

## Personal Names as an Inter-Ethnic Model of Acculturation in Indonesia

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### ABSTRACT

*Research on the subject of personal names is an interesting source for discovering the development of the thoughts, ideas, traditions, and life patterns of a person in an underlying collective. The specific goal of this research is to describe the development of the form of personal names in the Semarang community and to discover the inter-ethnic model of acculturation in a social and cultural context based on the dynamics of the life of the local community. This study uses a qualitative research method with reference to the theories of Miles and Huberman (1992) and Sutopo (2008). The location of the research was the city of Semarang in Central Java, Indonesia. The type of research is a field study which uses a single strategy, focussing on the personal names found in the city of Semarang in Central Java. The results of the research indicate the existence of name forms that are a product of inter-ethnic acculturation. This process of acculturation occurs both convergently and divergently. The process of convergence occurs due to the influence of several different cultures on a name, resulting in a new name that is a typically Indonesian name. The process of divergence occurs when there is a process of dispersion of the use of a Javanese (Indonesian) name in a foreign name (of a foreign ethnic group) in a form which is either complete or partial. This study proves two things, namely (1) that a process of inter-ethnic acculturation has taken place between Javanese names and foreign names, and (2) that a process of "mutual acceptance" has occurred between the culture of the migrant community and the local culture within the context of personal names, a process which is continuing to develop diachronically.*

**Keywords:** Personal names, Java, Acculturation, Semarang, Javanese culture

### INTRODUCTION

It is imperative that studies about personal names in the Javanese community are carried out within the broad context of social, historical, and cultural shifts, changes, and developments. This topic is deemed important since it touches upon the basic lives of the Javanese people, both as individuals and as a group. Personal names are a medium that records various aspects of a culture (Lehrer, 1999). A personal name contains the ideology and spirit of a particular era that is growing and developing (Daljuni, 1997). This research endeavours to provide a theoretical contribution, based on the data and focus of other research, in order to develop further onomastic studies in Indonesia.

Research on the subject of personal names deserves to be given special attention because of the limited number of studies and research that have been carried out so far in this area. The data contained in Uhlenbeck's research is limited to the names of Javanese people prior to the 1950s. However, since that time there have been numerous and rapid social changes that have taken place in Java and that have led to changes in patterns of thought, patterns of lifestyle, cultural systems, and so on. As a result of this, statements that are related to the motivation of names and studies about names deserve to receive a critical response.

Sahid (2010) investigated the elements that form the structure of Javanese personal names in Surakarta. Three years later, Sahid (2013) developed a study on the social dynamics of Javanese personal names in the north coastal region of Java. This research proved successful in updating the views of academics who now believe that research on personal names is not a narrow, dry, or unattractive field of study. Research on the subject of names covers a broad area and will always be a source of interest. This statement provides a “breath of fresh air” for a number of publications by Searle (1958), Crystal (1987), Alford (1988), and Patton (1991).

The research by Sahid (2013) on “Personal names in the North Coastal Region of Java” shows the connection between names and ideology, personal statements by the community, cultural taste, social phenomena (Rahinun, 1988), and various other actual phenomena within the Javanese community which is becoming increasingly plural in nature. The diversity of ethnic backgrounds, traditions, and customs is reflected in the names of the Javanese community. A study of personal names can provide various kinds of information about the process of inter-ethnic acculturation and syncretism such as that which is found in the area of Semarang in Central Java, Indonesia. It is important to gain an understanding of the forms of inter-ethnic acculturation in the midst of the spirit of multiculturalism that is becoming increasingly inevitable (Christensfield, Phillips, & Glynn, 1999).

This research attempts to understand the meaning of personal names from two different perspectives, namely the development of linguistic forms and also the socio-cultural function of a name. The focus of the research is the development of personal names as a model of inter-ethnic acculturation in Indonesia. By looking at the names used by the people in the city of Semarang, we can discover the models of inter-ethnic acculturation that have taken place. This research also attempts to set straight the possibilities of incorrect perceptions about the variety of name forms that tend to exist at the present time.

## **METHOD**

This research takes the form of a qualitative study (Charmaz, 2000; Staruss & Crobin, 2003; Sutopo, 2008). The use of a qualitative research method is deemed appropriate as it is able to provide a rich and holistic picture (see Merriam, 2008). The decision to use this method is related to the characteristics of the research problem, the data sources, and the research data (Marohaini Yusoff, 2004). The location of the research was the city of Semarang, which is the capital city of the Central Java Province in Indonesia. The city of Semarang has a multicultural texture of society.

The data sources for the study can be differentiated as two types, namely the data about names of people living in the city of Semarang and the informants who have a number of different variants of ethnic Javanese, Chinese, and Arabic names, and also people from Western countries who are living in Semarang. The sampling technique chosen was purposive sampling so that each context had to be addressed according to its own characteristics (Sutopo, 2008). The technique for data analysis uses an interactive work model consisting of three components, namely data reduction, data presentation, and verification (Miles & Huberman, 1992). The data from various sources is collected and displayed, based on its characteristics and traits, and is then interpreted by comparing it with other corroborating data and sources. The final step is verification or the drawing of a conclusion which preserves the reliability of the internal data, namely the names and conditions of the name-holders in the city of Semarang.

## PERSONAL NAMES IN THE CITY OF SEMARANG

The city of Semarang is often referred to as a “Low City”. The lower city area is often afflicted by flooding due to heavy rain and high tides. Semarang is situated at 6°50' - 7°10' south latitude and 109°35' - 110°50' east longitude. Semarang is also a coastal city and is situated between 0.75 m and 348 m above sea level. It is the capital city of the province of Central Java and as such, it is not surprising that since former times it has been inhabited by communities from various places outside Semarang as well as from outside Java and even from other countries. The city of Semarang is a centre of industry, a centre of government, a centre of trade, and also a centre of development for several of the main religions in Indonesia. The people of Semarang are used to living in a multicultural environment.

Since Dutch colonial times, Semarang was known as an old city and is found in urban historical records. Numerous different problems have occurred with frequency, including problems related to issues of social change, urban planning, religion, culture, industry, and trade. Each district of the city has its own characteristic of problems which need to be handled using appropriate efforts and policies. The city of Semarang is inhabited by people from numerous ethnic communities, such as Chinese, Arabic, and Indian communities, people from various Western countries, as well of course as the Javanese community. Apart from the ethnic Javanese (who make up the majority of the community), there is also a large number of ethnic Chinese, and this community has coloured the history, city planning system, economy, and culture in the city of Semarang. The formation of numerous different social groups in Semarang indicates that there are still many differences between these groups that may give rise to conflict (cross-cutting affiliations). For this reason, on a certain level the community is integrated on the basis of the development of cross-cutting differences. This will make them aware not only of the differences between them but also of the similarities.

**Table 1. Names of inhabitants of Semarang from different ethnic groups in Indonesia**

<i>Ethnic Origin</i>	<i>Name Form Used</i>
<i>Jawa</i>	<i>Irma Nur Afidah, Elang Satriya Bavana, Agung Nugroho, Aminah Wahyuningsih, Eka Ariyanti Permata Putri, Jefry Sanjaya Darmono, Khairiza Awalul Anif, Defi Indah Cahyani,</i>
<i>Batak</i>	<i><a href="#">Jesse Huta Galung</a>, <a href="#">Mahyadi Panggabean</a>, <a href="#">Ponirin Meka</a>, <a href="#">Radja Nainggolan</a>, <a href="#">Saktiawan Eka Sinaga</a>, <a href="#">Salor Sitanggang</a>, <a href="#">Syamsul Satria Harahap</a>, <a href="#">Zulkarnaen Lubis</a>.</i>
<i>Padang (Minang)</i>	<i><a href="#">Arzetti Kapitra Bilbina</a>, Muhammad <a href="#">Erwin Natosmal Oemar</a>, <a href="#">Armahedi Mahzar</a>, <a href="#">Masmimar Mangiang</a>, <a href="#">Masnellyarti Agust Hilman</a>, <a href="#">Pia Zebadiah Bernadet</a>, <a href="#">Riry Syeried Jetta</a>,</i>
<i>Ambon</i>	<i><a href="#">Carolyn Lilipaly</a>, <a href="#">Chantal Dewi Hehuwat</a>, Debby Chiara Hukom, Fauzi Baadila Hittipeuw, Lita Zein, Freddy Nahusuly, <a href="#">Kartika Indah Pelapory</a>, Joseph Marco Manuhutu.</i>

For centuries, the configuration of a multicultural society has grown and developed in the city of Semarang. This is evident in the use of personal names which over time has increasingly shown a connecting line that clearly indicates the inter-ethnic acculturation that has taken place and continues to take place in Semarang. The names of Javanese people who are natives or original inhabitants of Semarang (Java) have been combined with the names of people who originate from other ethnic groups outside the island of Java and also the names of people from other countries. Besides the Javanese, other ethnic groups from Indonesia include Batak, Aceh, Padang, Ambon, Bugis, and Papua communities. Ethnic groups from outside Indonesia who have lived in Semarang for many centuries include Chinese, Arabic,

Indian, and European communities, as well as a small number of communities from other Asian countries.

**Table 2. Names of inhabitants of Semarang from different ethnic groups from outside Indonesia**

<i>Asal Etnik</i>	<i>Bentuk Nama yang Digunakan</i>
<i>Jawa</i>	<i>Achmad Agus, Irma Nur Afidah, Elang Satriya Bavana, Agung Nugroho, Aminah Wahyuningsih, Eka Ariyanti Permata Putri, Elia Ling Agusta, Jefry Sanjaya, Khairiza Awalul Anif</i>
<i>Arab</i>	<i>Salim Ghazali, Abdullah Abdur Rahman, Hammam Abdul Rakhim, Muhammad Harith, Hoiriyah Dulhari Anwar, Riffa Holimah, Holisoh Enoch Sahri, Gudaibiyah Homsatun</i>
<i>China</i>	<i>Johan Winata, Edi Limantoro, Han Thiam Hien, Tommy Lee, Shangwei Wu Kong, Lim Huang Lie, Richard Oh, Angelique Nio Widjaja, Olga Lydia, Lou Zhengsheng,</i>
<i>India</i>	<i>Punjabi, Azhari, Haque, Mehnaz Sinivasan, Marissa Soraya Singh, Ahmeed Din Marinez, Muhammad Abdu Elif Ritonga, Raam Manoj Punjabi, Brian Nutfal <a href="#">Sigamani</a></i>

The above data indicates that there is a difference in the use of name elements due to a difference in ethnic background. Nevertheless, there are a number of name elements that show similarities, such as *Agung*, *Nugroho*, *Darmono*, *Setya*, and *Endah*, which are typical name elements indicating the names of Javanese people. Similarly, family names, such as *Lubis*, *Sitanggang*, *Panggabean*, *Simanungkalit*, etc. typically indicate that the name-holder originates from the Batak community in North Sumatra. Likewise, names using elements such as *Punjabi*, *Sinivasan*, *Singh*, and *Raam* indicate people of Indian descent, while elements such as *Lim*, *Kim*, *Lou*, *Ziang*, *Nio*, and *Tjin* indicate ethnic Chinese names.

The ethnic Chinese and Arabic communities have different models of acculturation compared with other ethnic groups from outside Java. Both use Indonesian names, whether for the whole name or only part of the name. In the case of the ethnic Chinese, whole Indonesian names are formed by replacing all the name elements with Indonesian name elements but retaining one part of the original Chinese family name as a nickname (for example *Lim Kim Hok* → *Muhamad Salim*, *Lim Hok San* → *Santosa Limanto*). Partial use of Indonesian names is indicated by the inclusion one or two Chinese name elements in the full name (for example *Nio Tze Ying* → *Christian Ying*). Similarly, Arabic names have also been combined with Indonesian names in almost the same way that is, either by changing the name completely but retaining an Islamic character, or changing the name only partially. This is also the case with Indonesian names used by people from Batak, Ambon (Maluku), and Minang communities (Kumbara, 2010; Shamsul, 1998).

The ethnic Chinese and Arabic communities have a long history in Semarang. They first appeared in the city many centuries ago when the Islamic religion entered the island of Java along the north coast. In addition to engaging in trade activities, these two ethnic groups also helped spread the Islamic religion to Java. One important figure was *Zheng He* or *Cheng Ho*, a Chinese Moslem admiral who built the *Sam Poo Kong* Temple as a place of worship for Moslems but with Chinese architecture (Mulyono, 2005).

## FORMS OF INTER-ETHNIC ACCULTURATION IN PERSONAL NAMES

Acculturation is a form of assimilation of two or more cultures which synergize to bridge the gap between the characters of the two cultures or of multiple cultures (Eagleton, 2000). Inter-

ethnic acculturation in personal names is marked by the appearance of names whose elements originate from several different cultures. Inter-ethnic acculturation in names is strongly influenced by patterns of behaviour, language, life tools, and so on (Lynch & Hanson, 1992). In this study, processes of convergence and divergence were discovered within the framework of the context of name-giving.

**Process of Convergence**

The process of convergence occurs whenever the influence of several cultures leads towards a single point and becomes a particular form of an Indonesian name. Local names and foreign names are combined to form new names which are characteristic of an Indonesian name.

**Table 3. Convergences of Javanese Chinese Names**

<i>Chinese Name Element</i>	<i>Javanese Name Form (Indonesia)</i>	<i>Result of Indonesian Name Formation</i>
洪 Hung/Ang-	<i>Anggawarsito, Anggakusuma, Angela, Anggoro</i>	<i>Santosa Anggakusuma, Angela Pratiwiningsih, ANggoro Wijaya</i>
黄 Oei, Oey (Wi-)	<i>Wijaya, Winata, Widagdo, Winoto, Wiraatmadja, Winarto, Witoelar, Widodo</i>	<i>Anthony Wijaya, Lenny Winata, Jay Lonard Wiraatmaja, Winarto, Retno Wietoelar</i>
李 Li, Lie, Lee	<i>Limantoro, Lindarto, Liandouw</i>	<i>Agung Limantoro, Juardi Lindarto, Johan Lienata, Gunawan Liandouw</i>
陆 Lu	<i>Lukman, Lukita</i>	<i>Lukita Hadi, Lukman Hakim, Lu Lukito winoto</i>

The convergence of ethnic Chinese names on the one hand is encouraged by the existence of “nicknames” (Sahid, 2012). Although the ethnic Chinese use Indonesian names, on a day to day basis, they also use nicknames which are chosen from a particular element of the name or are taken from the Chinese family name that is included as a part of their Indonesian name. Therefore, the position of the Chinese name element is extremely important and can also be accepted by both the local community and also the ethnic Chinese person who holds an Indonesian name.

**Process of Divergence**

In this study, the process of divergence as a form of inter-ethnic acculturation in personal names in Semarang was found to occur by observing the process in which the use of Javanese (Indonesian) names has spread into the names of foreign ethnic groups.

**Table 4. Indonesianization of Chinese Names**

<i>Original Chinese Name</i>	<i>Change to Indonesian Name</i>
<i>Nyo Siang Gwan</i>	<i>Nyata Gunawan</i>
<i>Tan Chen bok</i>	<i>Tana Budianto</i>
<i>Nio Tan Koen</i>	<i>Ninik Kuntari</i>
<i>Lim Hok San</i>	<i>Santoso</i>
<i>Lau Jeng Han</i>	<i>Handoko</i>
<i>Lim Kim Hok</i>	<i>Muhammad Salim</i>
<i>Nio Tze Ying</i>	<i>Christian Ying</i>

During the New Order era, President Suharto recommended that all names of Indonesian citizens of foreign descent, particularly the ethnic Chinese community, be changed and that

they adopt Indonesian names instead. After the G30S PKI incident (1966), Kristoforus Sindhunata called for this change as a way of reinforcing a spirit of nationalism in Indonesia. Since that time there has been a process of “Indonesianization” in which foreign names have been changed to become Indonesian names. Another aspect that has encouraged this process is the spirit of assimilation and the theory of natural integration in Indonesia.

During the period mentioned above, the process of name changing was met with both rejection and criticism by the ethnic Chinese community. Nevertheless, the process of politicization of culture continued to take place alongside a spirit of unity and under strict surveillance by the government. Ultimately, the process of changing Chinese names to become Indonesian names became a symbol of solidarity that cannot however be separated from the rejection shown by a number of prominent ethnic Chinese figures at that time.

It is important to note that data collected shows that since the 1998 wave of reform in Indonesia, the freedom to use Chinese, Arabic, and Indian names appears to have been “forced open” by the myth that there was a new wave of freedom developing and spreading throughout Indonesia. This was strengthened by a number of new rules and laws that were passed, including Law No. 12 Year 2006 about Citizens of the Republic of Indonesia, Government Regulation No. 2 Year 2007, and Regulation by the Minister of Justice and Human Rights No. M.01-HL.03.01 Year 2006, about the Process of Registration to Gain Indonesian Citizenship. This situation was like a breath of fresh air which brought with it a new surge of foreign names in Indonesia, a country which is known for its slogan Unity in Diversity.

## **CONCLUSION**

This study about the development of the form of names as a result of inter-ethnic acculturation in the city of Semarang indicates that a significantly strategic dynamic has occurred. Personal names are important as the symbol of an era, of the circumstances and development of a particular situation during a particular period of time. The data collected shows that this study has succeeded in proving the existence of a process of “mutual acceptance” between new cultures and local cultures within a cultural context. This study aims to provide an academic foundation for various situations that have developed diachronically. The ethnic Javanese community, as the majority, is faced with a situation in which it must both give and accept influence from other foreign cultures which hold social power. This is a reciprocal or complementary process.

The process of inter-ethnic acculturation is encouraged by several aspects such as a common religion, shared views and beliefs, the emergence of forms of nicknames which are down to earth, and the existence of social change. The process of inter-ethnic acculturation in names occurs through two processes, namely convergence and divergence. The process of convergence indicates the appearance of new names as a result of the acculturation of two or more different cultures. The process of divergence occurs with the use of Indonesian names in names with an ethnic character. These two processes occur both in entirety and in part. The process occurs in entirety when a foreign name is replaced by an Indonesian name. The process occurs partially when an element or sub-elements of a foreign name is used in an Indonesian name. This element or sub-element continues to show the identity of the name-holder as an Indonesian citizen of foreign descent who lives in the city of Semarang.

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