
Semiotic Analysis of Tapis Tuho Cloth (Old Tapis) as Lampung Ceremonial Clothing

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Abstract

Tapis Tuho cloth is one of the Tapis cloths usually worn as traditional Lampung ceremonial clothing. *Tapis Tuho* cloth is worn by people with high social status. This study aims to analyse the *Tapis Tuho* cloth semiotically and also to understand the meaning of its motifs and colors. The method of this study was carried out using semiotic analysis theory and qualitative descriptive methods. The research results and novelty of this analysis show that the motifs (Aro tree motif, riding animal motif, dragon motif, *sasab* motif, swinging crown motif, zig-zag pattern) and colors (red, black, gold) on the *Tapis Tuho* cloth are not only decorative but have meaning according to the use of the *Tapis Tuho* cloth used for Lampung traditional ceremonies. The implication of this study is that the Indonesian people, especially the people of Lampung, can better understand the meaning of the motifs and colors on the Tapis Tuho cloth, and preserve the traditional cultural heritage of Lampung, so that it can be passed on from generation to generation, both in terms of the meaning and existence of the cloth.

Keywords: analysis, fabric, motif, *Tapis*, semiotics

1. INTRODUCTION

Tapis cloth is a woven cloth originating from Lampung, which usually uses gold or silver thread to form specific motifs or patterns. Usually, the motifs on fabric are identical to flora, fauna, geometric motifs, etc., and are influenced by societal developments and the surrounding environment. Tapis cloth has many types and motifs, such as Tapis Pucuk Rebung cloth, Tapis Jung laden cloth, Tapis Bintang Perak cloth, and others.

In its use, the Tapis cloth must be worn according to the level of the user and the traditional procession that will be held in the conventional house. If the Tapis cloth used does not correspond to the degree or position of the custom, then the wearer must be fined (Syarif et al., 2021). One of the Tapis cloths worn by a person's title or position, namely the *Tapis Tuho* cloth worn by the wife of a person who

is taking the title of sultan, parents (*Mepahao*) who are taking the title of sultan, or the wife of the sultan who is attending the ceremony of taking the title of a close relative (Isbandiyah & Supriyanto, 2019).

Much research has discussed the meaning of the motifs and colors on the Tapis cloth. However, there are still no articles that explain in detail the meaning of the *Tapis Tuho* cloth motif using qualitative semiotic analysis methods. Not only that but there is still no article that discusses the value of the meaning of the *Tapis Tuho* cloth motif, which can be taken and applied to everyday life. Articles that discuss Tapis cloth generally only explain the meaning of the motifs and colors of Tapis cloth in general and only discuss types of Tapis cloth that are well known to many people, one of which is the Tapis Pucuk Rebung cloth. Therefore, some people do not know the meaning of the motifs and colors in Tapis cloth, which are less well known by the public, such as the *Tapis Tuho* cloth. The novelty of the results of this research is that it is a semiotic analysis of the *Tapis Tuho* cloth motif, which has not been available in previous studies. Previous research only explained the meaning of the motifs and colors of Tapis cloth in general and did not explain the *Tapis Tuho* cloth in detail. This article explains the semiotic analysis of each motif on the *Tapis Tuho* cloth in detail in tabular form. *Tapis Tuho* cloth has many motifs and colors and is used in Lampung traditional ceremonies. From the description above, the aim is to find out the meaning of the motifs and colors on the *Tapis Tuho* cloth so that it is used for Lampung traditional ceremonies, especially the traditional ceremony of conferring the title of Sultan. The problem in this research is explaining the meaning of the motifs and colors on the *Tapis Tuho* cloth as traditional Lampung ceremonial clothing for giving the title of Sultan through semiotic analysis. Therefore, this research aims to explain the meaning of the motifs and colors on the *Tapis Tuho* cloth as traditional Lampung ceremonial clothing for granting the title of Sultan through semiotic analysis.

Research conducted by Isbandiyah and Supriyanto (2019) concluded that each motif on the Tapis cloth has an implied meaning regarding the life values of the Lampung people. Then, in the research conducted by (Novialista, 2018), it was said that the tapis cloth motifs have the meaning of life, a stylization of the life patterns of the Lampung people, which continue to develop. Research conducted by (Suherman, 2018) discusses the motifs of Tapis cloth and their relationship to the meaning of life in Lampung society. As previously explained, the *Tapis Tuho* cloth is used to confer the title of "Sultan" in Lampung. Hence, the research conducted by Rahmawati (2022) discusses the traditional titles of the Lampung people by discussing the meaning of life in the traditional titles of Lampung but does not discuss in detail the use and meaning of the Tapis cloth used for Lampung traditional ceremonies. In research conducted by Halim and Rahman (2023), they discussed Tapis cloth motifs inspired by natural elements. Each motif has a shape inspired by animals and plants, which has meaning in the lives of people

in Lampung. Not only that but there are motifs in the form of geometric patterns that also have meaning in Lampung society.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

The method used in this article is semiotic analysis, a qualitative descriptive method. The analyzed data is all the colors and motifs found on Tapis Tuho cloth. Every part of the fabric is captured so that various motifs are found, such as the Aro tree motif, riding animal motif, dragon motif, *sasab* motif, swinging crown motif, and zig-zag pattern. Semiotics comes from Greek, meaning "sign," defined as something based on previously established social conventions that can represent something else (Rorong & Suci, 2020). The semiotic analysis used is the semiotic analysis of Ferdinand de Saussure. Ferdinand de Saussure said that language is a system of signs, and every sign is composed of two parts: the signifier and the signified. A signifier is a physical element of a sign in the form of a motif, image, or sound, while a signified is an absolute concept close to an existing physical sign (Hidayat, 2014). A signifier without a signified will not have a meaning or meaning that can be taken. On the other hand, signs cannot be conveyed without markers (Gunawan et al., 2015). Every color and motif that marks the tapis tuho cloth is a sign of the culture of the Lampung people. This article discusses each sign in the form of a motif on the tapis tuho cloth and explains the signs behind it.

Saussure developed the semiotic analysis theory, also known as linguistic semiotics. According to this theory, three words in French mean language: *parole* is a language expression originating from someone's mind, which is, of course, subjective; *langage* is a combination of *parole* and language rules used as an expression that cannot yet be said to be a social fact, and *langue* is a language rule. They are used by (Sitompul et al., 2021). Therefore, semiotic analysis contains science that examines the life of signs in society (Sobur, 2001). The structure of Saussure's Semiotic Analysis can be seen in Figure 1.

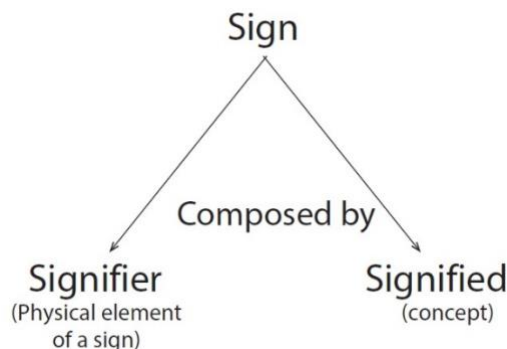


Figure 1. Structure of Ferdinand Saussure's Semiotic Analysis
Source: Sitompul et al., 2021

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Tapis cloth is a woven cloth from Lampung that has a symbolic meaning. It is a symbol of purity that can protect oneself from external dirt, such as dust, and extreme weather, such as rain or the hot sun during the day. Tapis cloth also has a symbol of the social status of the wearer, where the form of the motif applied has the meaning of life, as well as the color of the basic cloth, which has a symbol of the greatness of the Creator (Isbandiyah & Supriyanto, 2019). The illustration of the Tapis Tuho's cloth motif is illustrated in Figure 2.






Figure 2. *Tapis Tuho* Cloth Motif
Source: Karya ilustrasi pribadi

This research discusses the semiotic analysis of the *Tapis Tuho* cloth motif. *Tapis Tuho* cloth has motifs in the form of flora, fauna, and other shapes. Not only does it have a variety of motifs, this *Tapis Tuho* cloth uses gold embroidery thread to create the existing motifs so that the *Tapis Tuho* cloth has a luxurious and elegant impression according to its use as Tapis cloth which is used by people with high social status, especially when worn. By a wife whose husband obtained the title of sultan.


The primary meaning of granting the title of sultan is to preserve and uphold the traditional cultural heritage of Lampung that has existed from our ancestors. Apart from that, the ceremony of conferring the title of sultan also symbolizes maintaining kinship relations, which is the central system in Lampung cultural traditions (Rahmawati, 2022). Preserving and upholding Lampung's traditional cultural heritage is one of the efforts so that Lampung's traditional cultural heritage is not forgotten or even extinct and can be passed down from generation to generation to the current younger generation. Also, Lampung cultural customs, such as the title awarding ceremony and the *Tapis Tuho* cloth, can become one of Indonesia's

cultural assets. The following Table 1 is a semiotic analysis of the *Tapis Tuho* cloth motif, which is presented in tabular form. The signifiers are displayed in Figure 3 to 9 alongside their signifieds:

Table 1. Semiotic Analysis of Ferdinand de Saussure

| Signifier | Signified |
|---|--|
|  <p>Figure 3. Plain Tapis Cloth Motif before being embroidered with gold thread Source: Personal illustration work</p> | <p>The use of dark red with black lines has a dark and faded character. This aims to ensure that the <i>Tapis Tuho</i> cloth motif embroidered with gold thread can be seen more clearly and shine. A dark red base cloth color with black lines is used on <i>Tapis Tuho</i> cloth, and almost all types of Tapis cloth use this primary color. Black lines on the fabric are handy for consistent motifs so that they remain neat and not messy so that the shape of the motif you want to display can be seen clearly. It is the signs that use dark red and black lines as a sign of a place to tell or explain the meaning that symbolizes the greatness of the Creator of Nature through the motifs that arise from the cloth.</p> |
|  <p>Figure 4. <i>Tapis Tuho</i> Cloth motif, which resembles the shape of an Aro tree Source: Personal illustration work</p> | <p>On the <i>Tapis Tuho</i> cloth, the Aro wood motif is in the form of a geometric stylization between the shape of the trunk and branches of the Aro wood with a triangular geometric shape so that it looks more defined. However, some branches spread out in different directions. The Aro wood motif on the <i>Tapis Tuho</i> cloth is a sign of fertility and self-confidence. Aro wood forms sticks that branch, and the branches have different directions. This motif symbolizes the element of life as the source of human life and is also said to be a sign of justice and prosperity for the Lampung people (Suherman, 2018). This Aro wood motif also shows the element of life as the source of human life, which awakens human life (Yunian Putra & Indriani, 2017). So, it can be interpreted that the branches on this Aaro wood symbolize the source of human life, which is spread in different directions so humans can gain prosperity and revival of life.</p> |
|  <p>Figure 5. <i>Tapis Tuho</i> Cloth motif, which resembles a riding animal being ridden by a human Source: Personal illustration work</p> | <p>The riding animal motif on the <i>Tapis Tuho</i> cloth is a sign of someone with a high rank (Yunian Putra & Indriani, 2017). This is by the Lampung traditional ceremony of granting the title of sultan. The title of sultan is the highest traditional title in Lampung. Also, the riding animal motif is a sign of a leader who is a role model for many people and can positively influence everyone (Novialista, 2018). The sign of someone riding animals such as horses, elephants, and dragons has the signs of a leader who can</p> |

| Signifier | Signified |
|--|--|
| | guide them on the right path and also provide good examples so that people can apply these good examples to others. |
|  <p>Figure 6. <i>Tapis Tuho</i> cloth motif, which forms a dragon animal Source: Personal illustration work</p> | <p>The dragon animal motif on the <i>Tapis Tuho</i> cloth has a Chinese influence, which depicts the character of a brave and authoritative leader. Not only that, but the dragon animal motif also depicts the nature of a leader who is patient, fair, and wise (Isbandiyah & Supriyanto, 2019). The dragon animal is also a sign of a leader who can consider a problem with a cool head (Halim & Rahman, 2023). So, the sign of the dragon animal has the signs of a leader who not only leads firmly but is also a leader who has patience and wisdom so that people can follow him well. Not only leading but also being able to guide the community to achieve common goals, not taking sides, and being willing to listen to the community and their followers.</p> |
|  <p>Figure 7. <i>Tapis Tuho</i> cloth motif forms a <i>sasab</i> motif and a square geometric motif. Source: Personal illustration work</p> | <p>The <i>sasab</i> motif is an entire embroidery motif with a whole meaning regarding practical knowledge according to customary and religious norms (Halim & Rahman, 2023). This <i>sasab</i> motif is densely embroidered without a break and has a valuable scientific meaning. Almost all types of <i>Tapis</i> cloth use this <i>sasab</i> motif. The <i>sasab</i> motif has embroidery with a 2-10 cm width, forming geometric decorations such as squares and rhombuses (Novialista, 2018). The <i>sasab</i> motif on the <i>Tapis Tuho</i> cloth forms a geometric motif in a square shape. This is a sign that human life certainly has full benefits so that in running their lives people can help each other and help each other. This can be linked to the dragon motif, which means a leader who is wise and patient and can benefit the community and his followers.</p> |
|  <p>Figure 8. <i>Tapis Tuho</i> Cloth motif that forms a swinging crown motif forming a triangle Source: Personal illustration work</p> | <p>The swinging canopy motif is in the shape of a triangle connected by a rope, which contains the meaning of the philosophy of being firm in an agreed stance, not subject to negative influences, keeping up with the times, and being flexible (Susiana, 2017). This is a sign that a person's life must flow like water, not be influenced by things that deviate, but must remain flexible and easy to adapt to any situation.</p> |

| Signifier | Signified |
|--|---|
|  <p data-bbox="207 384 584 499">Figure 9. A bamboo shoot motif on <i>Tapis Tuho</i> cloth forms a triangle with a zig-zag pattern. Source: Personal illustration work</p> | <p data-bbox="618 254 1421 415">The bamboo shoot motif has the meaning of an inseparable family that helps each other and helps each other (Novialista, 2018). This is a sign that the life of someone who lives in a community has high solidarity, is willing to help each other in any condition, and maintains relationships.</p> |

Through Ferdinand de Saussure's semiotic analysis, we can understand the entire motif and meaning of the *Tapis Tuho* fabric motif. So, it can be interpreted that the *Tapis Tuho* cloth motif means that a leader with supreme power must be able to lead firmly and wisely but must also have a patient nature and be a light for many people. Also, a leader must be helpful to other people, be an example, and be a role model for many people. Therefore, through this ceremony of conferring the title of sultan, it is hoped that people with the title of sultan can become role models for the people of Lampung and leaders who are wise, firm, and patient. Also, people with the sultan title are expected to be leaders who remain level-headed even when faced with problems. A leader must also have a flexible stance, not be influenced by damaging things, be willing to follow current developments, and not be stubborn.

From the presentation of the table that explains the motifs and meanings of the motifs, we can see that the application of the meaning of the motifs on the *Tapis Tuho* cloth is not only applied to title awarding ceremonies but can be applied in our daily lives. That is why every motif created has a meaning closely related to our daily lives. The values contained in the *Tapis Tuho* cloth motif can be taken and applied in today's life. One example of the application of the values of the *Tapis Tuho* cloth motif is the application of values in organizational and work environments, such as being the head of an organization who has good leadership qualities, is willing to respect its members, and is patient. In the family, it is also the same; a family head must be able to lead his family well so that the wheels of life can run smoothly and harmoniously. Each motif has a meaning that symbolizes the philosophy of human life. To consider the philosophy or message that will be conveyed, the motif's meaning is taken into account by artisans so that the message can be conveyed well (Novialista, 2018). That is the superior value of Tapis cloth; artisans make motifs on Tapis cloth not only for beauty but also to incorporate the meanings of life into Tapis cloth.

4. CONCLUSION

Tapis Tuho cloth is not only used as personal protective clothing, but as traditional Lampung clothing used in Lampung traditional ceremonies, one of which is accepting the title of Sultan. Not only that, but the *Tapis Tuho* cloth also has meanings contained in each motif through semiotic analysis and qualitative descriptive methods through literature, journals, and trusted online articles. The motifs on the *Tapis Tuho* cloth are inspired by natural elements such as plants and animals, as well as the use of other geometric shapes. The meaning contained in the *Tapis Tuho* cloth motif is significantly related to people's lives today, and the meaning contained is very suitable to be applied in today's life. With this research, it is hoped that the Indonesian people, especially the people of Lampung, can better understand the meaning of the motifs and colors on the *Tapis Tuho* cloth, and preserve the traditional cultural heritage of Lampung, so that it can be passed on from generation to generation, both in terms of the meaning and existence of the cloth. Furthermore, it can become a reference for everyone in determining the meaning of works of art using semiotic analysis.

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