exploration of the linguistic and cultural intricacies characterizing the Panakawan figures, this ethnolinguistic study was underpinned by a multifaceted methodology. Central to this approach was the meticulous examination of textual elements within the play, involving an in-depth analysis of linguistic features, discourse patterns, and embedded cultural intricacies present in the dialogues and actions of the Panakawan characters. This textual scrutiny served as the foundational pillar, enabling a comprehensive understanding of the linguistic

nuances woven into the fabric of the play (Mortaza et al., 2023).

To complement the textual analysis, a second dimension of data collection was introduced, involving the deep observation of the play record (Löhr et al., 2020). This method diverged from direct live observation, providing an opportunity to capture and analyze the unfolding linguistic and cultural dynamics within the context of the play. The observation was instrumental in elucidating the real-world manifestations of language, culture, and the interactions of the Panakawan characters with the audience (see Peniro & Cyntas, 2019, pp. 1-13). This nuanced recording approach aimed to offer a more controlled and repeatable observation, allowing for a thorough analysis of specific linguistic nuances and cultural expressions in the Panakawan characters' performances (see also Alasmari, 2023; and Stepputtis et al., 2020).

The amalgamation of these two methodological strands, textual analysis, and recorded observations, fostered a holistic and detailed examination of the Panakawan characters in Semar Mbangun Kahyangan. By employing a multifaceted approach, this study endeavored to unravel the interconnected linguistic and cultural dimensions that define the portrayal of Panakawan figures, shedding light on their role as cultural ambassadors and carriers of Javanese wisdom within the rich tapestry of the traditional Javanese play.

The data purposively pertains to two Panakawan characters, namely Semar and Petruk. Despite the existence of at least four Panakawans, Semar and Petruk take center stage as the primary characters in the play. In contrast, the other two, Gareng and Bagong, function as subordinate figures, primarily serving as entertainment entities through jesting, singing, and dancing. Distinct from Gareng and Bagong, Semar and Petruk assume a more profound role in wayang performances, being characterized by seriousness and carrying greater significance for both the broader Javanese community and specifically for wayang enthusiasts.

Semar, recognized as a servant figure in wayang, holds a mythical status as the servant of the reincarnation of the god Ismaya, serving as a guardian within Javanese society (Muthoifin et al., 2022). Semar's existence transcends various perspectives and contributes substantially to the cultural discourse surrounding wayang. Similarly, the character Petruk is often synonymous with the puppeteer, given his multifaceted abilities reminiscent of the puppeteer. Petruk is regarded as a more versatile figure compared to Gareng and Bagong. Both Petruk and Semar emerge as serious and representative personas in wayang, conveying diverse messages, symbols, and philosophies (Noorzeha et al., 2022). Their roles are held in high esteem by supporters of wayang, reflecting a deeper

reverence for the nuanced meanings encapsulated in their performances.

**Data Analysis**

The data collected through a meticulous combination of textual analysis and performance observation undergoes rigorous examination within the purview of ethnolinguistic frameworks (Foley, 2006; Rasinger, 2013; Wierzbicka, 2016). This analytical process is rooted in an extensive review of existing literature on Javanese linguistic and cultural studies, establishing a solid theoretical foundation. By employing these frameworks, the analysis delves into the intricate linguistic strategies, humor, and linguistic playfulness exhibited by the Panakawan characters. Emphasis is placed on unraveling the nuanced ways in which these characters contribute to the transmission of Javanese philosophical concepts and cultural values through their dialogues and actions (Noorzeha et al., 2022, p. 107). This approach aligns with the insights offered by Wijayanti (2019), who underscores the paramount importance of comprehending the "interactions between Javanese language and Javanese cultural values". Their perspective serves as a guiding principle, informing the research's overarching goal to provide a comprehensive understanding of the linguistic and cultural dimensions encapsulated within the Panakawan characters.

In exploring the linguistic dimensions, the analysis delves into the semantic intricacies embedded in the dialogues of the Panakawan characters. The study identifies linguistic nuances and cultural references that contribute to the layers of meaning conveyed through their language (Hadzantonis, 2022; Siringo-ringo et al., 2022). Additionally, an examination of humor and linguistic playfulness seeks to unveil the expressive capacities of the Panakawan characters, shedding light on their unique linguistic styles that captivate audiences. This thorough linguistic scrutiny is complemented by a parallel investigation into the cultural dimensions manifested in the performances. It is expected to be able to reveal how the linguistic expressions of the Panakawan characters serve as

conduits for the transmission of broader cultural values and philosophies embedded within the Javanese tradition.

Furthermore, the idea of a reciprocal relationship between language and cultural values from Noels et al. (2020, p. 55) guides the study's exploration of the interplay between the linguistic choices of the Panakawan characters and the underlying cultural ethos. The analysis seeks to uncover instances where linguistic expressions serve as reflections of cultural norms, societal principles, and philosophical underpinnings specific to the Javanese context. By intricately linking linguistic elements to cultural values, the study aspires to contribute to a nuanced understanding of how language functions as a vehicle for the preservation and dissemination of cultural heritage within the realm of Javanese traditional performing arts.

The multifaceted approach employed in this study, drawing from ethnolinguistic frameworks and existing literature, is expected to underscore the richness of linguistic and cultural exploration embedded within the Panakawan characters. The nuanced interplay between language and culture, as articulated through the dialogues and performances, not only elucidates the distinctive linguistic styles of the characters but also sheds light on the profound cultural values and philosophical messages (Baker-Bell, 2020) woven into the fabric of Javanese traditional storytelling.

**FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

**1. Linguistic Features and Characterizations**

The findings in this study encompass linguistic data extracted from every conversation involving the two panakawans, Semar and Petruk. Additionally, other data include select conversations from other characters that contribute to the characterization of Semar and Petruk. In consideration of the purposive focus on the linguistic features in characterizing Petruk and Semar, irrelevant data were excluded. The performance had a total duration of seven hours; hence, the study chose to omit irrelevant data in the manuscript. For further detail, the following table outlines the number of dialogue extracts.

**Table 1**  
*Number of Linguistic Expressions Extracted from Data Source*

Number	Sayer	Linguistic Expressions	%
1	Semar	32	27.12
2	Petruk	24	20.34
3	Kresna	13	11.02
4	Puntadewa	12	10.17
5	Werkudara	10	8.47
6	Janaka	8	6.78
7	Nakula	7	5.93
8	Sadewa	7	5.93
9	Other Individuals	5	4.24
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>118</b>	<b>100</b>

In essence, the narrative of *Semar Mbangun Kahyangan* unfolds with Semar, the erstwhile servant of the Pandawa, undertaking the ambitious task of constructing Kahyangan, the celestial abode of the Gods. Semar dispatches his emissary, Petruk, to extend invitations to the Pandawas and Kresna, the Pandawa adviser embodying Lord Vishnu. Petruk's mission includes the solicitation of three cherished Pandawa heirlooms: (1) *Jamus Kalimasada*, (2) *Tumbak Karawelang*, and (3) *Songsong Tunggulnaga*. However, Kresna vehemently opposes Semar's endeavor, questioning the worthiness of Semar to undertake such a celestial construction. This narrative provides a foundation for drawing ethnolinguistic data, as the linguistic nuances in the dialogues and interactions between Semar, Petruk, and Kresna become crucial elements in understanding the cultural and philosophical dimensions embedded within the narrative.

Despite Kresna's reservations, Semar persists, and Kresna endeavors to dissuade the Pandawas from participating. This tension between characters and the ensuing dialogues offers valuable insights into the linguistic features that convey cultural values and philosophical underpinnings, forming an integral part of the ethnolinguistic analysis. Concurrently, Kresna conveys Semar's intentions to Batara Guru in Kahyangan, prompting a response in the form of Batari Durga and her retinue being sent to disrupt Semar's plans. The opposition intensifies

with the interference of the Korawas. These narrative elements provide rich material for an in-depth ethnolinguistic examination of how cultural values are expressed and contested through language in the context of traditional Javanese storytelling.

Ultimately, Semar elucidates to the Pandawa that the celestial construction is symbolic, representing the aspiration to forge a noble human personality. He contends that the act of building Kahyangan serves as a metaphor for the cultivation of human character. Consequently, Semar himself emerges as a significant heirloom, contributing to the development of human personality. Following Semar's explanation, Kresna extends his apologies, leading to the resolution of conflicts, including the defeat of Batari Durga and her entourage and the thwarting of the Korawas' interference.

These narrative resolutions offer further opportunities for ethnolinguistic exploration, delving into the linguistic strategies employed to convey reconciliation, resolution, and the embodiment of cultural values within the traditional Javanese storytelling context. The characterizations of Semar and Petruk can be traced from the linguistic features that appeared in the play. To sum up, the ensuing tables represent the profound narrative and philosophical dimensions related to the characterizations of Semar and Petruk. They serve as rich sources of ethnolinguistic data for in-depth analysis.

**Table 2**  
*Characterization of Semar*

Number	Description	Characterization
1	Semar is an heirloom and is an important figure in discussion	Friendliness/ Communicativeness Value, Democratic Value
2	Semar's actions are right	Honesty Value, Responsibility Value
3	Semar is a God who becomes human	Responsibility Value
4	Semar is a God in disguise (human)	Responsibility Value, Social Care Value
5	Semar's knowledge is like honey	Social Care Value, Responsibility Value
6	As a teacher, Semar is highly respected	Humble Value, Religiosity Value

**Table 3**  
*Characterization of Petruk*

Number	Description	Characterization
1	Petruk looks smart	Courage, Responsible
2	Petruk represents the dalang that is being responded to	Creative, Responsible
3	Petruk, representing the dalang, advises on the meaning of the song and conveys a prayer for all viewers	Creativity Value, Religiosity Value
4	Petruk is the most capable and responsible son of Semar	Achievement Appreciative Value, Responsibility Value

In the context of wayang, Semar is commonly portrayed as the manifestation of the deity Sang Hyang Ismaya (see Hidayatullah, 2021, p. 63). Sang Hyang Ismaya, despite outwardly appearing unattractive and assuming the guise of an ordinary person, carries the responsibilities of being a guardian, mentor, protector, savior, and guide of

nobility, embodying the virtues of a dignified human being (Yousof, 2014). In the rendition by Ki Hadi Sugito, Semar is similarly depicted as a divine entity. This portrayal is explicitly affirmed through a dialogue between the characters Antasena and Petruk, the son of Semar.

<i>senajan</i>	<i>Tatagelar</i>	<i>titah</i>	<i>Ngercapada</i>	<i>ning</i>	
although	look	being	world	but	
<i>biyen</i>	<i>Bapakmu</i>	<i>duwe</i>	<i>Wewenang</i>	<i>neng</i>	<i>Suralaya</i>
was	your father	have	authority	in	heavenly world

“Although your father is an ordinary man, he used to have authority in the heavenly world.”  
(*Excerpt 1, 00:01:40*)

The excerpt highlights the assertion that despite Semar's current human status, he once held celestial authority as the deity Sang Hyang Ismaya. This indicates a transformative aspect of Semar's character, transitioning from a divine being to an ordinary man. The linguistic choice of describing Semar as an "ordinary man" while acknowledging his past authority in the heavenly world reflects the cultural and philosophical richness of Javanese

storytelling. This juxtaposition of ordinary and divine attributes within Semar's characterization showcases the intricate interplay between language and cultural representation, contributing to a nuanced understanding of Semar's multifaceted identity in the Semar Mbangun Kahyangan narrative. A God character, Narada strengthens it as follows.

<i>Estunipun</i>	<i>wonten</i>	<i>dewa</i>	<i>anamur</i>	<i>titah</i>	<i>badhe</i>
indeed	exist	god	be	creature	will
<i>mbabar</i>	<i>kautaman</i>	<i>dhateng</i>	<i>para</i>	<i>putra</i>	<i>wayahipun</i>
teach	kindness	to	the	sons	offsprings

(2: 55).

“Indeed, there is a God who disguises himself as a human who will teach kindness to his children and grandchildren.”  
(*Excerpt 2, 00:02:55*)

The narrative commences with Narada reporting to Batara Guru about the world's chaotic state. A revered deity, Narada's insights influence gods and warriors, including Batara Guru and the kesatria. Narada reveals that Sang Hyang Ismaya, disguised as Semar, seeks to impart teachings of kindness, leading to conflict when Kresna opposes Semar. Semar's divine embodiment gains validation through the character Puntadewa. In a succinct discussion, the cosmic struggle unfolds as Semar's

teachings clash with opposition, revealing moral and philosophical dimensions. The language choices in this narrative reflect the cultural richness of Javanese storytelling. The interplay of divine personas and moral teachings exemplifies how language intricately conveys complex cultural concepts within traditional narratives, offering insights into the Semar Mbangun Kahyangan play's cultural and philosophical depths.

<i>Tata</i>	<i>Gelar</i>	<i>Penjenengan</i>	<i>Menika</i>	<i>Kaki</i>	<i>Semar Badranaya</i>	<i>Nanging</i>
way	physical	you	(part.)	oldman	Semar Badranaya	but
<i>Menggahing</i>	<i>Batos</i>	<i>Penjenengan</i>	<i>Menika</i>	<i>Namung</i>	<i>minangka</i>	<i>Tetameng</i>
Way	inner	you	(part.)	only	as	disguise

“From what appears, you are Semar Badranaya, but on the inner side you are just a cover.”  
(*Excerpt 3, 00:05:14*)

In the given narrative context, when confronting Semar, Puntadewa chose to employ Bahasa Krama Inggil, the most refined form of Javanese language, in contrast to his usual use of Bahasa Ngoko or the more casual Javanese language, which, while amicable, lacked the necessary reverence toward Semar, who functioned as his servant. Recognizing Semar as the embodiment of the Ismaya God during this encounter, Puntadewa deemed it imperative to adopt a more respectful tone. When questioned by Semar about his use of Bahasa Krama Inggil, Puntadewa revealed his acknowledgment of Semar's divine

nature, asserting that Semar was, in fact, a deity. Semar, however, promptly interrupted Puntadewa's statement for two reasons. Firstly, the general audience was already aware of Semar's status as the embodiment of the Ismaya God. Secondly, Semar deemed it unnecessary to assert his divine identity, aligning with the overarching theme of the play, denoted by the title SMK, emphasizing Semar's role rather than explicitly highlighting his divine nature as Ismaya Mbangun Kahyangan would suggest.

Furthermore, Kresna, serving as an advisor to the Pandawa, expresses the following.

*Kakang Semar menika ugi pusaka.....*  
 Brother Semar Is also an heirloom

*Yen Yayi Prabu dereng saparembag kaliyan kakang Semar,*  
 If yayi prabu have not discussed it with brother Semar

*menika dereng sampurna*  
 It is not yet perfect

“Brother Semar is also an heirloom, If you have not discussed it with Kakang Semar, it is not perfect yet.”  
 (Excerpt 4, 00:00: 46)

The quoted passage emphasizes Semar's pivotal role among the Pandawa, describing him as an "heirloom" symbolizing reliability and wisdom. This characterization signifies that perfection is contingent upon consulting with Semar, underscoring his central position in decision-making. In an ethnolinguistic analysis, the use of "heirloom" reveals the rich cultural and linguistic nuances within the Javanese language, conveying the idea that Semar is a valued legacy of wisdom passed through generations. The linguistic strategies

employed highlight the interconnectedness of language and culture, showcasing how Semar's portrayal reflects profound cultural values in traditional Javanese storytelling. This ethnolinguistic exploration offers insights into the linguistic choices made to convey cultural nuances, providing a deeper understanding of the cultural and philosophical dimensions embedded in the Semar Mbangun Kahyangan play. This is in accordance with what Petruk stated to Gareng and Bagong, after receiving an explanation from Antasena, as follows.

*Sing dianggep madu kuwi kawruhe bapak,*  
 What is considered honey is the knowledge of father

*Sing ana njero atine bapak, ya kuwi unen unen*  
 What is (exist) inside the heart of father is the talk about

*Bapak bakal mbangun kayangan, merga arep medharake kawruh*  
 The father is going to build the heaven because It will teach knowledge

*Diwejangke marang para bendara Sing supaya bisa manunggal,*  
 To be conveyed to the masters so they can be united

*Mula pasemone nganggo pusaka Telu*  
 therefore symbols using heirloom three

“... what is considered honey is the knowledge of father, Semar, what is inside his heart, yes, the talk about father who is going to build Kahyangan, because it will teach knowledge to be conveyed to the bendaras or masters so they can be united, therefore with symbols using three heirlooms”

(Excerpt 5, 00:00: 48)

Petruk's statement, characterizing Semar's knowledge as honey—both sweet and beneficial—supports the overarching portrayal of Semar. In constructing Kahyangan, Semar aims to unify the Pandawa by imparting this valuable knowledge. The symbolism of three heirlooms, namely Jamus Kalimasada, Tumbak Karawelang, and Songsong Tunggul naga, represents the concept of unity. In essence, Petruk's words not only emphasize the sweetness and value of Semar's knowledge but also illustrate its pivotal role in fostering unity among the Pandawa. In an ethnolinguistic analysis, the metaphorical use of "knowledge as honey" reveals cultural nuances within the language, contributing to a richer understanding of the cultural significance attached to Semar's wisdom and its representation in traditional Javanese storytelling.

Initially, the Pandawa faced a dilemma between heeding Semar's invitation to Karang Kabolotan and complying with Kresna's belief that Semar's desire to build Kahyangan was questionable. Kresna judged Semar guilty, advising the Pandawa not to attend Semar's gathering. To ascertain the truth, the Pandawa resorted to the heirloom room, seeking validation for Semar's intentions. According to the ritual, if, after the Pandawa's prayer, the three heirlooms of Pandawa exhibited movement towards Semar's location, it would signify Semar's correctness; otherwise, it would indicate his error. In practice, the three heirlooms indeed shifted towards Semar's place, conclusively confirming Pandawa's realization that Semar was in the right.

*Yen pusaka banjur jengkar saka pasareyan*  
*if The heirloom then moved from Their place*

*Iku katarimah Kakang semar bener*  
*It's Accepted Brother Semar is right*

*yen ora katarimah Ateges kakang Semar luput tingkah lakune*  
*if It's not accepted that's mean brother Semar wrong He did*

“If the heirlooms move from their place, it is accepted and that Kakang Semar is right, if not accepted, that means Kakang Semar did something wrong”

*(Excerpt 6, 00:01: 20)*

*Paripurnaning cipta pusaka sanalika musna saka padunungan,*  
*After praying the heirlooms were instantly vanished from Its places*

*Jamus Kalimasada, Tumbak Karawelang, Songsong Tunggulnaga*  
*Jamus Kalimasada Tumbak Karawelang And Songsong Tunggulnaga*

*Mendra saka padunungan tumuju Karang Kabolotan*  
*moved from Their place to Karang Kabolotan*

“After praying, the heirlooms have instantly vanished from their places. Jamus Kalimasada, Tumbak Karawelang, and Songsong Tunggulnaga moved from their place to Karang Kabolotan”

*(Excerpt 7, 00:01: 26).*

Based on these explanations, it can be inferred that Semar, as a servant embodying the Ismaya God, is acting in accordance with correctness in constructing Kahyangan. This correctness is demonstrated through the imparting of virtuous knowledge, as Semar possesses a profound and noble understanding. Semar's portrayal in the play transcends that of a mere human character; rather, it encapsulates profound thoughts forming the foundation of his philosophy.

An additional aspect of meriting analysis pertains to the characterization of Petruk. The term

"metruk," previously mentioned, utilized by the dalang for self-identification, extends beyond a mere designation. Ki Hadi Sugito employs the character of Petruk as a personal identification within the play. Petruk serves as the dalang's representative, conveying information to the audience and establishing legitimacy, signifying Petruk as a responsible messenger. This is evident in Petruk's dialogue with Antasena, where he states the following.

*Kowe mau seka ngendi*  
*you will*

*kok yahmene andang metu ?*  
*How come at this hour You just appeared*

*Nggih jane kula pun siyap-siyap*  
*Well actually I have prepared*

*lakon sing apik Ning*  
*play a good but*

*sing dikersakke kudu lakon niki kok.*  
*What is wanted most this play is*

*Kula ya mung kari ndherek mawon,*  
*I just to obey only*

*Nyatane Kula ya bisa*  
*In fact, I Can do it too*

“Where have you been and how come you have appeared at this hour?”

“Well, actually I have prepared a good play, but what is wanted is this play. I just obey, in fact I can do it too”

*(Excerpt 8, 00:01: 37)*



The excerpt, rooted in wayang purwa tradition, challenges norms by featuring Petruk's appearance in the early scenes of the play rather than the typical midnight *gara-gara* setting. Within the narrative, Petruk assumes the role of a guest at the Amarta Kingdom, engaging in a dialogue with Antasena, symbolizing the general audience's inquiry. Petruk's clever response articulates that his presence aligns with the nature of the play. Despite Petruk's capacity as the *dalang* capable of a more elaborate

performance, his role as a messenger necessitates responsiveness to the audience's desire for the play. This dual role underscores the complex nature of Petruk's characterization, functioning as both a messenger and a representation of the *dalang*'s identity. In an ethnolinguistic analysis, these narrative choices unveil linguistic intricacies, showcasing how language is wielded to convey nuanced cultural and performative elements within the traditional Javanese storytelling of the play.

<i>Yen</i> If	<i>Penjenengan</i> your honour	<i>dalem</i>	<i>ngendika</i> says	<i>kula</i> That I	<i>pun</i> am	<i>dhawuhi</i> ordered	<i>wangsul</i> to be sent home
<i>Kula</i> I	<i>Boten saged</i> cannot		<i>nampi</i> accept	<i>jer</i> because	<i>ing</i> In	<i>mriki</i> here	
<i>Kula</i> I am	<i>sowan</i> to visit	<i>Prabu</i> Prabu	<i>Puntadewa,</i> Puntadewa	<i>boten</i> not	<i>sowan</i> To visit	<i>ing</i> to	<i>Dwarawati,</i> Dwarawati
<i>Menika</i> This	<i>boten</i> does not	<i>nyepelekaken,</i> Mean to belittle		<i>ning</i> in	<i>urute.</i> order		

“If Your Honour says that I am to be sent home, I cannot accept that, because I am here to visit Prabu Puntadewa, not Dwarawati, this does not mean to belittle (to Prabu Kresna)”  
(Excerpt 9, 00:01: 00)

Petruk's linguistic abilities, including his command of Javanese macapat songs, contribute to the narrative's cultural richness. The portrayal of Petruk as a clever messenger not only highlights linguistic nuances in traditional Javanese storytelling but also emphasizes the interconnectedness between language, character development, and cultural representation. Petruk's utilization of the Pangkur song serves as a linguistic and cultural marker, offering insights into the deep-rooted traditions embedded in the portrayal of characters like Petruk within the narrative. Petruk, portrayed as a resourceful messenger, exhibits his cleverness and bravery during a visit to Prabu Puntadewa in Amarta, where he faces expulsion

from Kresna. This sequence underscores Petruk's intelligence and courage as a servant who dares to defy Prabu Kresna's request to leave. Petruk's disobedience incurs consequences, including being disliked and having to confront Pandawa's sons. However, Antasena's intervention aids Petruk, enabling him to overcome Pandawa's sons, and eventually gaining their support for Semar. Furthermore, Petruk's cleverness is evident in scenes where he interacts with Bagong and Gareng, showcasing his mastery of Javanese macapat songs, particularly the Pangkur song. Through singing and interpretation, Petruk demonstrates linguistic prowess, emphasizing his multifaceted character.

<i>Tembang</i> Songs of	<i>Jawa,</i> Javanese	<i>tembunge</i> songs that	<i>Jawa</i> Javanese words	<i>dadi</i> become	<i>pasemon,</i> symbols		
<i>Pangkur</i> Pangkur	<i>minangka</i> as	<i>kanggo</i> For	<i>gawe</i> make an	<i>tuladha</i> example			
<i>Gegambaran</i> The depictions	<i>pandonga</i> of prayer	<i>lan</i> and	<i>panuwun,</i> gratitude				
<i>Muga muga</i> hopefully	<i>sapungkure</i> after	<i>padha</i> they	<i>pepanggihan</i> meeting	<i>agung,</i> big			
<i>Ngluwari</i> Conveying	<i>pangudarasa</i> thought	<i>sapiturute,</i> and so on	<i>bisa</i> can be	<i>lebar luwar</i> cleaned	<i>tanpa</i> without	<i>ana</i> any	<i>tabet,</i> residue
<i>Lah</i> The word	<i>sapungkure</i> <i>sapungkure</i>	<i>banjur</i> than	<i>ana</i> become	<i>tembung</i> the word	<i>pangkur,</i> <i>pangkur</i>		
<i>Lah</i> Which means	<i>kasimpangna</i> To be spared	<i>saka</i> from	<i>bebaya</i> danger	<i>kasingkurna</i> released	<i>dening</i> from	<i>saklire</i> all	<i>trimala,</i> evilness

*Mung kari ana yuwana teguh*  
*There is only exist Goodness firmness*

*slamet saka kersane sing kuwasa*  
*And salvation from The will of The almighty god*

“Javanese songs, particularly the Pangkur, employ Javanese words as symbolic expressions. For instance, the term "sapungkure," which translates to "after," transforms into the word "Pangkur." In this context, Pangkur symbolizes a state of being spared from danger, liberated from the trinity of evils (illness, failure, and misfortune). The intended outcome is a state of pure goodness, resilience, and salvation, achieved through the benevolence of the Almighty God.”

*(Excerpts 10, 00:04: 14).*

The provided excerpt elucidates the interpretation of the Pangkur song by Petruk, specifically highlighting the significance of the words "sapungkure" (after) and "kasingkurna" (to be spared). Petruk's interpretation transcends a mere musical rendering; it serves as a prayer, as evident from the inclusion of the concluding line commonly employed in Javanese prayers: "kari ana yuwana teguh slamet, slamet saka karsane Sing Kuwasa" (there is only goodness, firmness, and salvation, and saved by the will of the Almighty God). This dual role emphasizes that Petruk not only represents the dalang in staging the wayang but also conveys prayers to the Almighty.

In an ethnolinguistic analysis, Petruk's interpretation of the Pangkur song reveals linguistic

intricacies intertwined with cultural and spiritual dimensions. The incorporation of Javanese prayers within the interpretation emphasizes the role of language as a conduit for expressing cultural values and spiritual sentiments. This linguistic exploration within the context of traditional Javanese storytelling underscores the close relationship between language, cultural representation, and religious expression. Ethnolinguistics, in this context, unveils the nuanced interplay of linguistic elements in conveying both cultural narratives and spiritual aspirations.

The end of the story of Petruk as Semar's envoy is Semar's gratitude to Petruk who has been responsible and succeeded in carrying out his duties as a messenger, as follows.

*Mung Petruk sing tak dhawuhi natkala semana*  
*Only Petruk whom I sent At that time*

*Ndherek ngaturi para bendaramu kabeh,*  
*invite all your masters (all of them)*

*Wis padha rawuh lan nyatane para pusaka*  
*already (they) present and In facts the heirlooms*

*Ya wis manjing pedaringan, ee ya tak trima ya Petruk,*  
*has entered Their places Eh ya I thank you ya petruk*

*Nggambarake yen kowe ngestokake marang dhawuhe bapak"*  
*proving that you have carried out of order from father*

“Only Petruk whom I sent at that time to invite all your masters, already present and in fact the heirlooms had entered their places, eh, I thank you, Petruk, proving that you have carried out your father's order well).”

*(Excerpts 10, 00:05: 16).*

Based on the provided explanation, Petruk's portrayal signifies him as a shrewd, accountable, and knowledgeable emissary. Deliberately employed by the dalang for self-identification, Petruk assumes the role of a representative character, connecting with both the audience and the wayang responders.

In an ethnolinguistic context, Petruk's characterization reflects linguistic choices that convey nuanced cultural roles within the traditional Javanese wayang. The deliberate use of Petruk as a self-identifying figure illustrates the interplay of language, culture, and performance in wayang storytelling. Ethnolinguistics sheds light on how

linguistic elements contribute to the multifaceted representation of characters like Petruk, emphasizing their cultural significance and role in engaging the audience and wayang responders.

In conclusion, the ethnolinguistic analysis of the characters Semar and Petruk in the Javanese play "Semar Mbangun Kahyangan" reveals a rich tapestry of linguistic intricacies intertwined with cultural, spiritual, and performative dimensions. Semar, embodying a deity, serves as a profound cultural symbol, with his teachings and actions encapsulating deep Javanese philosophies. Petruk, characterized as a clever and responsible messenger, not only plays a pivotal role in the narrative but also

serves as a linguistic conduit for prayers and cultural expressions. The deliberate use of Javanese songs, such as the Pangkur song, adds a layer of linguistic creativity, contributing to the cultural and spiritual richness of the storytelling. Moreover, the characters are strategically employed by the dalang for self-identification, connecting with both the audience and the wayang responders. Ethnolinguistics, in this analysis, underscores the inseparable relationship between language, culture, and performance in conveying the profound philosophy and cultural values embedded in the Javanese wayang tradition.

## 2. The Philosophy of Semar and Petruk's Characters

the use of Javanese language within these philosophical expressions and characterizations serves as a linguistic conduit for conveying profound cultural and spiritual values. The discourse surrounding Semar and Petruk demonstrates how language intricately interweaves with cultural symbolism, emphasizing the role of ethnolinguistics in unraveling the deeper meanings embedded in traditional Javanese storytelling.

The identified philosophy corresponds to the overarching wayang philosophy that underscores the imperative of self-improvement to the extent of experiencing a symbolic death within life. The characterizations of Semar and Petruk within the narrative appear to encapsulate philosophical symbolism. Semar's presence in wayang purwa is acknowledged as an authentic Javanese character, representing the *dewa ngejawantah* or the embodiment of the deity, the God Ismaya (Panfili, 2021). Stange emphasizes that discussing Semar

holds significance for Javanese people, not as a regression into superstition or narrow parochialism but as a utilization of cultural heritage for attaining universal spiritual liberation. The discourse surrounding Semar's character in wayang inherently carries gnosis value, providing a dimension of spiritual liberation (Clark, 2020). Semar, portrayed as a sagacious companion, stands as a potential role model for the wayang audience.

The philosophical ideology harmonizes seamlessly with Semar's characterization in the play, particularly in the construction of Kahyangan. Kahyangan serves a dual purpose, externally representing a divine realm for the Gods, justifying Semar's authority as the embodiment of the Ismaya God. Internally, Kahyangan holds a symbolic meaning, signifying the inner sanctum of every human being and the cultivation of their character. Semar's teachings to the Pandawa intricately link to this process of character development. In the context of ethnolinguistics, the linguistic choices employed in conveying these dual meanings contribute to the narrative's cultural and symbolic richness. The use of the Javanese language becomes a crucial medium for expressing profound philosophical concepts, highlighting the intricate relationship between language and cultural symbolism in traditional Javanese storytelling. Ethnolinguistics unveils the layers of meaning embedded in linguistic expressions, emphasizing language's role in conveying intricate cultural and philosophical nuances. The character building of humans is related to the context of Semar's teaching to the Pandawa, as follows.

*Sedaya titah ing ngarcapada sami kasinungan kesagedan kepinteran,*  
Every human beings in this world Are the same has skills intelligence

*Ning yen boten adhedhasar setiti ngati-ati gampang kejeglong-jeglong.....*  
But If its not Based on accuracy And caution They are easy To fall into....

*Yen pengin badhe ngerti batin kula, penjennengan sedaya*  
if You wish to know the inner self of you you all

*Kudu bisa nglakoni mati sajroning urip.*  
Have to able to carry out Death in life

*Ora ngemungaken para Pandawa, sedaya titah ing ngarcapada*  
not only the Pandawa, but every human being in this world

*Ingkang badhe nggayuh nglintan suksma,*  
Who want to reach the latitude of suksma

*Mati sajroning urip, boten wonten lepatipun*  
Or dead in life there is nothing Wrong

“Every human being in this world has skills and intelligence, but if it is not based on accuracy and caution, they are easy to fall into....If you wish to know my inner self, all of you have to be able to carry out death in life. Not only the Pandawa, but every human being in this world who wants to reach the suksma latitude, or dead in life, there is nothing wrong.”

(Excerpt 11, 00:05: 24)

Having received teachings from Semar, the Pandawa were acknowledged as recipients of great blessings, leading them to encounter Sang Hyang Wenang. In this encounter, they received teachings emphasizing the awareness and remembrance of the eternal realm, with Puntadewa specifically bestowed with *Titabsra ngelmi sejati*, promoting a perpetual remembrance of goodness and avoidance of evil. This underscores Semar's characterization as embodying philosophical and symbolic thoughts, centered on the cultivation of human character, akin to contemporary notions of character education. The linguistic nuances in conveying these teachings add depth to the cultural and symbolic dimensions, illustrating the intricate interplay between language and the conveyance of philosophical concepts in traditional Javanese storytelling.

Semar's philosophical characterization is intricately linked with Petruk, who is chosen as his envoy in building Kahyangan. Petruk's role, as elucidated earlier, serves the dual purpose of self-identification for the dalang and as a responsible messenger performing the SMK play. Petruk's successful execution of duties, inviting the Pandawa and securing three heirlooms, draws a parallel to the dalang's responsibility and success in fulfilling the

role of an envoy. From an ethnolinguistic perspective, the linguistic expressions used to convey Petruk's responsibilities and achievements add depth to the cultural and symbolic dimensions, illustrating the nuanced interplay between language and the portrayal of character roles in traditional Javanese storytelling.

Petruk, the character who is chosen by Semar as his envoy to invite the Pandawa and borrow the heirlooms, is analogous to the dalang who is chosen by the wayang responder to perform SMK play, and invites the audience community to be given teaching. Therefore, the Pandawa who were at the end succeeded in being given teaching by Semar, likewise, the community members who succeeded in following the show performed by dalang whose duty is *ngudhal piwulang* 'giving advice'. As for Semar character who gives a teaching to Pandawa in the context of play performances all night long, that is SMK. Meaning that the process/happening of conveying Semar's teachings begins from the wayang responder who wants this to happen to the community. SMK play means the happening of the teachings conveyance by the dalang. The Kahyangan that Semar was meant to build is as follows.

<i>Ya</i>	<i>kuwi</i>	<i>unen-unen</i>	<i>bapak</i>	<i>bakal</i>	<i>mbangun</i>	<i>Kahyangan,</i>
Yes	the	Talk about	father	Who is going	to build	Kahyangan
<i>Merga</i>	<i>arep</i>	<i>medharake</i>	<i>kawruh,</i>	<i>diwejangke</i>	<i>marang</i>	
because	it will	teach	knowledge	To be conveyed	Toward	
<i>Para</i>	<i>bendara</i>	<i>sing supaya</i>	<i>bisa</i>	<i>manunggal</i>		
The	masters	so	they can	be united		
<i>Mula</i>	<i>pasemone</i>	<i>nganggo</i>	<i>pusaka</i>	<i>telu</i>		
Therefore	ways	using	The heirlooms	Three		

"Yes, the talk is about father who is going to build Kahyangan, because it will teach knowledge to be conveyed to the masters so they can be united. Therefore, the way is using three heirlooms."

(Excerpt 12, 00:04: 21)

The excerpt highlights the significance of building Kahyangan, emphasizing the impartation of knowledge to masters for unity, symbolized by the three heirlooms. Notably, the term "manunggal" (united) resonates within wayang culture, often manifesting in idioms like "manunggaling kawula Gusti" (the union of servant and God). This unity signifies humans becoming one with The Almighty God. The fusion of human and divinity involves practices such as being "dead in life," denoting the suppression of passions. From an ethnolinguistic perspective, the embedded idioms contribute to the linguistic richness of Javanese culture, intertwining language with cultural and philosophical nuances within the context of the play.

The excerpt highlights the significance of heirlooms, often denoted in Javanese as "piandel,"

suggesting reliability and faith. This linguistic connection enriches the cultural and philosophical depth of Javanese discourse. The term "manunggal," as discussed, carries connotations of faith and belief. In the context of the three heirlooms—Jamus Kalimasada bible, Karawelang spear, and Tunggulnaga umbrella—the SMK play specifically associates the bible with the Pandawa. Ethnolinguistically, the choice of words such as "knowledge," "strength," and "peacefulness" reflects the nuanced linguistic strategies employed to convey philosophical concepts within the Javanese cultural framework.

In summary, the ethnolinguistic examination of Semar and Petruk in the Javanese play "Semar Mbangun Kahyangan" reveals a profound Javanese philosophy deeply embedded in linguistic

expressions. Semar, symbolizing the deity Ismaya God, becomes a linguistic repository embodying divine wisdom. The chosen Javanese terms, like "piandel" denoting heirloom, and "manunggal" signifying unity, intricately interweave language with cultural and philosophical dimensions. The intricate linguistic dynamics between Semar and Petruk unveil a complex symbolic relationship, casting Petruk as the responsible messenger and the embodiment of a dalang in wayang performances. This linguistic analysis underscores the profound connection between language, culture, and the conveyance of Javanese philosophical teachings (see Ubaidillah & Marpuah, 2021, pp. 288-309). Through Javanese idioms and nuanced linguistic strategies, Semar and Petruk emerge not just as characters in a play but as cultural emissaries, epitomizing the profound ethos and wisdom that define Javanese identity through the lens of wayang and shadow puppetry.

## CONCLUSION

Drawing from the analyses conducted, this study arrives at several key conclusions. Primarily, it discerns Semar's intent to cultivate the character of the Pandawa and, by extension, humanity at large. This cultivation is achieved through the practice of "mati sajroning urip," a Javanese philosophical concept translating to 'dead in life.' In essence, this practice advocates the restraint of intense desires, urging individuals to fortify their inner selves against the pitfalls of mistakes or sins. The concept of being 'dead in life' encapsulates the notion of maintaining steadfast control over one's passions, thus steering clear of moral and ethical transgressions. Semar's overarching desire to instill this philosophy signifies a profound aspiration towards moral and spiritual elevation, elucidating the intricate interplay between the characters in Semar Mbangun Kahyangan and the philosophical underpinnings embedded within the traditional Javanese cultural context.

In philosophical terms, the portrayal of Semar serves as a conduit for the dalang to articulate the aspirations of the wayang audience, seeking to impart teachings about constructing Kahyangan, symbolizing the development of human character and personality. Essentially, the philosophical essence lies in self-improvement towards truth or holiness. Similarly, Petruk's characterization holds a comparable philosophical significance as the dalang utilizes it for self-identification and to represent their role in fulfilling duties. In this capacity, the dalang conveys prayers to guide humanity, particularly the wayang audience, in steering clear of malevolence and embracing goodness, steadfastness, and salvation in alignment with the divine will. This dual characterization of Semar and Petruk, each laden with philosophical depth,

encapsulates the dalang's role as a conveyer of moral and spiritual teachings within the cultural and spiritual framework of wayang performances.

Philosophically, the characters of Semar and Petruk embody a spectrum of virtues including friendliness, communicativeness, democratic values, honesty, responsibility, social care, humility, religiosity, courage, creativity, and achievement. This philosophical delineation underscores the multifaceted nature of these characters, representing a rich tapestry of moral and ethical principles within the cultural and mythological context they inhabit. It reflects a nuanced integration of cultural values and philosophical ideals, illustrating how the portrayals of Semar and Petruk extend beyond mere theatrical roles to encapsulate profound reflections of societal virtues within the Javanese cultural ethos.

Semar imparts teachings imbued with religiosity, a fitting characteristic as he represents the human incarnation of a god. This alignment with divine essence aligns with the concept rooted in Hindu philosophy that has evolved within the cultural context of Java. The notion of a human embodying the essence of a deity holds significance in Javanese spirituality and reflects the synthesis of indigenous beliefs with Hindu philosophical tenets. Semar's role as a divine figure encapsulates the intricacies of Javanese cosmology, where the spiritual and mythological realms intertwine, contributing to a profound cultural narrative that underscores the synthesis of religious philosophy and indigenous beliefs within the Javanese cultural tapestry.

This study is constrained in its focus on a singular play, specifically the *Semar Mbangun Kahyangan*. Consequently, the conclusions drawn herein necessitate validation through additional investigations, prompting a call for similar studies involving different theatrical works. The validity of the study's findings could be fortified through the examination of diverse objects of analysis. Moreover, the outcomes derived from this study would benefit from corroborative support from other wayang studies that adopt distinct perspectives. By engaging in complementary investigations with varying objects and perspectives, a more comprehensive understanding can be achieved, fostering the emergence of new conclusions that augment and fortify the results obtained within the scope of this study.

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