AN ANALYSIS STUDY: MELISMATIC IN ORIGINAL MALAY SONG (OMS)

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Abstract

Original Malay Song (OMS) has become Malay culture heritage with historical background and special musical itself. Melismatic is one of special musical from Original Malay Song or melismatic in West music. The function is as singing style presented to graciously the rhythm of song melody. It has characteristics, because without melismatic, OMS will lose one of the special musical character. This study aims to analysis melismatic as one of special musical character in OMS. Data collecting technique did by semi-structured interview to four legend singers of OMS, literature study, discography study and field note study. After researched carefully, gained that melismatic is only general character. In the general character there is various ornamentation melody types.

Keywords: OMS, Melismatic

The Introduction

Original Malay Song (OMS) has assumed to have a very long history since the influence of Persian literature named Rubaiyat become the source of emerging ancient Malay literature around 16th century. This assumption has basic. The first assumption is by the prolific poet from Aceh Hamzah Fansuri in the 16th century has influenced by the Persian literature, but he developed Persian Literature in the form of two lines in one paragraph into Malay lyrics consists of four lines in each paragraph. The second assumptions, assumpt that the influence of Persian Literature actually had entered Aceh earlier, that is in the 12th. This assumption made based on the record got by the writer such as Al Farabi, Jalaludin Rumi and Omar Khayyam (1048-1124). OMS is not only has its own history but also has musical special characters known as Melismatic function to be better in song melody rhythm. Melismatic is one musical expression element very important and become the original special characters. The grandeur of OMS singers can be seen from their effort to pitch the original Malay song in the performance.

The Short History of OMS

OMS has long history, there is no special written composition on that case. Some very limited composition in sum, both of them explained here stated that this genre has existed along with the emerging of Malay History such as Hang Tuah History, Malim Demam History, Malim Dewa History, etc, that is around 16th BC (Hj. Mohd Zain Hamzah, 1961). If that is true, thus it might be said that this genre is grouped into the oldest popular song in the world, aged more than five years. Therefore this genre is not present in other part of the world except in the Malay Culture language, thus this genre is authentic and unique. The second, if there is a relationship between OMS with Malay lyrics, there is a speculation that said that Malay lyrics as the main chain and the type of The Middle East poet, because Malay Lyrics similar to ruba’i (ruba’iyat), that is a type of poem famous in Persia. Idawati continued her speculation by making comparation study between Malay Poem and Ruba’iyat (Idawati, 2013). Then explained there are some differences between both that is, usual ruba’i consists of two lines and each ruba’i is a whole unit also one complete semantic, while the poem consists of four lines and form related paragraphs. Furthermore said that:

If observed the difference between ruba’i and Malay poem above, thus understandable that ruba’i is not fully the prototype of Malay poem, but also closer to the form of gurindam (rhapsody). However there is difference because in Arabic-Persian literature (Persian, pen) itself does not know long
poem composed in some ruba’i meanwhile gurindam usually consist of long paragraphs which still as the main theme.

To the next part discussed the role of a Sufic man in the 16th century in Aceh named Hamzah Fansuri. The great works of Hamzah Fansuri has much inspire and made a reference for the works of the next Malay poets. Also said that scientist has agreged concluded that Malay poems become the basic for the growth of OMS today. Not satisfied with the speculation above, the researcher tried to get further information on Malay poem and traditional poetry in the Indonesian archipelago from other source.

The first source, from the book entitled Words of Paradise: Selected Poems of Rumi, New Interpretations by Rafiqi Abdulla composed by Francis Lincoln (2000). This book is the new interpretation by Rafiqi Abdulla to the collection of Persian poem in 1204 written by Jalaluddin Rumi, a famous poet and his literature works influence until Aceh. This poet composition named ruba’iyat, the plural form is ruba’i in the 12th century spread also the change in the era Sultanate of Aceh. This book consist of 2 collections of ruba’iyat poetry entitled Shams-e Tabriz dan Mathnawi-e Ma’navi. Both of them contains teaching on moral and spiritual knowledge.

Aceh in the 12th century has been an area that often visited by large-scale merchants from the Middle East, Europe and China. Amirul Hadi (2004) explained:

"Early signs of the emergence of Aceh are observable after its unification with Lamuri of Mahkota ‘Alam around the end of the fifteenth or early in the sixteenth century. Lamuri was a kingdom that, at the time, was better known and perhaps more powerful than Aceh itself. Yet there is little information available regarding it. Founded in around the ninth century with Krueng Raya as its capital, it was an important port-kingdom visited by many people from different corners of the world, such as Arabia, Persia, Europe and China (p. 12)."

From the explanation above that in the 9th century had present a kingdom in Aceh called Lamuri with Krueng Raya as the central. Since that time has started influence between nations and opened. This matter is possible the influence of Persian literature in Aceh, because according to the historical story entitled Ying-Yai Shenglan (1456), recorded that the society and the kingdom Leaders have believed into Islam Religion.

Below is the record from Snouck Hurgronye in Abubakar Atjeh (1985): At the time of King Mongol Hulagu in 1258 BC destroyed Bagdad more than five centuries as Islamic Kingdom, it seems like the Islamic kingdoms dissapeared. Only a half century before the even occur, Islam developed peacefully and come to Indonesian islands and its nearest area.

Based on the records above, able to made assumption with the entering of Islam in Indonesia in the 12th century, thus believe that in the same era come also Arabic-Persian literature, that was in the form of ruba’iyat. Furthermore at that time was the golden age for the development of ruba’iyat literature in Iran-Persian.

The supporting development of Malay literature in the early time of Aceh Sultanate consists in Malay History book as the main reference of Malay history source in Malaka era in the 15th century stated by J.M.Gullick dalam Amirul Hadi (2004) recorded that:

"...there is a certain amount of historical facts embedded in it. But its main significance in the context of social analysis is that Malay literature and history served to transmit the traditions and values of the community, more especially of its ruling class” (p. 4).

The scripts above has proved the importance of Malay Literature and History in changing tradition also values in Malay society. The further question is how Malay literature gain influence and Arabic-Persian literature?

The first assumption made based on the popularity of Al-Farabi (870-950), a great sufistic and poet in Persian. His influential works were brought by Arabic merchants to Aceh in the 12th. He also
beside as a great philosopher and man of letters, Al Farabi has Arabic named Muhammad Ibn Muhammad Ibn Tarkhan, come from the ethnic nation of Farab (Turki) and he also a very talented musical expert. According to Majid Fakhry (2002), Al Farabi written some books on music such as, Kitab al-Musiga al-Kabir (Musical Theory), Ihsa al-Ulum (The Knowledge on Theory and Musical Practice), and theories on melody Fi’l Iqa also al-Nuklah ila’l-Iqa (Melody Transition). Unfortunately his books on music did not learn deeply by the Malay society at that time, while at this moment proved by the growing influence thus emerging Malay poems and famous traditional poetry that become the part of Malay literature culture.

The great influence of Arabic-Persian Literature we know from Malay Literature works in form of poetry called ruba’i is very popular in the citizen level at that time because it content good deed comes from Al-Quran. He gave great influence in Hamzah Fansuri works in form of Malay poem developing in the 12th century. His literature works were very famous in Aceh as written in Malay Annals and also Snuck Written, Hurgronye Marcopolo, etc. Make sure also through merchants from the Middle East to Aceh at that time, directly to bring together ruba’iyat, the works of poem or poetry of famous Arabic-Persian.

It is not only Al Farabi and Jalaluddin Rumi Omar Khayyam (1048-1124) also very synonym with various works of Ruba’iyat has great influence in the development of literature in Indonesia until now. Omar Khayyam has complete name Abu’l Fath Omar ibn Ibrahim Khayyam, was born in the city of Nayshabur, Khurasan Province, Iran. Omar Khayyam written 14 books on philosophy and literature in the time less understand by the people because the language composition was to deep to understand (Mehdi Aminrazavi, 2005).

The word of Ruba’i (in plural form Ruba’iyat) in the meaning of ‘qurratain’ (four lines poem) in form of words Al-Rabi means number four in Arabic numbers, Ruba’i showed a paragraph consists of four lines very popular in the Persian poem because the simplicity of style. The short lines form aphorism/the real ideal emerge effectively. A Ruba’i consist of two hemistich or stanza with total sum of four parts. The type of this poem also called taraneh’ (snatch/fragment) or ‘dobaiti’ (twoliners) in the early era of Persian literature. In the time of Omar Khayyam, the reading of four parts where only the first part to the second and the fourth reading, to give more freedom to the reading (Mehdi Aminrazavi, 2005).

Mehdi Aminrazavi also give five criterions to determine the original Ruba’iyat:

i) Every ruba’i follows a theme from four differents approach
ii) Logical structure and the relationship from each ruba’i
iii) Determining to message and not to the form
iv) All Ruba’iyat presenting one theme relationship with the struggling of life that is: doubtness, protest, confrontations and hard critics (sarcasm)
v) Elegy of poem

An Analysis of Cengkok or Lenggok (Melismatic) in OMS

Melismatic is the part of the terms used in OMS. Sometimes the musical artists often called with the terms bunga-bunga melodi or melody interest. Although there is difference in the name of the terms, the melismatic has the similar function with the style of singing presented to give the best song melody rhythm. It has characteristics, that is a synonym special character and specific in OMS. Without melismatic, OMS will be awkward because the quality or the singer creativity of OMS measured by giving individual melismatic.

Nur Ainun explained that the melismatic of a song depends on to the song text itself. Melismatic is more related to the expression of a song text. In OMS, the right melismatic has soft nuance and pitch more rumble. Thus what did by Nur Ainun when he made personal characters, different with other singer.

While according to Tengku Hamidah, melismatic is one elements of very important musical and become the special characteristics from OMS. The melismatic is very important thus become
the best special character as the originality. Therefore also make a difference on where is the best Malay song and fair. I often hear songs from Rosiah Chik, Rafeah Buang and Kamarian Noor. They are really not deny again their greatness in singing Original Malay Song. I got their specific melismatic which then influence me in creating my own melismatic style. Furthermore, I also often learn how to sing the song from the best melismatic. I would not allowed to explain the words, but melismatic is the product of our soul expression.

According to Tengku Hamidah Cengkok or melismatic is the highest result of poem expression or musical texts into highest value musical expression. Tengku Hamidah uses the terms “bunga-bunga/flowers” as the change from the term cengkok or melismatic. Without ultra sensitive expression, good melismatic will not gained by the singer, he says.

Aspalela Abdullah has his own argumentation related to melismatic in OMS. According to him, we have to create our own identity (and this melismatic). But it is able to gain by practicing and changing voice to adopt from listening melismatic from the senior singers. I also often to listen singings from Kamariah Noor, while studying the characteristics of melismatic. One thing for sure I also find special characters of melismatic of my own thus I got admittance from seniors such as S.M Salim.” I feel sorry that new singers now often make mistake by “referring to the wrong person and the wrong song”, He says. Melismatic is basically allow to produce with the highest expression for the content value in the poem (song texts).

SM. Salim is very respected by OMS singer everywhere, of course has good opinion similar with the three legend singers above. His opinion on melismatic in OMS need to recite as follow.” To sing this original Malay song is not easy. Weh have to be smart in melismatic the original song in which the melody is not in the notation meant. We allow to make better the song or worse the song. Its not an easy way to sing original Malay song. If have to sing a long song like ‘Laila Majnun” is hard to sing it well”. Thus S.M Salim gave explanation to us that it is not easy to sing OMS, particularly because melismatic is not written in the notation. Thus OMS melismatic is individual style, the meaning every singer has his own style, depending on his creativity in making ornamentation for the available song melody. This is also relationship with the interpretation for the text according to the term from Nur Ainun called as the interpretation for the meaning of poem.

Therefore the informants consist of experts and appropriate as the legend of OMS has told about their musical experience in the case of melismatic in OMS.

Then below is the analysis from the point of musical theories on what says on the melismatic. In the term of west musical terms, synonym appropriate with the term of cengkok or lenggok is the word melismatic comes from German language which give meaning of vocalization art that florid (John Stainer and William Barret, 2009, p. 285). Then John Stainer and William Barret (2009) classified as a singing technique of elaborative and complicated. Melismatic elements explained as (i) a song or melody and (ii) a notation or some of it ornamented as a syllable without having extended syllable. In the term of British musical theory language called “Grace Notes”, in Italian language called “Fioritura” (P. 285).

Susan E. George, et.al. (2005) give information on “melismatic” as follow: “A syllable can be sung on more than one note (syllable extension or melisma) and also two consecutive syllables of different words can be connected to the same note. The punctuation of the lyric has to be attached to the word before the graphic extension or melisma”(p. 163).

Meanwhile Michael Kennedy in the Oxford Dictionary of Music (2006) said that “melisma: is a group of notes to sing a syllables of words (p.625). It is hard to write definite melismatic with the right notation because every singer has his or her own different melismatic and always similar with the interpretation and individual skills.

After listening, observing and analyzing some repertoire example of song from the figures of OMS from various songs
such as the original, style, zapin, dance and mistress, thus need to explain that some melisma of OMS probably consists of some note ornamentation type, that is:

- **Acciaccatura**, that is a type of grace note in form of note or more previous than note originally from the syllable song text. It is often combine with other vocal techniques named as double or triple appoggiature.

The example of notation 1: Acciaccatura in NLMA (Anak Tiung Song)

![Notation 1: Acciaccatura in NLMA (Anak Tiung Song)](image)

**Appoggiatura**, also included into one type from grace note followed second than previous note or after it. Appoggiatura is one beauty in the singing and every singer OMS should able to master this technique.

Baird descripted Appoggiatura as follow:

> Of all the ornaments of singing, none is easier for the master to teach or for the student to learn than the appoggiatura. In addition to its pleasing quality, it alone in the art enjoys the privilege of being heard frequently without becoming tiresome to the listener, so long as it does not exceed the limits of good

The example of notation 2: Double Appoggiatura in OMS 'Song of Anak Tiung'

![Notation 2: Double Appoggiatura in OMS 'Song of Anak Tiung'](image)
taste as prescribed by those who understand music (Julianne C. Baird, 1995, p. 88).

Need to note here that in OMS, *appoggiatura* is generally not written to follow writing technique of music theories, but it is form from the beginning thus the result from the singer expression follow song melismatic and the style of individual singer. However, in OMS there are many functions of *appoggiatura* as follow:

- As the connector of melody/song to make it more melodious and giving the original of Malay character. The message of connector function is to make OMS has “melismatic” because it is legato/slur and few of stacatto/detached.
- To fill the movement of melody/song become has content
- To enrich the harmony variation as passing tone horizontally to harmonic note vertically
- To make OMS melody is more life and brilliant

In the context of “melisma” or the extension of OMS syllables, beside *appoggiatura* there is also trill as the special character of OMS. The result from observation and analysis of some examples of singing repertoire from OMS figures to make trill in singing are as follow:

- *Appoggiatura* is usually to lengthen the first note from the trill and sing it louder than the trill follow it.
- If want to make variation with longer *appoggiatura*, thus started with soft sound then harder to make it soft again along trill
- If there is strong beats thus *appoggiatura* in OMS usually followed accented notes
- As like a long trill usually first by *appoggiatura* but it is not a must that all *appoggiatura* in OMS usually followed by grace-notes and trill.

The example of notation 3: Triple *appoggiatura* in OMS ‘Lagu Anak Tiung’

![Notation](image)

- Element of *mordent* also able to know clearly in the example of songs of informants. Mordent is not an ornament who has two forms of upper mordent and lower mordent or called just mordent. Although in theory is not written in the notation of OMS, however practically it is often singing. The writing symbol of mordent theoretically in the song of Jalak Lenteng song by Tengku Hamidah is as follow:

The example of notation 4: Mordent in OMS “Lagu Jalak Lenteng”

![Notation](image)
Grapetto, is an ornament notation consists of basis notation with up sequent and down sequent. Below the example of gruppetto element contain in the singing of Nur’Ainun analyzed through discography principles.

The example of notation 5: Grupetto in OMS “ Sere Mersing Song”

- There is ornamentation notation as important as in OMS spread out with termination notation. In theory, ornamentation notation like this there in the end of song melody but the value of length and short of notation is relative. Termination notes like this is may consists of one or two notations.
The example of notation 6: “termination notes in OMS the song of“ Eating Betel Fine”

\[ \text{Makan Sirih} \]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Langgam</th>
<th>Andante</th>
<th>( \text{( \bar{\text{J}} ) = 56} )</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vokal</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Accordion</td>
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The analysis to the example of figures song and discography study find out that other ornament notation is slide notes. Ornament notes slide to the main notes slur. It is different with appoggiatura which is note in leaps, this slide notes always move with interval with steps wise. Such as in appoggiatura, slide notes also may consists of two or three notes to the real notes in a song melody.

The example of notation 7: “Termination notes in OMS the song of“Jalak Lenteng”

\[ \text{Jalak Lenteng} \]

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The example of notation 8: (Slide notes) in OMS the song of *Mak Inang Pulau Kampai*'

**Mak Inang Pulau Kampai**

- **Trill**, or notations flow like a wave, often present in OMS. Although it is not written theoretically in the score, but every singer of OMS studied gained to produce the soft and impress trill voice. In other words, it is not too excessive thus explain the softness of oscillation. The first level for a new singer in OMS should able to make trill of particular syllable thus resulting beauty of melismatic. However it need to pay attention if “trill” ahead by an appoggiatura notes, thus appoggiatura notes should become the first note to the “trill”.

The example of notation 9: “Trill “ or flowing notes such as wave in OMS the song of “*Mak Inang Pulau Kampai*”

**Mak Inang Pulau Kampai**

If observe specifically as the example song of OMS, the composing song of OMS only use basic notation without writing ornamentation notation or in the term of Malay is Lenggok or Cengkok (Melismatic)

The example of notation 10: Basic Notation of OMS the song of “Anak Tiung” which is not written in Lenggok or Cengkok (ornamentation notes)
The example of notation 11: Notation song of “Anak Tiung” which is written Lenggok or Cengkok (Melismatic) (not ornamentation)

**Anak Tiung**

**Langgam**

Andante  \( \text{J} = 60 \)

**Lagu: Melayu Aeh**

Transkrip: Tengku Kitawati

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The notation includes a transcription of the music notation for the song "Anak Tiung," featuring the vocal and accordion parts. The notation is in B minor with a tempo of 60 beats per minute, presented in a clear and readable format for musical transcription.
Thus, the conclusions gained from above outlines are lenggok or cengkok (Melismatic) in OMS it means ornamentation notes. Melismatic can find in syllable which is generally not written in the score (if present) and sing it melismatic (slur/legato). Therefore it should be there is no more misunderstanding that lenggok or cengkok is identical with melismatic. But, in OMS with melismatic (slur/legato) there is extension of syllable song expressively by using ornamentation notes outline above.

The conclusion
After studied more comprehensively thus in this paper assumed that the history of OMS is older than the previous assumption in the 16 century. If the history existence of rubaiyat literature art as the principle presence of old Malay literature, thus probably since the 12 century of Sultanate Aceh Era the Malay Literature was growth fastly. It assumed that in this period the early emerging of Malay Literature traditional poetry that become the main for the presence of OMS. So far there is no absolute certainty for that, therefore need to study the history aspect of OMS specifically.

Beside the speciality of Old Malay Literature history which influences old OMS, there is OMS musical characteristics specifically that is lenggok or cengkok (melismatic) generally made as melismatic style. Actually there are types of notes ornamentation in lenggok or melismatic of OMS. It is different with West arts song as a written art thus notes ornamentation to produce melisma also has written systematically. While lenggok melismatic of OMS is never written because OMS is in oral culture. From this oral culture OMS has long history and esthetics values that keep on maintain as the heritage of Malay Culture.

Reference


