Petangan Tradition In Javanese Personal Naming Practice:
An Ethnoliguistic Study

Sahid Teguh Widodo
sahidteguhwidodo@yahoo.com
Faculty of Letters and Fine Arts
Sebelas Maret University

Kundharu Saddhono
kundharu@uns.ac.id
Faculty of Education and Teacher Training
Sebelas Maret University

Abstract

This study investigates *petangan,* a form of tradition which belongs to the Javanese cultural heritage. *Petangan* (a study of calculation) plays an important role in Javanese culture. The *petangan* tradition first appeared centuries ago, at which time it has been developed and recorded in both written and oral traditions. The scope of this research focuses on a study of the *petangan* tradition in relation to personal naming practices. This study applied a qualitative research method - elaborated in order to identify various ways in which the Javanese give meaning to, evaluate, and predict the character of the name given to their children using the *petangan* tradition. This tradition is very popular in Java. However, in its development, it has started to become less prevalent among the Javanese community since it must compete with many forms of counter culture which are more modern, rational and instant. Data are collected from the sources of data obtained from documents and observation. The data analysis technique employed in this research is interactive analysis technique which involved three simultaneous activities: data reduction, data presentation, and verification. To obtain the validity of data, data verification was done through data triangulation by comparing the data presented to previous researches and *petangan* books. The finding of the research shows that *petangan* has important role in Javanese naming tradition in terms of its form, use, and social function in Javanese society. This study also discovers the development of personal naming practice, ideas, cultural taste, and various other changes which are taking place in the Javanese society from one era to another.

Keywords: Tradition; *petangan;* Java; personal name; *primbon*

Introduction

The Javanese tradition has a numerological system or "a study of calculation" which is known as *petangan Jawi* (Geertz, 1983; Koentjaraningrat, 1984, Radjiman, 2001). One of the sources of Javanese numerology comes from a manuscript called *primbon*. *Primbon* is a book containing calculations of *neptu pasaran* to determine what is good or bad based on a calculation of numbers or the value of a day, month, and year, as a guide in Javanese daily life. *Neptu pasaran* is used to decide the day and date for a wedding, moving or building a house, starting a new business, travelling, finding and deciding on

choosing a spouse etc. *Primbon* has become better known as *pangawikan Jawi* "the storehouse of Javanese knowledge" (Narwiyanto, 2011).

Primbon is an ancient Javanese manuscript containing predictions about the good or bad fortunes of a person in his/her life. *Primbon* is also used as a source for calculating or determining a person's name. Essentially, the principle of *primbon* maintains that each person is born into the world at a precise time and place, and as such, his/her name should be determined, based on what is prohibited and allowed, and also based on the numerals of time. For centuries, *primbon* calculations have greatly influenced the Javanese mindset. This is why the writer believes that it is important to explain the *petangan* tradition in the Javanese naming system.

Based on the results of the observation, the Javanese society living in and around Surakarta (predominantly the older generation) still recognizes the concept of *neptu* and *pasaran* days based on the Javanese Calendar. Kuswa (2006) states that:

> *Petangan, procession, and sesaji in the Javanese wedding ceremony are social activities and rituals that still exist in Javanese society. These activities are traditions that contain values, norms, and spiritual symbolic aspects… These traditional activities are a way of looking for a peaceful life* (p.138).

Poerwadarminta (1939) describes *neptu* (*nabtu*) as *ajining angka ing petungan dina,* the value of days based on a numerical calculation. *Pasaran* means *dina kang akehe lima,* the names of the Javanese days in a five-day cycle. A person who has mastered the skill of *pasaran* calculation is often called a *dhukun petung*. In some village areas, the name *dhukun petung* is given to a person who works as a *dhukun bayi* (usually a mature Javanese woman), who takes care of, bathes, and gives massages to a baby until the baby is *selapan* or thirty six days old. In Java a *dhukun* is also believed to be an expert in fortune-telling, and is revered because of his mystical and supernatural abilities, and also his extraordinary powers. A *dhukun* also has a role as an informant in some traditional birth ceremonies (Sahid, 2010). In subsequent developments, however, a *petangan* expert is no longer called a *dhukun* but instead is referred to as a *priyayi sepuh* "an elder", a paranormal, or a cultural expert.

The following section will explain about the results of the analysis of the *petangan* tradition in Javanese cosmology based on ethnolinguistic study; the local wisdom of the Surakarta community in Central Java is the core of the study. Ethnolinguistic perspective is used in the language study which considers cultural aspect (see Ahimsa, 1986). This article focuses primarily on the concept of *neptu* and *petungan* as the basis for deciding a person's name which is used by some members of the Surakarta community. The people who no longer use this tradition are influenced by the mystification of *petangan* (on one side), and have also adopted a new orientation of sources for choosing a name, such as magazines, films, television, radio, and books. Both these sources are an indication of the dynamic process of an era which presents new forms of cultural expression, such as is occurring today.

Research Methodology

The aim of this study is to observe more closely the dynamic development of *petangan* as a cultural tradition which is still acknowledged in Java, particularly by the Surakarta community in Central Java. *Petangan* has become a context for the personal naming practice among the Javanese. An understanding of this context can be achieved by understanding human expression, both individually and collectively (Sutopo, 2002). This study uses a qualitative research method in order to help the researcher gain a deeper and more detailed understanding about the phenomenon of *petangan* (Miles & Huberman, 1984), and also to provide a rich and holistic result of the study (Merriam, 2008). The decision to employ this methodology is related to the nature of the research topic, the area of study, and the available sources of data (Marohaini Yusoff, 2004).

This research is influenced by a grounded theory approach. Annells (1997) considers grounded theory to be the most comprehensive form of qualitative methodology. This theory has a distinctive language and rules. Strauss and Crobin (2003:23) explain that grounded theory is one thing that is inductively derived from the study of the phenomenon it represents. It is discovered, developed, and verified through systematic data collection and analysis of data pertaining to the phenomenon. In this case, the phenomenon of Javanese naming will be listed, classified based on *petangan*, and analysed to find the forms of *petangan* used in Javanese naming. The sources of data in this research are documents related to Javanese naming and phenomena refer to Javanese cultural traditions on naming process. The data will be obtained from the sources of data in the form of the list of Javanese names and cultural events (see Marohaini, 2004). The list of Javanese names in this research is Javanese names of people found in Surakarta represented by previous research dealing with Javanese names. The variety of Javanese cultural traditions will be listed to obtain the data in the form of cultural events specifically the Javanese cultural traditions on naming process, for example *spasaran* (five days old), *slametan* (tradition of changing unsuitable name), etc.

The technique used for validating data in this research is triangulation, including the triangulation of (data) sources, method, and theory. Merriam (2008) confirms that the triangulation of sources means the comparison of various sources in order to establish validity. In principle, this technique is a strategy for examining the level of validity based on the comparison between the technique for collecting data and the different sources of data (Adelman, Jenkins, & Kemmis, 1980). In this research, the data derived from observation will be validated by comparing to the data presented by previous researches and *petangan* books e.g. Javanese *primbon*. The technique of data analysis used in this research is an interactive analysis technique which involves three activities which occur simultaneously, namely data reduction, data presentation, and verification (Sutopo, 2002). The list of Javanese name obtained as sources of data will be classified based on the use of *petangan*. The result of the classification –data reduction —will be presented as the data of the research as some data will be omitted due to the absence of *petangan*. The data will be analysed by interpreting or evaluating them based on Javanese *petangan* concept. The result of this analysis will be drawn as the conclusion of the research to understand the use and social function of *petangan* in Javanese naming tradition.

Calculating *Neptu* and *Pasaran*

Throughout the history of civilization, the Javanese, as a part of global society, have constantly had to deal with a variety of natural phenomena. Human intelligence has triggered the creation of numerous scientific concepts about nature and celestial bodies (sun, moon, stars, and planets). These scientific concepts have undergone rapid developments which have given rise to other more specific scientific disciplines such as astrology, geography, mathematics, astronomy, horoscopy, and so on. According to Radjiman (2000), the Arabic, Chinese, Babylonian, Indian, and Greek nations were the forerunners and pioneers of these scientific developments until they finally reached the Malay area and the Island of Java.

Each nation in the world has created its own calendar system which is arranged systematically to record and mark various kinds of events, historical incidents, and other occurrences that have befallen them. As a result, different variants of time calculation systems have arisen. The *Saka* calendar from India was once used in Java, in particular from the time of Hindu influence until the beginning of the Islamic era on the Island of Java. Nevertheless, in the year 1555 in the *Saka* calendar (1633 AD or 1043 *Hijriah*, in the Islamic calendar), Sultan Agung, King of the Mataram kingdom, created a Javanese calendar which was a combination of the *Saka* calendar (from India) and *Hijriah* (the Arabic calendar). The concept used for calculating the Javanese year is based on *taun wolu* (names of the years in an eight-year cycle) and *Windu Papat* (names of the *windu* [eight-year cycles] in four periods). The eight names of the years in the Javanese calendar are: *Alip, Ahe, Jimawal, Je, Dala, Be, Wawu,* and *Jimakir*, while the four names of the *windu* are *Windu adi, Kuntara, Sengara*, and *Sancaya.*

The Javanese calendar assigns a particular characteristic for each year and *windu* (eight-year period). For example, *Windu adi* has the characteristic of "*linuwih*" (prosperity), which influences those who want to build a new house or start a new life after marriage. *Windu Sangara* (flood) means never-ending sorrow, illness, and death. This is evidence that the Javanese are still interested in forecasting an event or a person's fate with great care (*njelimet*, *memet*) based on the *neptu* "numerical value" of a particular time (day, month, and year) and the certain characteristics contained therein using the concept of *petangan Jawi* (Javanese calculation). Furthermore, many forms of fortune-telling related to time and people's fate have been developed through symbols of nature (cosmology). The Javanese concept of *petangan* is the manifestation of a way of life, knowledge, and Javanese cosmology (*kejawen*) as a medium to become one with the universe. *Petangan* is the representation of the Javanese mindset and feelings in an endeavour to get closer to nature as the center of life and God the Creator as the source of life (Javanese Cosmology). According to Radjiman (2001) the purpose of this concept of calculation is to avoid all forms of punishment from God. However, in reality this purpose is misinterpreted by Javanese *primbon* enthusiasts who place man at the center of the cyclone of life and not the universe. Acceptance of a person's fate, "*narimo ing pandum*", has been manipulated in such a way so as to suit human desire and lust.

Table 1: Names of Javanese Days and Numerical Values

Name of Day	Day (in Javanese Calendar)	Numerical Value
Monday	*Soma / Senen* [sənɛn]	4
Tuesday	*Anggara / Selasa* [səl s]	3
Wednesday	*Budha / Rebo* [rəbo]	7
Thursday	*Respati / Kemis* [kəmIs]	8
Friday	*Sukra / Jum'at*[jum?at]	6
Saturday	*Tumpak / Setu* [sətu]	9
Sunday	*Dite, Raditya / Minggu* [minggu]	5

Source: Soemodidjojo (1994)

The value of a day can be used as a way to predict the situation of a certain time. Each day has its own numerical value, and whether it is good or bad, the result can be seen by using this method. The formula is to add the value of the day of birth and the value of its *pasaran* (see Table 2). The result of this sum is then used to calculate a person's character by looking at a fixed sequence, starting from *Guru* (Teacher), *Ratu* (Queen), *Pandhita* (Priest), *Wali (*Religious Leader), and *Setan* (Satan), then returning to *Guru*, *Ratu*, and so on. For instance, a person who was born on Saturday and his *pasaran* day is *Wage*, has the values of 9 and 4 respectively. Add those numbers (9+4) and the result is 13. Number '13', if it is calculated by using the sequence above, will stop on *Pandhita* (priest). Hence, it can be concluded that a person born on Saturday *Wage* has similar traits to a priest, such as wisdom, gentle feelings, and a tendency to give advice. This method of calculating is called *pancasuda* or *suda wuwuh*.

Table 2: *Neptu*, *pasaran*, Direction, Colour and Javanese alphabet

Name of Pasaran	Numerical Value	Direction	Colour	Javanese Alphabet
Legi	5	East	Yellow	*ha, na, ca, ra, ka*
Paing	9	West	Red	*da, ta, sa, wa, la*
Pon	7	South	White	*pa, dha, ja, ya, nya*
Wage	4	North	Black	*ma, ga, ba, tha, nga*
Kliwon	8	Middle	Any colour	All twenty letters of the Javanese alphabet

Source: Soemodidjojo (1994)

Neptu pasaran is the calculation of a five-day cycle. It is different from the Gregorian calendar which has a seven-day cycle (one week consists of 7 days). In the Javanese calendar, the term used is *sepasar*, "one *pasaran*", which means a period of 5 days. Each day is believed to have its own power, and rules over a particular cardinal direction, as well as containing a certain colour and some of the letters from the Javanese alphabet (Radjiman, 2001).

Neptu and *Pasaran*: The Basis for Determining a Name

Neptu Pasaran is one of the guides used by the Javanese for naming a child. It is suggested that a child born on a particular day and *neptu pasaran*, as shown above, should be given a name containing one of the Javanese letters or syllables shown in table 2. For instance, if a Javanese baby is born on *pasaran Pon*, a good name for him/her must contain elements or syllables of *pa, dha, ja, ya*, and *nya*. The parents may choose a good and appropriate name for their baby, such as: <u>Pa</u>mungkas Adi Candra, Kundaru Sa<u>dha</u>na, <u>Ja</u>ya Lesmana, Te<u>ja</u> Gumilang, Ho<u>ya</u>n Bhakti Nuswa, and <u>Nya</u>ta Gunawan.

If a baby is born on *Pasaran Pahing*, a good name for the baby is *Wardhani, Dasih, Sawitri, Darma,* or *Tanaya*. If a baby is born on *Pasaran Kliwon*, the baby may have a name with any syllables, except for certain names which are not allowed for ordinary people (*Puspaningrat, Cakraningrat, Mangkubumi*, etc). The Javanese alphabet has 20 syllabic-letters (*aksara Jawa*). It is not only used for writing but each letter also has a value that can be used to calculate a person's good (*utama*), bad (*nistha*), or average (*madya*) characteristics. The letters in the Javanese alphabet are as follow:

Ha : 1	*Na* : 2	*ca* : 3	*ra* : 4	*ka* : 5
Da : 6	*Ta* : 7	*sa* : 8	*wa* : 9	*la* : 10
Pa : 11	*Dha* : 12	*ja* : 13	*ya* : 14	*nya* : 15
Ma : 16	*Ga* : 17	*ba* : 18	*tha* : 19	*nga* : 20

Radjiman (2000) explains that the numerical value of each letter can be used to reveal a person's character. In addition, the result can also be used to answer the mysteries and puzzles of life from a person's past, present and future. For instance, the name "*Sumartoyo*" has four Javanese syllables: sa, ma, ta, ya. These four syllables are then added based on the value of each: sa + ma + ta + ya. The result of the addition will be 8 + 16 + 7 + 14 = 45. The result is then divided by 3. The number remaining after the division is symbolized as follows:

Table 3: Three Symbols According to the Result of Division

Remainder	Symbol	Meaning and Characteristics of Symbols
1 (one)	*Jarak Lanang*	This means to bring victory, glory, peace, and dignity.
2 (two)	*Jarak Manten*	This means fertile and having a lot of children. *Jarak manten* is often called *jarak jodho*, which means always bringing harmony in every aspect of life.
0 (zero)	*Jarak Rampas*	Wasteful, bad, extravagant, lacking discipline, careless, disorganized, unable to look after things well (Poerwadarminta, 1939).

Source: Radjiman (2001)

The sum of the series of syllables in the name Sumartoyo (sa+ mar+ ta+ ya) is 45 divided by 3 and the result is without a remainder. Thus, the name Sumartoyo falls on the symbol

'*Jarak rampas*' which means a person who is not good at managing his money or his family, and is unable to look after things well.

Table 4: The five symbols based on the number remaining

Remainder	Symbol	Meaning and Characteristics of Symbols
1	*Sri*	Happy, wealthy, lucky, noble, successful.
2	*Lungguh* 'sitting'	Holding a high position, honourable, charismatic
3	*Gedhong* 'building'	Prosperous, honourable, leader, well-known
4	*Lara* 'illness'	Suffering, sickly, unlucky, miserable
5	*Pati* 'death'	Short life, bankrupt, death of family member

Source: Soemodidjojo (1994)

The way to use the table of five symbols above is by calculating the value of the remaining number from 1 downwards, according to the amount of the remainder. If the remainder is more than 5, the process must be repeated again from 1 downwards. For example, if after the division, the remainder is 7, it will fall on the "*lungguh*" symbol. If it is 9, it will fall on the "lara" symbol. And if it is 12, it will fall on "*lungguh*" again and so forth. It should be noted that the Javanese alphabet does not have any vowels as such. All vowels are represented by one syllable, *ha*. If there is a name starting with a vowel, the value will not be counted, or will have a value of zero. So, the calculation starts from the second syllable, and so on. In the name "Inawati" the syllable /I/ has zero value, so it can be calculated as I (=0) + na (na=2) + wa (wa=4) + ti (ta=2) and the result is 0+ 2+ 4+ 2 = 8. When following the sequence in table 4 (*sri-lungguh-gedhong-lara-pati-sri-lungguh-gedhong*), it falls on *gedhong* meaning that the person will someday become rich, honourable, a leader, and well-known.

Another naming practice customarily used in Javanese society is a combination of the *neptu* of the day and the *neptu* of the *pasaran*. If a baby is born on *Selasa* (Tuesday) *Pon*, the value is Tuesday (3) + *Pon* (7) = 10 (see tables 3 and 4). The result can be added to the value of the consonant phonemes in the name which will be or has been given. It is then divided by 3, and the remainder will show the fortune of the person, whether it belongs to *jarak lanang, jarak manten, jarak jodho* or even *jarak rampas*. A person with the name Megawati (which has the consonant phonemes /m/, /g/, /w/, and /t/) who was born on *Kamis* (Thursday) *Legi* has the following character. The value of the name is: ma+ga+wa+ta= 16+17+9+7= 49, and the value of its *Neptu Pasaran* is: Thursday (8) and *Legi* (5) = 13. The result is 49 + 13 = 62, divided by 3, which is 20 with 2 as the remainder. The remainder falls on *Jarak Manten* revealing that Megawati is predicted to be a wealthy person with potential to have children, and will always create harmony in every aspect of her life.

Neptu and *Pasaran*: Revealing a Person's Character

Some members of Javanese society, especially the older generation, still believe that *neptu* and *pasaran* play an important role in determining a person's natural character. It is

calculated by adding the *neptu* of the day and its *pasaran* (Suwardi, 2003). The character of a person, as based on his *neptu* and *pasaran* (birth date), is determined as follows:

Table 5: A person's character based on his birth date

Value of birth date	Natural character
8	Bad character, fond of quarrelling, and dangerous when angry.
9	Fond of moving, has a desire to destruct, resistant to magic spells.
10	Determined, kind, enjoys a good relationship with siblings, smiles easily.
11	Generous, brave, trustworthy, smart, eager to steal if poor.
12	Accepts his destiny, lucky, often loses things.
13	Talkative, peaceful, loves to be praised, high-tempered (emotional).
14	Work is not long-lasting, not rich, and shy.
15	Fond of giving orders, stubborn, enough to eat, a lot of relatives, often fights.
16	Easy to forgive, fond of criticizing, his wish often comes true.
17	Failed ambitions, a quiet drifter, often treated badly by others.
18	Whiny, boastful when rich, likes being alone.

Source: Soemodidjojo (1994).

Kuswa (2006) explains that if the *neptu* of the day and *neptu* of the *pasaran* of a prospective couple are identified, we can see a prediction of their marriage. This is done by adding the *neptu* of the day and *neptu* of the *pasaran* of the couple, then dividing the result by four. The remainder will indicate a number which represents a certain symbol and meaning.

Table 6: The remainder after division, its symbol, and its meaning

The remainder after division	Symbol	Meaning
1	*Gentho*	Difficult to get offspring
2	*Gembili*	Will be blessed with children
3	*Sri*	Always fortunate
4	*Punggel*	Ends with separation due to death

Source: Soemodidjojo (1994)

The concept of *petangan* above is rather confusing because it is related to a natural element, namely *palawija* plants (the crops planted in the garden around a Javanese house). What is the basis for this consideration? At this point, the writer assumes that the names of *palawija* plants are used because in the past, Java was a predominantly agrarian society. In addition, it relates to the sacred element in Javanese culture (Kumbara, 2010).

The Development of the Javanese *Petangan* Tradition

Javanese *petangan* has developed in Javanese cosmology and is both an individual and collective science (Javanese Heritage) which has been tested by space and time.

Throughout its history, *petangan Jawi* has undoubtedly played an important role. This means that the tradition still continues to exist and has a strong influence on Javanese life as a cultural heritage from the past. It has been passed down as an oral tradition from one generation to the next (Sahid, 2011).

Javanese *Petangan* itself is diverse in its variations, forms, and categories. One of the most popular and comprehensive written sources is the manuscript *Kitab Primbon Betaljemur Adamakna*, which contains predictions about numerous aspects of life, including: (1) *pranata mangsa*, 'interpretation of the universe', (2) *petangan*, 'a method for calculating fortune, nature, and character, (3) *panagan*, 'understanding good fortune' (derived from the word *naga* = dragon), (4) *pawukon*, 'the calculation of birth and fortune', (5) *katurangan*, 'the knowledge of physiology, (6) *mojarobat*, 'medical knowledge', *wirid/wejangan*, 'noble advice/guidance, (8) *aji-aji*, 'magical charms', (9) *kidung*, 'traditional songs containing magical values, (10) *jangka*, 'forecasts', (11) *tatacara selamatan* 'procedures for holding traditional celebrations', (12) *donga/mantra* 'prayers and spells', (13) *ngalamat/sasmita* 'fate, destiny, luck, and its magical premonitions' (Soemodidjojo, 1994).

The *Primbon* manuscript has been reprinted more than fifty times. This is evidence that the *petangan* tradition continues to survive today in the Javanese society. However, in the course of time, many of the teachings contained in the Javanese *petangan* manuscript are no longer relevant today. This may be due to the many restrictions that are difficult to implement in the present. Sahid (2011) states that the reason for the decline in interest in the *petangan* tradition among the Javanese community is influenced by the changing mindset of society, from an associative way of thinking to a more materialistic, conditional, and realistic mindset. The production of the *primbon* book in the *Surakarta* area still continues and still has its own community of buyers. The people who are interested in this book are not only from the older generation but also from the younger generation, in particular those who are interested in the field of culture (literature and philology). They consider *Primbon* to be an ancient manuscript which was formerly an important guide book and source of knowledge. The use of *primbon* from one era to the next represents the dynamic progress of the Javanese socio-cultural life, including the tradition of giving a name.

Nowadays, there are many television programs on private stations offering a fortune telling service to their viewers. If we look more closely, the source of these fortune-telling advertisements originates from the *primbon* manuscript. The notable paranormal figures appearing in these advertisements are Ki Joko Bodho and Ki Roso. The title '*Ki'* attached to their names shows that they are Javanese. This is an indication that Javanese *primbon* is starting to become more popular among a broader community, after being repackaged in a different way from its original form.

The *petangan* tradition can also be applied by Javanese people who want to build a new house/building. They usually use a detailed and thorough calculation (*petungan memet*). They will choose a particular month which is considered to be a 'good' or propitious month. It is hoped that the calculation will bring about prosperity, happiness and

tranquillity for those living in the house. Some of the best Javanese months for building a house are *Robingulakhir*, *Jumadilakhir*, and *Sakban*. Apart from deciding the month, the Javanese also take into consideration the direction and position of the house. Most of them will choose a house which faces South (it is believed that this will bring good fortune, happiness, and fertility) or East (for good health, vitality, and good fortune). In addition, the position of a house should not be on a T-junction (the Javanese call this position *sunduk sate*, 'satay skewer', since it is believed it may cause calamity for the inhabitants of the house).

This method of calculation is rather difficult to be applied to today's situation. The majority of the Surakarta community (especially newcomers from outside the town) live in housing districts built by housing developers who no longer consider these calculations. Nevertheless, we still often find prospective customers of a housing project who continue to use Javanese *petangan*. Many people still believe that if a house is left empty for a long time, it will be haunted by evil spirits. Hence, a series of exorcism rituals are held, for example burning a dried coconut leaf while walking around the new house (after *Maghrib* or evening prayer time), entering each and every part of the house. This ritual is performed to keep away any danger from unseen evil spirits. In the case of a housing district, it seems difficult for the owner to choose a house which fulfills all the requirements of the above calculations. This is one reason why *petangan* is no longer attractive to some people.

Petangan Tradition in the Middle of the Changing Cultural Taste of Society

Whether we like it or not, the old tradition of Javanese *petangan* still exists in the middle of today's dynamic society. In fact, the tradition has found a way to escape from the force of the cultural changes taking place in society and rapid growth of counter cultures which are more interesting for all members of society, including both the *kawula cilik* "ordinary people" and elite social groups (Geertz, 1983; Kuntawijaya, 1987). The changing cultural taste in the Surakarta community has destroyed the power of the "high culture" which is protected by the government. The hierarchical system of social classes is gradually being pushed aside in a dynamic society which is constantly moving and beginning to reject its old patrons (Hetti, Triana, & Idris, 2011).

According to a study conducted by Suhadi (1991), the *petangan* tradition in the practice of name giving is closely related to different aspects of taste, understanding, and sensitivity. These aspects generate a sense of fascination, understanding, and comprehension which stimulate different kinds of forms, meanings, and symbols. The decision to give a particular name is the climax of a process of exploring, searching, and inventing. It is also the highest level of fulfilling a non-material human desire which can be acknowledged collectively in a socio-cultural context.

A name is the manifestation of a human desire. Therefore, the *petangan* tradition is a way to find appropriate names, not only which can be accepted by our common sense, but also which are suitable on moral, ethical, and aesthetical grounds. Lieberson (1982) states three other principles: the mechanism of imagery, ideal values, and society's response.

From the above explanation, it can be concluded that changing cultural tastes have caused changes to the form of people's names in the Surakarta area. The names previously used by villagers are being affected by new name references. This phenomenon can be seen in many schools in Surakarta. Children from villages already have new names as a result of the social interaction of their parents. In addition, the influence of a material culture has also contributed to these changes. Television, radio, film, and the development of publishing companies (for popular books, newspapers, and magazines) are other external factors which have led to the appearance and development of new forms and meanings of names. Consequently, this has altered the perception and appreciation of society regarding the value of the *petangan* tradition (ceremonies and customs) in the practice of name giving.

Conclusion

To most Javanese people, a name is an 'heirloom' whose dignity must be protected, honored, and praised (Sahid, 2011). On the other hand, the Javanese easily change their names based on various cultural reasons which does not make sense in today's modern society (Sahid, Nuraini, & Hisham, 2010b). According to traditional opinion, name changing is normal because the meaning of a person's old name does not suit his personality. The Javanese refer to this as "*kawratan nami*" – the name is too 'heavy' to bear. A name which is believed to be unsuitable can cause some problems in life such as: always suffering from sickness, a failed business, a failed marriage, and other unfortunate events. It perhaps makes more sense if we understand the important concept of a name in Javanese culture. A person and his name are like *curiga manjing warangka* or a *keris* (a Javanese dagger) and its sheath. A fine *keris* with a bad sheath will not show its beauty and vice versa. A name and the person using the name must be suitable, or '*jumbuh*'. For this reason, choosing a particular name needs special attention and calculations.

The concept of *petangan nami* in the process of naming is not the same as in the past, and has even begun to be disregarded by the Javanese in today's society. Mudjanto (1987) adds that some Javanese people are more fascinated by instant things and more interested in modern trends. Does this phenomenon signify that traditional cultural images are starting to lose power in the middle of modern cultural influences?

Today, the organic nature of traditional Javanese culture is changing to a more mechanical type of culture. This means that a modern Javanese society is developing with a cultural image which is based on a complementary dialectic process (Ahimsa, 1986). One unique feature of the Surakarta community is its close interconnection and interdependency in physical, psychological, historical, social and cultural aspects. These bonds have consequently generated a collective awareness to preserve social and cultural conditions which are balanced, harmonious, and beautiful (*peni*). This encourages the community to strive continuously to find harmony in their social and cultural lives. This is evident in the fact that Javanese names are still used by society today even though it is impossible to avoid the huge influence of modern names.

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About the authors

Sahid Teguh Widodo is a lecturer in the Javanese Department, Faculty of Letters and Fine Arts at UNS. His expertise is cultural studies and applied linguistics in onomastics. He holds a Ph.D from Universiti Utara Malaysia (UUM) and is currently head of the Institute of Javanology LPPM Sebelas Maret University.

Kundharu Saddhono is a lecturer at Sebelas Maret University (UNS-Solo). His field of expertise is sociolinguistics and cultural studies. He earned his doctorate from Gadjah Mada University Yogyakarta.