

## SYAIR AND PANTUN PROSODY\*

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Many characteristics of the Malay syair and pantun have become standard items in handbooks and textbooks concerned with classical Malay literature.<sup>1</sup> These works uniformly agree that the syair consists of a series of quatrains containing an ongoing story. The final syllable of each line (*kerat*) within a stanza (*bait* or *rangkap* or *untai*) rhymes with every other final syllable of that stanza (aaaa, bbbb, ....). Furthermore, the line generally consists of four words with a more or less definable caesura (*jeda*) after the second word. The pantun has all the features of the syair quatrain except that the final rhyme is of the abab type,<sup>2</sup> and there is often an alternating internal rhyme (cdcd) between the precaesural syllables. Although pantuns may be linked to form a pantun sequence, most are independent. Also, pantuns may range from two to twelve lines although these are rarer than the four-line variety. The primary difference separating the syair form from that of the pantun, however, is that while the syair has a continuous story throughout the quatrain--and between quatrains--the pantun divides into two parts, the first half (*pembayang maksud*) having specific, concrete images<sup>3</sup> to describe nature or the human world, the second half (*maksud*) using abstract words to state an observation or maxim.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>See "Bibliographical Note" at the end of this article.

<sup>2</sup>Ali Ahmad, *Asas Menganalisa Sajak* (Kuala Lumpur: Fajar Bakti, 1971), pp. 4-6; Annas Haji Ahmad, *Sastera Malayu Lama* (Penang: Saudara Sinaran, 1966), pp. 49, 70; Harun Aminurrashid, *Kajian Puisi Melayu* (Singapore: Pustaka Melayu, 1960), pp. 19-22, 45-47; Mohd. Taib Osman, ed., *Warisan Puisi Melayu* (Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, 1975), pp. 1-4, 35-39; Omardin Haji Asha'ari, *Kajian Pantun Melayu* (Singapore: Malaya Publishing House, 1961), p. 24; *Pantun Melayu*, ed. R. J. Wilkinson and R. O. Winstedt (Singapore: Malaya Publishing House, 1961), pp. iii-xv, 183-204; Sir Richard Winstedt, *A History of Classical Malay Literature* (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford, 1969), pp. 190, 193-95; and Dr. Haji Zaba, *Ilmu Mengarang Melayu* (Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, 1965), pp. 221-24. Specific terminology varies: M. Taib Osman, *Warisan*, pp. 35-36, uses *bait* or *bait rangkap* as meaning a four-line stanza while *Kamus Dewan* under "*rangkap*" says that a *rangkap* equals two *bait* or four lines. What is important here is that different terms are used for modern poetry than are used for syairs and pantuns. I cite here only Malaysian terminology.

<sup>3</sup>By an image I mean words for specific objects or motions which the senses can perceive.

<sup>4</sup>For example, *Budi yang baik dikenang jua* (only good character is remembered).

Amin Sweeney has argued that syair and pantun line structures are identical.<sup>5</sup> He has also shown that the basis of syair lines is not a system of quantitative meter.<sup>6</sup> What the basis of syair and pantun prosody is, however, has not yet been satisfactorily shown. The handbooks make two assertions about the nature of syair and pantun lines, but these claims are vague and often incorrect. C. Hooykaas, for example, has claimed that every line has four words and that the line must have from eight to eleven or twelve syllables.<sup>7</sup> The unsatisfactory nature of his definition is suggested by the term "eleven or twelve syllables," for the extent of possibilities given argues that the basis for the line is still unknown. It is also clear that these two rules are not independent, because without affixation Malay words are predominantly disyllabic.<sup>8</sup> To write a four-word line with two monosyllables and no affixation would be difficult, if not impossible, because of the few monosyllabic words in Malay. A four-word line with one affixed word and one monosyllabic word already satisfies the rule of having eight to twelve syllables. Generally, any other combination of four words also satisfies this rule as it is equally difficult to write lines where all words are multiply affixed. Because of the linguistic character of the Malay language, the second rule, then, is a natural result of the first. As a definition, it is not useful for articulating the prosody of syair and pantun lines.

These two commonly asserted rules fail in their descriptive accuracy. There are numerous lines, such as the following, which fulfill the syllable-count rule, trespass the word-count rule, and yet are apparently well within the limits of acceptability for syair lines:

- (1) SKT I.16.D memberi hati bimbang dan rawan<sup>9</sup>  
I.29.A berkamar ikatan Melayu

The syllable-count rule, while generally describing syair and pantun lines because of the breadth of its inclusion, nonetheless has its exceptions:

<sup>5</sup>Amin Sweeney, "Some Observations on the Malay Sha'ir," *Journal of the Malayan Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* (henceforth *JMBRAS*), 44, 1 (1971), p. 61; A. Teeuw, "The Malay Sha'ir: Problems of Origin and Tradition," *Bijdragen tot de taal-, land- en volkenkunde* (henceforth *BKI*), 122 (1966), pp. 431-32.

<sup>6</sup>Sweeney, "Some Observations," pp. 60-61. C. Skinner, *Sja'ir Perang Mengkasar*, *Verhandelingen van het Koninklijk Instituut voor Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde* [henceforth *VKI*] 40 (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1963), p. 65.

<sup>7</sup>C. Hooykaas, *Perintis Sastera* (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford, 1967), pp. 8, 73. He defines a *seloka* as a pantun having an aaaa final rhyme pattern (p. 84).

<sup>8</sup>A. Teeuw, *Taal en Versbouw Rede . . . aan de Rijksuniversiteit te Utrecht op 19 Mei 1952* (Amsterdam, 1952), p. 10, has neatly shown that the syllable count system is a result of a word-based verse. He argues for a line consisting of four words, but also points out a number of short words which are not to be counted and some words of four or more syllables (e.g., *permaisuri*) are counted as two (*permai* and *suri*).

<sup>9</sup>All syair lines are taken from the *Shair Ken Tambuhan*, ed. A. Teeuw (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press and University of Malaya Press, 1966). Capital Roman numerals indicate chapters; Arabic numerals, quatrains; and Roman letters, lines. All pantuns are taken from *Pantun Melayu*, ed. Wilkinson and Winstedt (see note 2). Arabic numbers indicate the pantun, and Roman letters denote the lines.

- (2) I.2.D segala yang mendengar belas dan kasihan  
 I.15.D dilebihkan daripada segala para puteri  
 182.C dunia nak kiamat

It might be fairly asked why the rule should not be expanded to read "Every line has from seven to sixteen syllables." Whatever the wording, the rule is too broad to explain the basis of the lines it purports to describe.

The four-word and syllable-count rules, however, suffer more from their inadequacy than from their inaccuracy, since it is possible to write unacceptable lines by following these rules. Placing two monosyllabic words in adjacent positions on one side of the caesura or constructing a line with five disyllabic words is apparently not acceptable in syairs, yet some lines have two monosyllabic words and many have five words. The prosody of the syair and pantun, therefore, has not been sufficiently described.

The possible models of prosody are not unlimited: accentual (e.g., English), quantitative (Latin, Arabic<sup>10</sup>), syllabic (Japanese *haiku*), syllabic and tonal (Chinese *lü shih* poems<sup>11</sup>), etc. Each of these prosodic forms can be described by precise rules which may be broken only with prescribed variations. Something similar to these forms should be sought for the syair and pantun.

I have tried to argue that the presently accepted rules for syair and pantun lines are too inaccurate to distinguish between correct and incorrect lines and do not provide a sufficient description of the basis of their prosody. In the rest of this study I will examine the first three chapters of the *Syair Ken Tambuhan* (*SKT*), an early work dating from somewhere between the fifteenth and seventeenth centuries.<sup>12</sup> These three chapters consist of 44, 50, and 130 quatrains or a total of 896 lines. Second, I will examine the first 210 pantuns (840 lines) found in Wilkinson and Winstedt's *Pantun Melayu*.<sup>13</sup> This 1914 collection is early enough to avoid being influenced by present-day theories about Malay prosody and also has the advantage of providing a good geographical and historical distribution in its selection.<sup>14</sup> With these two bodies of data I will demonstrate that syair and pantun prosody is based on a system of four word clusters per line. Furthermore, the syair, as represented by the *SKT*, differs from pantuns according to the kinds of allowable exceptions to the standard line.

The first chapter of the *Syair Ken Tambuhan* has 176 lines (44 stanzas) of which the majority have four words, according to the system

<sup>10</sup>Sweeney, "Some Observations," pp. 60-61; Teeuw, *Taal*, p. 3.

<sup>11</sup>See Ch'en Shou-yi, *Chinese Literature: A Historical Introduction* (New York: Ronald Press, 1961), pp. 232-34.

<sup>12</sup>Teeuw, *SKT*, pp. xxxiii-xxxiv.

<sup>13</sup>It is unfortunate that current practice is for collections and anthologies not to state the origin of their pantuns. Wilkinson and Winstedt's anthology is the only major exception.

<sup>14</sup>For the geographic distribution of similar poetic forms, see Overbeck, "The Malay Pantun," *SBRAS*, 85 (1922), pp. 2-12.

of word division in Teeuw's edition (see Table I).<sup>15</sup> This preponderance of four-word lines suggests that the system of syair prosody may be found by trying to reduce all non-four-word lines into the four-word pattern. Such rules as it may be necessary to formulate and the conversion of these lines into the present spelling system will alter the statistics of Table I in such a way that continuous reassessment will be required.

Table I

<u>Words/Line</u>	<u>Lines</u>
3	23
4	111
5	39
6	3

The meaning of "word" at this stage of analysis includes the root word and all of its affixes, affixed personal pronouns (*ku-*), and reduplicated members (*dayang-dayang*). These affixes and other enclitic words, as written in Teeuw's edition, are listed in Table II.

Table II

<u>Affix</u>	<u>Example</u>	<u>Citation</u>
beR-	berbuat	I.6.A
[dari]	daripada <sup>16</sup>	I.15.D
di	di bawah <sup>17</sup>	I.4.B
di-	ditunggu	I.19.A
ke	ke bawah <sup>18</sup>	I.6.B
ku-	kupersalini	III.8.D
meN-	mendengar	I.2.D
per-	persembahkan	I.4.C
se-	sekedar	I.1.D
ter-	terlalu	I.8.C
-an	tawanan	I.2.B
-i	ditunggu	I.19.A
-kan	dengarkan	I.1.A
-lah	inilah	I.2.A
-nya	madahnya	I.1.C

<sup>15</sup>Hereafter, spelling is according to the *Pedoman Umum Ejaan Baharu* (Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, 1975) of the Jawatan Tetap Bahasa Malaysia, Kementerian Pelajaran Malaysia.

<sup>16</sup>The prepositions *dari*, *di*, and *ke* were formerly joined to the succeeding, adjacent preposition (*diatas*). Now separated except when followed by *pada* they often appear in five-word lines. I have therefore analyzed them as inseparable compounds (see the discussion of compounds and monosyllables below). As will be demonstrated later, it is *pada* and not *dari* which is the affix, but this is not apparent at this point in the argument. Also, the interpretation offered here does not differentiate between the place markers (*ke* and *di*) and the similar affixes (*ke-* and *di-*) on grounds of prosody.

<sup>17</sup>See note 16.

<sup>18</sup>See note 16.

Once the affixes are accepted as part of the word, then the first step in analysis is to examine the behavior of reduplicated words. There are ten reduplicated words present in the first chapter:

- (3) I.6.A masing-masing hendak berbuat bakti  
 I.6.D emas dan perak berkati-kati  
 I.10.D keluk tembosa berbagai-bagai  
 I.11.D disinar syamsu gilang-gemilang  
 I.12.D sekalian bertenun sehari-hari  
 I.23.D bangunlah sekalian dayang-dayang  
 I.27.D lalu memakai bau-bauan  
 I.34.C cahaya durjanya gilang-gemilang  
 I.37.D lalu memakai bau-bauan  
 I.40.C terkibar-kibar puncanya sebai

All but the first two examples have three words under the definition of word given above. These eight examples become four-word lines if the reduplicated words are counted as filling the places of two words, and the first two examples (I.6.A and I.6.D) then count as five-word lines. The model which reduplicated words suggest is that there are four positions for words in a line. A reduplicated word fills two of these with the additional condition that both positions must be on only one side of the caesura and not bridge it:

- (4) I.37.D lalu/memakai//bau-bauan<sup>19</sup>  
 A / B // C-D  
 I.40.C terkibar-kibar//puncanya/sebai  
 A-B // C / D

This model, then, provides two provisional rules: (1) words consist of a root word, its attached pronouns, and affixes according to the current system of word division; and (2) reduplicated words fill the positions of two words.

The second rule is further corroborated by the evidence of Chapters II and III which have 25 examples altogether of reduplicated words with a total of 5 exceptions (II.6.C, 16.B, III.33.C, 80.D, and 130.A).<sup>20</sup> The fourth exception, III.80.D, contains *masing-masing* as does I.6.A. Also, II.6.C has *sana-sini*, and II.6.A *bunyi-bunyian*, and III.69.C has *ayah bonda* in a five-word line.<sup>21</sup> These apparent exceptions suggest that Rule Two should be applied only to true reduplicated forms as *masing-masing* never occurs "unreduplicated," and the other words are more in the realm of compounds than of reduplications.<sup>22</sup>

<sup>19</sup>For the purposes of prosody, the vowel sequences *au*, *ua*, and *ai* behave as though they form two separate syllables--the one exception is final *ai* as in *sebai* (I.40.C) or *wai* (I.25.D). These sounds could also be analyzed as glide plus vowel or vowel plus glide, or, again, as diphthongs. Cf. *Pedoman Umum*, pp. 6-7. In III.86.A *ia* is disyllabic.

<sup>20</sup>II.6.a, 6.B, 6.C, 16.B, 19.C, 32.D, 35.C, 46.C, 47.A, III.33.C, 35.B, 47.B, 48.D, 50.D, 59.D, 80.D, 85.B, 86.A, 87.C, 92.D, 93.D, 98.B, 112.C, 127.B, 130.A.

<sup>21</sup>Neither Teeuw, *SKT*, nor the *Pedoman Umum* (p. 23) hyphenates *ayah bonda*.

<sup>22</sup>For example, *bunyi-bunyian*, *ayah bonda*, *sana-sini*, *laki isteri*, and *bapa aji*. Thus *bunyi-bunyian* is "orchestra," not "many sounds."

They should therefore count as holding the position of a single word:

- (5) I.6.A masing-masing/hendak//berbuat/bakti  
                   A           / B   // C   / C  
       II.6.A segala/bunyi-bunyian//telah/berbunyi  
                   A   /       B           // C   / D

This resolution leaves only I.6.D, II.16.B, III.33.C and 130.A as exceptions among the lines with reduplicated words.

Monosyllabic words also show regularity in their deployment. Counting reduplicated words, other than the compounds of the *masing-masing* and *bunyi-bunyian* variety, as two words, lines having more than four words and also having monosyllables show a direct relationship between the number of monosyllables and the number of words exceeding four. Thus five-word lines have one monosyllable, and six-word lines have two monosyllables:

- (6) I.3.C takhta kerajaan yang amat besar  
       I.2.D segala yang mendengar belas dan kasihan

This regular pattern suggests the next rule: (3) monosyllables do not fill a word position; rather, they join with an adjacent word to form a word cluster. If Rule Three is accepted, then both six-word lines in the first chapter become four-word lines:

- (7) I.2.D segala/yang mendengar//belas/dan kasihan<sup>23</sup>  
       I.34.D segala/yang memandang//suka/dan sayang

Furthermore, I.6.D, II.16.B, III.33.C, and 130.A, noted above as apparent exceptions to Rule Two, are by virtue of Rule Three four-word lines:

- (8) I.6.D emas/dan perak//berkati-kati  
       II.16.B bekerja nin/jangan//berura-ura  
       III.33.C Ken Tambuhan/tunduk//kemalu-maluan  
       III.130.A Raden/pun sangat//bersuka-sukaan<sup>24</sup>

Of the thirty-nine lines with five words in Chapter I, thirty-four have four words or word clusters per line by virtue of Rule Three. Lines I.8.D, 11.A, 15.D, 36.C, and 41.A still have an excess of words. I.15.C has too few: *dikasihi/sang nata/dan permaisuri*.

A small number of disyllabic words regularly appear in five-word lines. I have therefore analyzed them as enclitic or proclitic affixes. These words are *puluh*, *belas* ("-teen"), *para*, and *pada*. *Akan* and *diri*

<sup>23</sup>Most monosyllables join with the following word because of their meaning, not because of any rule of prosody. In popular criticism, monosyllables such as *yang* and *nin* "are not words"; however, the fact that they are monosyllables has only been partially suggested as the basis for their inability to be "words." Skinner says that the line should have four "minimal free forms," *Sja'ir Perang Mengkasar*, p. 65; and Hooykaas, *Perintis*, p. 73, states that short words, e.g., *yang*, *ini*, *lagi*, *di-*, *-kan*, and *pun*, do not need to be counted; and Teeuw, *Taal*, p. 10, says that *yang*, *dan*, and *di* are not counted because they are incomplete.

<sup>24</sup>The word *pun* is an enclitic or proclitic depending on its context.

perhaps also do not fill a word position, but the sample does not provide sufficient evidence to warrant a conclusion.<sup>25</sup>

*Para* serves as a pluralizing and individualizing word ("each and every") which cannot stand alone. As such, it joins with the following word:

- (9) I.8.D tempat/menaruhkan//anak/para ratu  
 I.15.D dilebihkan/daripada//segala/para puteri  
 I.41.A demi/ditentang//segala/para puteri

but: III.80.A adapun/segala//para/puteri<sup>26</sup>

Where Teeuw's edition sometimes separates the words for "-teen" and "-ty" (*belas* and *puluh*), these words along with the preceding number should be counted as a single word cluster.<sup>27</sup>

- (10) I.11.A diperbuatannya/balai//empat puluh/ruang  
 I.16.A empat belas/tahun//umurnya/tuan  
 II.3.A tujuh belas/tahun//umur/baginda<sup>28</sup>

but: I.10.A beberapa/puluh//buah/balai

*Pada* also joins with another word to fill a single position:

- (11) II.9.B pada kakang/patih//baik/bertanya  
 II.12.B aku nin/hendak//bertanya/pada diri  
 I.15.D dilebihkan/daripada//segala/para puteri

One final rule is necessary to describe the arrangement of words in the *SKT*. As will be seen, Rule Two (reduplicated words) and the observations on compounds are only special cases of the next rule.<sup>29</sup> If for the purposes of this study words of four or more syllables are called "polysyllables," then polysyllables can fill the positions of two words:

- (12) I.3.A Seri/Narendra//Chempakajajar  
 I.5.D parasnya/seperti//bidadari<sup>30</sup>  
 I.14.B lakunya/arif//bijaksana  
 I.15.B namisnya/seperti//Mandodari  
 II.20.B melungguh/di atas//peterana  
 III.3.A setengah/di pohon//nagasari  
 III.11.A Wiradandani//berdatang/sembah

<sup>25</sup>Cf. Hooykaas, *Perintis*, p. 73, and Teeuw, *Taal*, p. 10.

<sup>26</sup>A good argument--although it would make *para* the sole example--would be that the word is a zero element and thus is not counted at all. It therefore does not join to make polysyllabic word clusters. This line would then be interpreted as a three-position line.

<sup>27</sup>This use of numbers differs from the practice in pantuns where each part of the number fills a position.

<sup>28</sup>The homonym *belas* (love) always fills one position: III.80.C: *rasanya/belas//tiada/terperi*.

<sup>29</sup>See note 25 above.

<sup>30</sup>*Bidadari* fills two positions in I.13.C, II.14.B, III.31.A, and 60.A. In III.116.C it fills one position: *seperti/Indera//dengan/bidadari*.

Polysyllables may also include affixes and adjacent monosyllables:

- (13) I.3.B baginda/bangsawan//yang mutabar  
II.20.C sikapnya/seperti//Sang Rajuna

Polysyllables optionally take the place of two words, as is shown in the following lines which have two polysyllables. Since in most lines a polysyllable with the ability to fill two word positions occurs post-caesurally, it is probable that in a line with two polysyllables the last one should be analyzed as filling two positions:

- (14) I.4.A beberapa/ratu//yang bermakota  
I.12.C disuruhkan/ratu//permaisuri<sup>31</sup>  
I.44.B di sebelah/pintu//peranginannya  
III.69.B jika/kehendaknya//kuturutkan  
III.89.B ke hadapan/Raden//didatangkan  
III.96.D dilabuhkan/tirai//pusparagam

Our fourth rule should therefore read: (4) words--including affixes, attached pronouns, and adjacent monosyllables--of four or more syllables may fill two positions on one side of the caesura. Reduplicated words and compounds are special subsets of these polysyllables: reduplicated words always fill two positions while compound words fill one position. Also, word clusters formed with *para*, *pada*, *belas*, and *puluh* usually do not fill two positions.

Rules One through Four now allow for an analysis of the lines which are not four-word or four word-cluster lines. Below are listed all of the exceptions from the first three chapters of the *SKT*. Only I.36.C does not have three words or three word clusters of three syllables each:

- (15) I.29.A berkamar/ikatan/Melayu  
III.7.D burung nin/memberi/kasmaran  
III.105.B mengrumrum/seraya/mengidung  
I.36.C seperti akan lenyap rasa dirinya<sup>32</sup>

As a recapitulation of the rules of syair prosody, most lines consist of four positions. Words of two or three syllables fill one position while monosyllabic words join with an adjacent, usually subsequent, word to fill one position. Words or word clusters, i.e., a monosyllable plus a longer word, having a total of four or more syllables, may fill two positions. Reduplicated words must fill two positions while compounds (*ayah bonda*, *bunyi-bunyian*) fill only one. Compounds formed with *belas*, *puluh*, *pada*, or *para* also do not qualify as polysyllables of the type which can fill two positions. If the line does not have four words or four word clusters according to these rules, then it must have three three-syllable clusters. Out of the sample of 896 lines, only one line does not qualify as a four or three position line:

- (16) I.36.C seperti akan lenyap rasa dirinya.

<sup>31</sup>*Permaisuri* fills two positions in I.15.C, III.83.D and 86.C.

<sup>32</sup>It is possible that *rasa dirinya* is a compound filling one position or, alternatively, *akan* like *pada* and *para* joins with the subsequent word. In either case, the sample is insufficient to suggest a solution.

The descriptive rules outlined for syair prosody also apply to the construction of the pantuns in Wilkinson and Winstedt's collection. The main difference is that there are fewer special cases. *Masing-masing*, for example, is treated as a normal, reduplicated word. There are also few instances of lines having two polysyllables.<sup>33</sup>

The pantun form offers two advantages for analysis which are not as strongly present in the syair. First, the caesura is much more obvious due to the frequent placement of noun and verb phrases wholly on one or the other side of the caesura. Second, the internal rhyme of precaesural syllables is helpful for indicating on which side the "missing" word in a three-word line is to be found. Only when two parallel lines, e.g., A and C, are apparently short by a word does this second characteristic fail us.

The basic pantun line consists of four words, each having two or three syllables:

- (17) 10.A Bunga/sena//tepi/perigi  
 16.A Kilat/cermin//Malim/Sutan  
 24.A Sudah/gembur//baharu/menukai  
 66.A Pertama/teluk//kedua/pantai

Monosyllables join with their adjacent word to form a word cluster, i.e., a series of words which fills one position in the line. These monosyllables are generally proclitic rather than enclitic. Furthermore, the juncture does not occur across the caesura. There are no instances within the sample of 840 lines where a monosyllable fills a word position.

- (18) 42.D Tak tentu/arah//ia/bertanya  
 76.B Mengemat/raja//tak dapat/diempit  
 94.C Tuan/laksana//bulan/yang terang  
 110.C Sudah/termakan//buah/nan mabuk  
 209.D Tidur/tak hendak//makan/tak mahu

Words of four or more syllables fill two positions; however, polysyllables act as two words only when the polysyllable as well as an optional monosyllable--but no disyllabic or longer word--is the sole word on its side of the caesura. When the polysyllable fills one position and accompanies another word of two or more syllables, then the polysyllable must occur first. In the *SKT* no such requirement was observable. In the pantun sample there are no instances of a polysyllable filling one position and also following a disyllabic or longer word within the same half line.

- (19) 5.A Bagaimana//menangkap/landak?  
 117.A Kelekati//bermata/riang  
 196.A Adik/seorang//penyudahan

*Matahari* exemplifies the way in which polysyllables are placed to fill two positions (20-A) or one position (20-B):

<sup>33</sup>I have excluded 138.C (*astaghafiru'llah al-'adzim*) from the analysis, although it appears to be a three trisyllabic-word line. Lines with long Arabic words seem to be outside of normal prosody; cf. *Sja'ir Perang Mengkasar*, 7.C, 9.E, and 10.D.

- (20-A) 96.D Hendak/bertemu//si matahari  
 98.D Di mana/jatuh//matahari  
 101.D Bulan/dah dapat//di matahari  
 116.D Nak berkubur//di matahari
- (20-B) 97.C Matahari/sudah//saya/gantung  
 99.C Bulan/mabuk//matahari/gila  
 100.C Matahari/mabuk//bulan/gila  
 102.C Matahari/sakit//bulan/demam

Polysyllabic words may consist of affixed syllables and adjacent monosyllabic words. Reduplicated words, because they have four or more syllables, also act as polysyllables:

- (21) 17.B Dipacunya//ke Semantan  
 33.D Rosak/binasa//panjang-panjangan  
 47.B Ikan/bernama//si barau-barau  
 60.A Di permatang//tak dapat/mandi  
 80.B Menetas/sebiji//diturunkan  
 120.D Badan/kita//masing-masing  
 138.A Pecah/pekapur//Cik Maalim  
 158.B Si kerakap//tumbuh/di batu

As in 120.D some compound words which were counted as single-position words in the *SKT* count as two-position words in the pantuns:

- (22) 202.B Dua/puluh//anak/merpati  
 but: 148.B Masak/mari//dengan/pati santan

The second type of line consists not of three trisyllabic words as in the *SKT* but of two trisyllabic words followed or separated by a disyllabic word. This alternate type of line is frequent in the 840-line sample. As with the polysyllables, a trisyllabic word cluster may consist of a root word, its affixes, and an adjacent monosyllable. In 23-A are lines of the trisyllabic/trisyllabic/disyllabic type<sup>34</sup> and in 23-B those of the trisyllabic/disyllabic/trisyllabic type.<sup>35</sup>

- (23-A) 28.A Mentadak/mentadu/hijau  
 56.A Selasih/di pucuk/pauh<sup>36</sup>  
 69.B Gelugur//di tebing/tinggi  
 111.A Berhuma//ke balik/desa
- (23-B) 74.A Sianggit/paku/lembayung  
 139.A Teritip/tiram/tergantung  
 141.B Kemuning//gugur/bunganya  
 147.B Selasih//saya/cucukkan

Where the position of the caesura is ascertainable through the internal rhyme patterns, it regularly occurs after the first trisyllabic word.

<sup>34</sup>For example, 22.A, 37.A, 49.A, 63.A, 71.A, 72.A, 74.C, and 112.B.

<sup>35</sup>For example, 97.A, 119.D, 140.A, 182.A, 187.A, and 192.C.

<sup>36</sup>The vowel sequence *au* here clearly divides into two syllables. Otherwise, the line is anomalous.

Through the application of the proposed rules, only two exceptions to the four-position and three-position lines occur in the 840-line sample:

- (24) 28.C Adik berbaju hijau  
182.C Dunia nak kiamat

Part of the value of the proposed rules is that they show the underlying regularity that is present in such seemingly incorrect lines as the following:

- (25) 192 Tanam-nyiur//di tepi/pantai,  
Terung/perat//di lorong/jalan;  
Di dunia//niat/tak sampai,  
Di akhirat//bertanggungan.

Finally, let us consider two pantuns from the Raffles 18 manuscript of the *Sejarah Melayu* (*SM*). This 1612 version of the *SM* probably predates the *SKT*. It also adds 300 years to the span of this study and puts in perspective the rules which apply to Wilkinson and Winstedt's collection of pantuns.<sup>37</sup>

- (26) Lalai-lalai mana butan?  
Butan lagi di kelati;  
Kakak Tun Telanai, mana pungutan?  
Pungutan lagi di Tanjung Jati!<sup>38</sup>
- (27) Ke sana-sana raja duduk,  
Jangan ditimpa oleh papan;  
Diketahui ganja serebuk,  
Mengapa maka dimakan.<sup>39</sup>

These two pantuns show that by the year 1612 the rules for monosyllables (e.g., 26.D), polysyllables (27.C), reduplicated words (26.A), and three-position lines (27.D) were an established part of pantun prosody. Only one difference distinguishes the *SM* pantuns from those of Wilkinson and Winstedt: it is possible in the former to place polysyllables, which fill one position, after a disyllabic word (*Kakak/Tun Telanai//*). This is the same practice as in the *SKT*, but it is avoided in Wilkinson and Winstedt's collection.

In this study I have attempted to demonstrate that syair and pantun lines have two shared variants, a four-position and a three-position line. The words or word clusters which can fill a position consist of a disyllabic or longer root word, its affixes, and an adjacent, usually preceding, monosyllabic word. Within certain limitations, four-syllable words can fill two positions: reduplicated words must fill two positions while compounds--especially in the *SKT*--usually fill one position. Disyllabic and trisyllabic words occupy one position each. For pantuns, three-position lines begin with a trisyllabic word.

<sup>37</sup>R. Roolvink, "The Variant Versions of the Malay Annals," p. xxiv in *Sejarah Melayu: 'Malay Annals,'* ed. and trans. C. C. Brown (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford, 1970), which was originally published in *JMBRAS*, 25, 2 and 3 (1952), pp. 1-276 and based on the Raffles 18 MS, ed. R. O. Winstedt, in *JMBRAS*, 16, 3 (1938), pp. 1-226.

<sup>38</sup>Brown's emendation, n. 302.

<sup>39</sup>Winstedt, *SM*, p. 196.

The remaining positions are filled by one trisyllabic and one disyllabic word or vice versa. For the *Syair Ken Tambuhan*, three-position lines have three trisyllabic words. Through the use of these two line types and the rules for words of different syllable lengths, all but one line out of 896 in the *SKT* and two lines out of 840 in the anthology of Wilkinson and Winstedt occur regularly.

The prosody suggested here offers a number of advantages over the system assumed in the secondary literature. Its more precise formulation of rules gives more guidance in manuscript editing and may provide a direction to the much understudied field of syair and pantun semantic systems. Furthermore, the ambiguous area of what is and what is not a word in these poems is removed by showing that monosyllables do in fact count in the prosodic system, particularly in the formation of polysyllables and in the creation of trisyllabic words for the three-cluster lines. The major area which is left as insufficiently described is that of the disyllabic words, such as *para* and *pada*, which predominate in the apparently anomalous syair lines.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>40</sup>Numerous examples of these disyllables are present in the "Syair Perahu," pp. 16-21 in Johan Doorenbos, *De Geschriften van Hamzah Pansoeri* (Leiden: Batteljee & Terpstra, 1933).

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Professor Teeuw's speech, *Taal en Versbouw* (see above) is often considered to be the most influential of the cited works. This is, I believe, due to the clarity of his statements. In all fairness, however, it should be noted that this address does not primarily treat Malay prosody as such, but rather discusses what, if any, changes occur in poetry (as an example of language) when formal aspects of the language change. The use made of his work, both here and elsewhere, is therefore often outside of the context of his ideas.

