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## **Spoken Theatre Aceh of PMTOH Peugah Haba developed by Teungku H. Adnan: Spectacles Study**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*Peugah Haba is an oral literary art from Manggeng, Aceh. The tradition was adapted to a performance art by Mak Lapee in 1950 and then developed and popularised by Teungku H. Adnan since 1964. He called his theatre as PMTOH, the idea came from when he often rode the PMTOH bus when selling medicine, he was impressed by the sound of its horn and then practised it in every performance during Peugah Haba in Aceh. The theatre presented by Teungku Adnan is probably spectacles in a general, objective perspective. Therefore, this research is conducted to analyse the existence of props, costumes, and acting as part of the spectacle of peugah haba performed by Teungku Adnan PMTOH. The methodology used in this research is descriptive qualitative method. Meanwhile, in obtaining the data the researcher used documentary technique. The result of this research indicated that this spectacle addition brings novelty to the narration of the epic of Teungku Adnan theatre, especially in Acehnese hikayat. In addition, the existence of properties, costumes and additional acting in the spoken theatre facilitates the Acehnese people in interpreting the story.*

**Keywords:** Aceh Culture, Peugah Haba, Spectacles

## INTRODUCTION

The speech art is an art that is presented orally, usually in the form of traditional stories, *hikayat*, legends, and so on. Speech art is one of the traditional arts in Aceh. Traditional arts have several meanings and functions such as entertainment; maintaining community identity; and supporting tourism activities. There are several types of speech arts in Aceh, such as PMTOH, *Seumapa*, *Hiem*, *Ratoh*, *Dikee*, and so on (Furqan et al., 2019). In this research, researchers are interested in analysing the PMTOH speech art developed by Teungku H. Adnan. The narration of *hikayat* presented by Teungku Adnan PMTOH as *peugah haba* has changed since its inception. *Peugah haba* is the art of storytelling prevalent in the South West coast of Aceh (Ihwan, 2016). *Peugah Haba* was originally a form of oral tradition that was later adapted by Mak Lapee from Manggeng since 1940 into an oral performance and later became popular in the 1950s (Ikhwan, 2016), then examined and given innovations by Teungku Adnan PMTOH. *Peugah haba* is derived from two Acehnese words, *peugah* (talk) which is a verb and *haba* (news) which is a noun. Thus, *peugah haba* in Indonesian can be interpreted as delivering news or telling stories. The story comes from *hikayat*, which in the Acehnese community on the South West Coast is also called *haba*.

The name of the PMTOH spoken theatre was given by his supporting community. The idea came from when he often rode the PMTOH bus when selling medicine, he was impressed by the sound of its horn and then practised it in every performance during *peugah haba* in Aceh. The theatre presented by Teungku Hasan is probably spectacles in a general, objective perspective. The spectacle presented by Teungku Adnan PMTOH in his theatre is able to attract people from all backgrounds, from children to adults, to watch his performances. Teungku Adnan PMTOH also added property, costume, and acting elements to his performance. Teungku Adnan PMTOH plays alone on stage while sitting. There is no shifting of positions in the performance. All characters are played by Teungku Adnan PMTOH, with costume marks and props that are part of the artistic performance. The props used in the performance are placed on the left side and some inside the barrels, while costumes are placed on the right side of the actor's position. Costume changes are conducted on stage alone. Teungku Adnan PMTOH is assisted by one person at the back of the stage to tidy up the costumes that have been used, as in the video documentation of Teungku Adnan PMTOH's performance from the Aceh TVRI Station source with the title *Hikayat Si Dang Deuria*, episode *Cut Putroe Ti Melahirkan Cut Raja Beusa*. The performance lasted for 30 minutes without a break. Teungku Adnan PMTOH looked great in portraying all the characters with costumes and props that changed without a break. The dialogue used was in Acehnese, combining *cha'e* (rhythm) and *tutoe* (conversation). The music in this performance was also played directly by Teungku Adnan PMTOH. The instruments

played are *rapa'i* (Acehnese percussion that resembles a tambourine), castanets placed on the left and right sides, and sounds produced from the body.

The most interesting thing about this performance is Teungku Adnan PMTOH's use of props, clothing and acting, as this is not performed by other storytellers in Aceh including his mentor. He began the performance taught by Mak Lapee by using the props of a pillow and a sword made from coconut fronds as performed by Mak Lapee's last student, Muda Balia. Teungku Adnan PMTOH then added to the spectacle of his performance by adding properties and costumes, such as puppets, toy weapons, army helmets, women's and men's clothing, wigs, and scarves. The addition of these spectacle elements is different from the lessons he learnt from Mak Lapee (Afifuddin, 2016b). The existence of spectacle elements such as children's toy props, costumes, and acting in Teungku Adnan PMTOH's peugah haba performances is interesting to observe because Teungku Adnan PMTOH is the only performer who does these things in his performances that originated from the presentation of *hikayat* in Aceh.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Spectacle can also be referred to as the visual aspects of a play, especially the physical actions of the characters on stage. It also refers to the staging, costumes, makeup, lighting, and other equipment. In addition, spectacle is also considered to be one of the most and an important part of the drama performance (Hidayahtulloh & Saksono, 2017). It encompasses the director's overall expression that is captured by the audience (Shrivastwa, 2022). Spectacle in a theatre performance is part of the texture of the performance. According to (Puspita, 2023), spectacles are various equipment to support the story mentioned in drama script.

The term *hikayat* comes from Arabic terms which means telling stories. It is a variety of folklore that is included in narrative text (Septiani et al., 2020). In addition, Hikayat as part of old prose that is imaginative, palace-centric, deductive, anonymous and static in content (Haryanti & Samosir, 2020). Hikayat is a Classical Malay story that emphasizes the element of storytelling. Meanwhile, according to (Ahmad, 2017), *hikayat* contains advice, history and stories of the monarchs. *Hikayat* is performed by one person called a *penghikayat* (storyteller). The existence of *hikayat* in the life of the Acehnese society is the intellectual treasure of the Acehnese society. *Hikayat* tries to record the reproductive aspects of the Acehnese people, both about themselves as well as their perceptions of the other civilizations. Moreover, Hikayat is an Acehnese literary work resulting from the knowledge that are related to Acehnese's real life, that aims as entertainment related to beliefs and traditions (Afifuddin, 2019).

Spoken theater of PMTOH is one of the art form that originated in Nangroe Aceh Darussalam from the creativity of Teungku Adnan, which considered as Acehnese traditional arts. Spoken theater of PMTOH originated from Peugah Haba

Mak Lapee which was improved by Teungku Adnan by adding properties such as toys and costumes (Sulaiman, 2016). The spoken theater has a unique concept of play in accordance with the spirit and theatrical nuances that grow and develop in the community. The spoken theater is performed by one person in the form of a monologue (Juned, 2020). Bahany (As, 2016) states that one of the most popular hikayat performed by Teungku Adnan PMTOH is *Si Dang Deuria hikayat*. This *hikayat* is a literary art of speech that is still alive in the midst of Acehnese society. He also explained that *hikayat* of *Si Dang Deuria* required seven consecutive nights for its performance. In 1990, Teungku Adnan PMTOH began playing on TVRI Aceh television station. Teungku Adnan PMTOH played the *hikayat* Malem Diwa until it was finished in several episodes in the *Hikayat Aceh* TV program. Acehnese society, who admire him everywhere, is able to enjoy his performances through television media.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The method used descriptive qualitative method. Meanwhile, in obtaining the data the researcher used documentary technique. Descriptive qualitative research is a type of qualitative research that examines the characteristics of a phenomenon, rather than explaining its possible underlying causes or mechanisms. It includes of words, images, or other non-numerical information (Denzin, Norman K.n, 2018). Documentary research is a type of research technique that involves the systematic investigation and analysis of existing documents or records. These documents can be in the form of written, visual, or audio materials, such as books, articles, photographs, videos, and audio recordings (Hassan, 2023). The researcher collected video documents of Teungku Adnan PMTOH performances from TVRI Banda Aceh station as research material. The video data was analysed instrumentally to systematically observe and consider everything that exists and appears in the video recording documents as a work of art. Analyses were only conducted on performance elements, such as props, costumes, and acting. All analysed data is presented in the form of descriptive analysis.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The episode *Cut Putroe Ti Melahirkan Cut Raja Beusa* on the programme “Hikayat Aceh” produced by TVRI Aceh station is a part of *Si Dang Deuria* story played by Teungku Adnan. *Si Dang Deuria* story is a popular oral literature in the South West Coast, Aceh. It originated in Nagan Raya where it spread and became popular. Teungku Adnan usually takes seven consecutive nights to complete the story in performance (Afifuddin, 2019). Adnan’s recitation of episodes in chunks on TV programmes is a form of adaptation to the development of audio-visual technology. The episode *Cut Putroe Ti Melahirkan Cut Raja Beusa* tells the story of the first child birth process of King Tuha and his consort named Cut Putroe Ti.

King Tuha had to wait 15 years for Cut Putroe Ti to get pregnant. Cut Putroe Ti's pregnancy made King Tuha feel happy. The king took great care of the condition and gave full attention to Cut Putroe Ti. The labour process was a time that King Tuha was expecting because he would soon have a successor to his kingdom. The king called the Commander to immediately find seven senior midwives to handle Cut Putroe Ti's labour. King Tuha did this because he did not want a fatal failure in labour. The characters in the episode *Cut Putroe Ti Melahirkan Cut Raja Beusa* are King Tuha, Cut Putroe Ti, the Commander, Senior Midwives, and the infant Prince Beusa. Spectacles in the Peugah Haba Teungku Adnan performance in the *Cut Putroe Ti Melahirkan Raja Beusa* episode consist of property, costumes, and acting. Using properties, costumes, and acting by Teungku Adnan PMTOH in the narration of *hikayat* is a new thing in Acehnese society. The addition of properties by Teungku Adnan PMTOH is an act that deviates from the teachings given by Mak Lapee. Teungku Adnan PMTOH's action received a negative response from his teacher, thus making the relationship between the two become disharmonious. The use of *wayang* in the performance was one of the reasons for the problems between them (Afifuddin, 2016a). *Wayang* became a problem because it was considered a statue that categorised as an idol that deviated from religious beliefs. Teungku Adnan PMTOH seems not to have made this conflict an obstruction to stop his creativity in presenting the story. Adnan's courage in using puppets as performance properties is a novelty of performance art in Aceh's culture that is dominated by Islam (Afifuddin, 2019).

Considering its function in the performance, the puppet property is used by Teungku Adnan PMTOH to portray a baby or princess character that is impossible and cannot be played by himself. The wooden sword is the property most often used by Teungku Adnan PMTOH in his performances. The wooden sword becomes a tool to hit the pillow as a sign of the beginning of the story or the transition between characters. The sword is also used as a property for the Commander character, besides toy weapons.



**Figure 1.** Teungku Adnan PMTOH portrays the character of the Commander in the *Si Dang Deuria Hikayat*

The properties used in the performance assist Teungku Adnan PMTOH in describing the characteristics of each character. Every character performed by Teungku Adnan PMTOH is inseparable from the properties that characterise him. Most of the properties used are children's toys, such as toy weapons of various shapes and types; and dolls of various shapes and sizes. In addition, there is also an army steel helmet commonly worn by soldiers on the battlefield. Besides props, costumes are also one of the important properties that assist Teungku Adnan PMTOH in creating characters. Teungku Adnan PMTOH distinguishes costumes between characters to enable the audience to recognise the characters being played. This helps Teungku Adnan PMTOH because this performance is a one-man show, which Teungku Adnan PMTOH plays alone. The costumes worn by Teungku Adnan PMTOH in his performances are tailored to the characters he plays. Teungku Adnan PMTOH even uses female costumes along with wigs to portray the character of a princess or midwife.

Observing the costumes used by Teungku Adnan PMTOH in his performances, it can be ascertained that these costumes were items that were easily obtained by Teungku Adnan PMTOH. Kebaya clothes, army clothes, wigs, shawls, and others were costumes that were available in Aceh in that time. None of the costumes were specifically designed by Teungku Adnan PMTOH, as were the children's toy props he used. The audience can recognise and distinguish the characters played by Teungku Adnan PMTOH from the costumes used because each character has its own costume. Indeed, the costume of midwife characters is

different from the costumes used for female characters. Teungku Adnan PMTOH acted the midwife character by only using a shawl as a head covering. Meanwhile, Teungku Adnan PMTOH used a flower-patterned women's dress combined with a long wig for princess role. Besides properties and costumes, acting skills have an important role in the performance of Teungku Adnan PMTOH. Teungku Adnan PMTOH's acting ability in portraying characters and changing costumes on stage quickly makes the performance like a modern theatre performance. Teungku Adnan PMTOH portrays characters with movements and voice changes according to the character being portrayed. When playing the Commander character, Teungku Adnan PMTOH acted like a warlord with a firm attitude and loud voice. The King character is played by Teungku Adnan PMTOH, with an authoritative attitude and a rather heavy voice character. While for the Princess character, Teungku Adnan PMTOH moves gently and changes his voice to be smooth. Changes in the performance of the story by Teungku Adnan PMTOH by incorporating elements of spectacle make the performance of the story not monotonous. The performance of the story is not monotonous because all the characters in the story are performed on stage by Teungku Adnan PMTOH, something that is not practised by other storytellers in Aceh.



**Figure 2.** Teungku Adnan PMTOH portrays the character of the princess and her son in the *Si Dang Deuria Hikayat*

Although the conflict between Teungku Adnan PMTOH and Mak Lapee, his teacher, the existence of properties, costumes, and acting in the performance of the story by Teungku Adnan PMTOH is able to present the characters in the story with a more contemporary portrayal. The figure of commander in the royal era was portrayed with costumes of army clothes, headpieces, and properties of toy weapons. These costumes and properties made Teungku Adnan PMTOH's

performance more interesting, and therefore, the story became famous and popular among Acehnese communities. While watching Teungku Adnan PMTOH's performance, we will notice several characters played by one actor. Each character performed makes the performance seem alive and interesting to watch. The costume changes on stage in the roles and *cha'e* played without a break make the performance goes on without the visible process of changing costumes and roles. The characters in the performance are portrayed through bodies and puppets by Teungku Adnan. In general, the properties and costumes used by Teungku Adnan PMTOH in the creation of characters do not match with the time setting in the story. The time and place setting in the story is a royal story where the characters live with the palace system. All properties used in Teungku Adnan PMTOH's performance are representations of the characters played. Although the properties used by Teungku Adnan PMTOH do not quite match the time and place setting, the discrepancy does not eliminate the substance of the characters and stories in the story being played.

The first character presented by Teungku Adnan in his performance is the character Putroe Ti. Putroe Ti is the wife of King Tuha who is the king of Meureudu, a kingdom in the Aceh province. Putroe Ti has been married to King Tuha for 15 years and lives happily. Their marriage has not been blessed with children until in the 15th year Putroe Ti became pregnant with their first child. Putroe Ti's pregnancy made King Tuha happy because the wait was so long.

Teungku Adnan visualised the Putroe Ti character with a puppet formed as a girl. The puppet was picked up from a barrel on his left side. It is dressed like a princess. The clothes used are teenage children's clothes with dresses commonly worn by children in Europe. Underneath is a long cloth that covers the doll's legs. The puppet as the character Putroe Ti is placed on a wooden barrel where clothes and some properties are stored in a sitting position. Teungku Adnan intended to convey a message to the audience about the figure of a princess in the *Si Dang Deuria Hikayat*. The puppet used by Adnan as a visualisation of Putroe Ti in his Peugah Haba facilitates the audience in imagining the character played in Adnan's performance. The audience is allowed to imagine how Putroe Ti, the consort of King Tuha, actually looks like. The character of Putroe Ti is not only presented using puppets. In the scene when Cut Putroe Ti plays with his son, Prince Beusa, Adnan uses his body to present the character of Cut Putroe Ti. Adnan used long fake hair and orange *kebaya* clothes as presented in figure 2. The use of his body as an acting medium for the Cut Putroe Ti character because there are two characters played simultaneously by Adnan, which are Cut Putroe Ti and Prince Beusa who is still a toddler. The next character presented by Adnan is the character of King Tuha. In the beginning of the story, Adnan only used vocal acting for his character King Tuha. He did this because he had to play two characters at once; Prince Beusa and Commander Emping Beuso. Both characters are portrayed through the medium of



his body, but only one character is presented using costumes and properties, which is the Commander.



**Figure 3.** Teungku Adnan PMTOH plays the character of Putroe Ti using a puppet

Adnan played two characters, that is, King Tuha and Commander Eumping Beuso who was a great commander in the kingdom. In this section, the King character is played using vocal characters (voice over). Adnan uses a heavy and firm vocal character to play the character of King Tuha to give a strong and authoritative impression of a king. King Tuha calls the Commander to come to him because there is a command that will be given to the Commander. The character of Commander is portrayed by Adnan through his body. Adnan dresses the commander character directly along with the dialogue and action of the commander answering King Tuha's call. The character of the commander in the Dang Deuria Hikayat in the episode of *Cut Putroe Ti Melahirkan Cut Raja Beusa* is realised with a military costume, a headpiece, and a long-barrelled toy weapon or wooden sword as presented in Figure 4. The commander's character seems dashing and brave. This can be seen in the following dialogue:

“Hormat Senjata...”

“Ampon daulat tuanku!”

“Saya Eumping Beso, dalam nanggroe kamo yang jaga.”

The dialogue stated that the commander named Eumping Beso was the highest commander in King Tuha's kingdom. Eumping Beso is responsible for the safety of King Tuha's kingdom.



**Figure 4.** Teungku Adnan PMTOH plays Commander character in the Si Dang Deuria Hikayat

Based on the story's setting, the Commander character during the royal period did not use long-barrelled weapons and army clothing because there was no war equipment at that time as used by Teungku Adnan PMTOH. Using toy guns, steel helmets, and army clothing by Teungku Adnan PMTOH for the Commander character gives the impression of a gallant and loyal Commander who is able to maintain the security of the kingdom as a soldier of the Indonesian National Army. The style of a soldier giving a gesture of respect performed by Teungku Adnan PMTOH for the Commander character is easily understood by the audience. Whenever there is an independence day ceremony of the Republic Indonesia, Acehnese people always watch and hear the signal from the ceremony leader. The Commander received an order from King Tuha to look for senior midwife, an old woman who has the ability to handle childbirth. The order was given because the King received news from Putroe Ti that she might give birth as in the following dialogue:

King: "Hai Pahlawan!"

Commander: "Daulat Tuanku."

King: "Jino laju aneuk loen rab na, ka jak panggil keuno Makwa Bidan, beutroh seukarang, tujuh droe yang tuha-tuha. Aleh saket tuan putroe, aleh uroe, aleh malam. Aleh lahe aneuk agam, aleh lahee aneuk dara."

Commander: "Siap, Ampon Daulat."

The senior midwife character is presented by Adnan using a shawl that covers the head resembling an Indonesian Muslim woman wearing a hijab. The use of the shawl as a symbol conveys a message to the audience that the character played by Adnan is a woman. Then Adnan uses acting techniques to emphasise the character played. Adnan uses a soft and smooth vocal character and a little bit hoarse. The character of senior midwife is an old woman. Her body movements are also adjusted, slightly bent and if moving a little slow. The way Adnan presented senior midwife by using costumes and acting was able to give the impression as if the one who appeared on the stage was an old woman.



**Figure 5.** Teungku Adnan PMTOH plays the character of senior midwife using a shawl on his head

The last character in the episode *Cut Putroe Ti Melahirkan Cut Raja Beusa* is the character of Raja Beusa who is still a baby. Adnan presented the baby of Cut Putroe Ti with a small doll with a size of approximately 15 cm. The doll resembles a baby boy made from plastic material. Adnan wrapped the doll with a cloth like a newborn baby to emphasise that it was a newborn baby. The wrapped doll was placed next to a rather large doll, approximately 45-55 cm which represents the figure of Cut Putroe Ti who has just given birth as shown in figure 6.



**Figure 6.** Teungku Adnan PMTOH narrates the process of the birth of Prince Beusa, as seen on his left, two puppets are used. The small doll represents the baby Prince Beusa and the large doll represents Cut Putroe Ti who has just given birth to Prince Beusa.

For the baby character, Adnan also uses a different puppet. The puppet is made of wool that is quite a bit bigger than the puppets used for newborns. The puppet's form resembles that of a small European child. The puppet is used by Adnan as a representation of the Prince Beusa character who is starting to grow up, as presented in figure 2. Adnan played the king's character at the end of the story using costumes. The king is presented wearing a yellow coloured *baju kurung* and a red coloured *kupiah*. The yellow colour is gold, Adnan uses yellow clothes to depict the prosperity and splendour of the king. the red colour on the *kupiah* symbolises the courage and bravery of a king. the combination of the two colours is used to give a message to the audience that King Tuha is a leader who provides prosperity to his people and is also a brave king.



**Figure 7.** Teungku Adnan PMTOH plays the character of King Tuha

The spectacles presented by Teungku Adnan PMTOH on stage are things that exist and are easily found around the lives of its audience, allowing the audience to recognise the character played by Teungku Adnan PMTOH easily. Those are the same for the acting. Adnan uses props that can be easily found in children's toy stores such as dolls and toy guns. The clothes used are also the clothes that were popular in Aceh at that time between 1980-2000. These clothes were sold in many markets in Banda Aceh. Spectacle assists Adnan in presenting all the characters in the story. These characters can be presented by Adnan with the assistance of props, costumes and acting. Adnan does this in order for the audience to be able to easily receive the message of the story and can also easily imagine the characters played by Adnan.

## CONCLUSION

Spectacles are important for Teungku Adnan PMTOH in his *hikayat* performances. The addition of spectacles makes Teungku Adnan PMTOH's performance of the story become a new thing in Acehnese history. The existence of properties, costumes, and acting in the *hikayat* performance by Teungku Adnan PMTOH made it easier to be understood by every group and age of Acehnese communities. The audience can enjoy the scene and the characters presented. Teungku Adnan PMTOH succeeded in making the oral literature of *hikayat* contemporary with his own creativity.

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