



Semiotics Analysis of Besurek Batik Motif as a Preservation and Alternative Indonesian Teaching Materials

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Abstract. The purpose of this study is to describe the semiotic of Besurek batik motifs as a preservation effort and one of the alternative Indonesian language teaching materials. This type of research is qualitative with descriptive method. The data are gathered using photographers, recording sheets, observations, interview guidelines, and literature studies. The semiotic analysis described in this article are (1) semiotic analysis on Calligraphy motifs; (2) semiotic analysis of the Rafflesia motif; (3) semiotic analysis of the Kuau Bird motif; (4) semiotic analysis on the Relung Paku motif; (5) semiotic analysis on the Rembulan motif; (6) Besurek batik semiotics as an effort to preserve and alternative Indonesian language teaching materials.

Keywords: Semiotic analysis · Motif of Besurek Batik · Preservation · Indonesian language teaching materials

1 Introduction

Indonesia is the largest archipelagic country in the world which has more than 17,000 islands with a rich culture spread over every region. The culture of each region in Indonesia has its own uniqueness compared to other regions, with this diversity of uniqueness forming Indonesia as a multicultural country. Of the various cultures that exist, one of the cultures we know is batik. In general, batik is patterned fabrics used for scarves, clothes, headbands, sarongs, shirts, women's skirts, and others.

Batik is a national cultural heritage that contains values that should be developed and utilized for present and future life (Mulyani, 2021; Mustika, 2018). Batik has also long played a role as a vehicle for understanding the notion of inheritance of values that grow in society. In fact, batik holds an extraordinary meaning for the purpose and philosophy of life, local wisdom, cultural values, and becomes a way of life and moral order for people in Indonesia.

Batik in Indonesia has been designated by UNESCO as a human heritage for oral and intangible culture on October 2, 2009, since then October 2 has been commemorated as National Batik Day. According to the Big Indonesian Dictionary, batik is defined as a pictorial cloth made specifically by writing or applying wax (wax) on the cloth, then processed by a certain process, or commonly known as batik cloth (Wulandari, 2011).

Batik motifs not only display beauty, but become a very decisive element because from that motif we can find out whether a batik has value or not. Batik motifs also show where a batik comes from. Batik business in the community is usually carried out in groups by involving many people with various skills, ranging from the skill of drawing the pattern of *mencanting*, making scribbles, the process of coloring, washing to drying cloth.

One of the areas that already owns and produces its own batik is Bengkulu, the batik is named Besurek batik. Besurek batik is produced by small and medium business batik craftsmen. Besurek batik has different characteristics from batik in general. The color selection for the Besurek batik motif uses bright colors such as red, orange, blue, purple, green, brown, and other colors. The choice of bright colors aims to give a distinctive impression that only Besurek batik has.

According to history, Besurek batik began to be known by the people of Bengkulu when the exile of Prince Sentot Ali Basa and his family in Bengkulu by the Dutch colonial government. At the time of exile, Sentot Ali Basa's family filled their busy lives while in exile by bringing equipment and raw materials to make batik. The people of Bengkulu see and pay attention to the Sentot Ali Basa family doing the batik work. Furthermore, the people of Bengkulu felt interested and asked Sentot Ali Basa's family to teach them how to make batik. Finally, the people of Bengkulu learned to make batik so that they were skilled. The name is still batik, this is because batik comes from the word *jentik* which means writing, Bengkulu people add *surek* which means writing (Zesymadara, 2012).

When studied the meaning of batik besurek consists of two words namely "batik" and "besurek". The word batik comes from the Javanese language, namely "amba" which means dots or beads (verb to make dots), then developed into the term "batik", meaning to connect the dots into a certain image on a wide or wide cloth (Mifzal, 2012). Furthermore, the word "besurek" comes from the Bengkulu language, namely "besurek", meaning writing. The basic motif of besurek batik is Calligraphy letters. So from this Calligraphy motif, it was developed into other motifs such as motifs taken from Arabic letters. The Calligraphy letters used as the design of the Besurek batik motif can be read, but have no meaning so they can be used in any circumstances. (Gugus, 2012).

Besurek batik is not only used for fabrics and clothes, but also contains implicit meanings. What is meant is the symbolic meaning contained in the Besurek batik motif, such meanings as regional historical values, cultural values, local wisdom, tourist attractions, flora and fauna, regional geography, regional arts, and others. Besurek batik patterns or motifs have various types and different levels of complexity. The motifs made by batik have their own purposes and goals, depending on the motifs made.

Besurek batik motif is a source of data which is the subject of this research. The batik motifs consist of Calligraphy motifs, Rafflesia motifs, Kuau Bird motifs, Relung Paku motif, and moon motifs. So, the five Besurek batik motifs can be said to be Bengkulu local wisdom because the motifs describe the identity of the Bengkulu people.

The Besurek batik motif has a high artistic value and blend, loaded with philosophical meanings and meaningful symbols that show the Bengkulu people's way of thinking. Besurek batik contains cultural values, religious values, local wisdom, and life values

as well as values that can be developed in Indonesian language teaching materials that should be appreciated and maintained.

Given the very important role and position of Besurek batik, this research must be carried out as soon as possible. This research is expected to introduce the values contained in Besurek batik to the Indonesian people and all nations in the world and introduce them to future generations, even this research can be used as teaching materials for Indonesian language to instill cultural values and local wisdom. In line with this, this study also documented Besurek batik in Bengkulu. Starting from this background, it is important to conduct this research with the title "Analysis of Semiotics on Besurek Batik Motifs as an Effort for Preservation and Alternative Indonesian Teaching Materials."

2 Method

This study uses a qualitative approach with a descriptive method. Qualitative research is several research procedures for scientific activities that can be used to solve problems according to the point of view and approach taken by the researcher (Aminuddin, 1991; Rukajat, 2018). Moleong (2009:6) says that qualitative research means research that intends to understand phenomena about what is experienced by research subjects such as attitudes, perceptions, motivations, actions, with a special natural context, and utilizing various scientific methods.

The descriptive method in this research is intended to describe as clearly as possible the object under study, to describe the data, systematically, and accurately. Descriptive method is a method that examines the status of human groups, an object, a set of conditions, a system of thought or a class of events in the present (Nasir, 1983:63). According to Ratna (2012: 53) descriptive analytical method is carried out by describing the facts and then followed by analysis. Description is a description of the characteristics of the data accurately according to the nature of the data itself (Djajasudarma, 2016: 16). Basically, the description is a clear writing style so that the reader can find out what semiotic analysis on Besurek batik motifs looks like as an effort to preserve and alternative Indonesian language teaching materials.

Batik Besurek motif is a source of data which is the subject of this research. The batik motifs consist of Calligraphy motifs, Rafflesia motifs, Kuau Bird motifs, Relung Paku motif, and moon motifs. The focus of the research is the analysis of semiotics or symbolic meaning in Besurek batik motifs and describes the contribution of symbolic meaning to Besurek batik motifs for alternative Indonesian language teaching materials.

3 Findings and Discussion

3.1 Describe Semiotic Analysis on Calligraphy Motifs

Calligraphy motifs contain philosophical meanings that symbolize Islam. Islam is the majority religion in Bengkulu Province. Based on data in 2021 the percentage of Islam is 97% (BPS, 2021). Da'wah of Islam can be done in various ways, one of which is through the Calligraphy art of da'wah media in Besurek batik motifs. Calligraphy motifs are considered effective for introducing Islamic teachings and values to the Bengkulu people.

This makes Islam more existent and people see Islam as beautiful with Calligraphy motifs.

Calligraphy motifs are one of the media used by the Bengkulu people to express their thoughts and feelings about humans with the Creator. The results of this reflection give birth to pearls of heart, taste, soul, and mind that are poured out in the form of very creative Calligraphy motifs and have art with alluring beauty. Thus, Calligraphy motifs can be used as a means to educate, especially those related to religious values.

The entry of Islam to Bengkulu coincided with the entry of Arabic art and culture, one of which was Calligraphy. Calligraphy is a form of Islamic cultural art that marks the entry of Islam in Bengkulu. This is in line with the mission of spreading Islam. Islam has transmitted its culture to the people of Bengkulu. Although the people of Bengkulu already have a variety of cultures, the interaction between these cultures runs smoothly. Along with the times, with the existence of batik, it is combined with the Calligraphy motif.

Bengkulu people are religious people, people who believe in the existence of God Almighty. God is believed to be the creator of nature and its contents. God is the source of everything in the universe. Belief in God Almighty reveals that their awareness in life cannot be separated from the will of God Almighty.

Religious values are implicitly contained in the Calligraphy motifs. Calligraphy motifs contain elements of truth and courage to display them. It is found in various calligraphic motifs. In the end, Calligraphy motifs have a position that cannot be underestimated in maintaining and recording a culture.

Calligraphy in besurek batik displays the art of beautiful writing or beautiful writing that is synonymous with Islam. Calligraphy as an art not only has aesthetic value, but also contains special meanings and contains values in life.

The Calligraphy motifs on Besurek batik describe religious values, namely carrying out orders and staying away from God's prohibitions in accordance with the religion adopted, namely the balance between the life of the world and the hereafter. Believers in order to create a balance between efforts to obtain worldly needs and the needs of the hereafter. Do not pursue one by abandoning the other.

Worldly life and the hereafter are natures that humans must go through so that this life can be fulfilled by both without having to be separated. Bringing a balance between the world and the hereafter is part of Islamic teachings that must be followed by its adherents. When worshiping before Allah, then worship with all sincerity without expecting praise from humans. For example, when praying, let's forget all worldly affairs, we only remember and focus on Allah, as if there is no more opportunity to prostrate to Allah because tomorrow will die. Vice versa, when we have finished carrying out our obligations to Allah, then we deal with worldly affairs with care and calculation. We try and work hard to get worldly benefits in a good and lawful way as if we are going to live forever.

The Calligraphy motif displays the personality of the Bengkulu people, who are predominantly Muslim, seen from good habits and harmony by applying good character values in everyday life. Good character as an identity owned by the Bengkulu people as a characteristic of the overall behavior outwardly and inwardly. This character is the



Fig. 1. Calligraphy Motif

basic capital in building the country and maintaining the integrity of the nation and state (Fig. 1).

3.2 Describe the Semiotic Analysis of the Rafflesia Motif

The Rafflesia motif contains the meaning of Bengkulu's fertility which must be grateful for. Gratitude is conveyed to God who has created the Rafflesia flower to live on the earth of Bengkulu. Bengkulu is a country of extraordinary natural wealth and has a very dense forest as a place for Rafflesia flowers to live. Every blessing given by Allah swt. Should be grateful so that these blessings continue to increase.

Bengkulu is one of the provinces in Indonesia which is located on the island of Sumatra. Geographically, Bengkulu is located at coordinates 2° South Latitude – 6 South Latitude and 101°–104° East Longitude. The area of Bengkulu Province is 19,919 km², the 24th largest in Indonesia. Bengkulu is known as the earth of Rafflesia because according to history, the Rafflesia flower was first discovered in Bengkulu.

Rafflesia flower is one of the icons of flora or prima donna in Indonesia. The Rafflesia flower is one of the plants that has unique properties as well as keeps a mystery for plant science. Rafflesia is unique because this species is only in the form of buds or blooms, no stems, leaves, and roots. In addition to buds or flowers, Rafflesia is only equipped with suckers, namely tissues that have a root-like function that sucks nutrients produced by the host plant through photosynthesis. Rafflesia belongs to the group of holoparasites, plants that cannot carry out the process of photosynthesis on their own, like other flowering plants, they cannot carry out the process of photosynthesis themselves and are very dependent on their hosts. The host plant of Rafflesia is very specific, namely the *Tetrastigma* genus. However, not all *Tetrastigma* species host Rafflesia, and only certain species within this clan host Rafflesia.

Rafflesia is a plant known to have the largest single flower in the world. This type of flower is dioecious, or there are two houses with male and female flowers on different individuals. Because of its uniqueness, the Rafflesia flower has a special term to name the parts of the flower and is different from the terms commonly used by flowering plants in general (Susatya, 2011).

Rafflesia *Arnoldi* flower is the iconic flower of Bengkulu. Based on history, this flower was first discovered in 1818 by British Governor Sir Stanford Raffles and botanist Joseph Arnold in Pulau Lebar village, Pino Raya Bengkulu Selatan. Rafflesia *Arnoldi* is the largest species in the world. Rafflesia *Arnoldi*, with a diameter of 70–110 cm, is referred



Fig. 2. Rafflesia Flower Pattern

to as the Giant Padma and received the title of “National Rare Puspa”. (Presidential Decree No, 4/1993) (Fig. 2).

3.3 Describing Semiotic Analysis on the Kuau Bird Motif

The philosophy of the Kuau Bird motif in Besurek batik resembles the eyes that are so many and regular with beautiful colors on each feather. The colors are unified, balanced, and dazzling to those who look at them. The Kuau Bird batik motif is a symbol of beauty and a source of inspiration for the creation of the Besurek batik motif because it has several interesting things.

There is much that must be published about the fauna in Bengkulu, one of which is the very beautiful and interesting Kuau bird. All of these must be protected in their habitat and introduced to the wider community that this Kuau Bird is Bengkulu’s natural wealth that must be preserved. Thanks to the peculiarities of this bird, it was taken as a source of ideas in making Besurek batik motifs. This motif sells well in the market because his work is in accordance with the wishes of the community.

Beauty has an important role in human life. One form that is realized is the work of art in the Besurek batik motif. The purpose of this beauty is to please and arouse desire (Surajiyo, 2015). The highest manifestation of beauty is reflected in nature, so the purpose of art is beauty and imitating nature, in this case the Kuau bird. Art is not a product of beauty, but beauty is an ideal that should be attached to art media. Beauty is not only a sensory pleasure, but also lies in the heart (Parmono, 1985).

Aristotle argued that humans are “animal rationale”, and Cassirer said humans as “animal symbolicum”, and humans as creatures who enjoy beauty are called “animal aestheticus”. Basically, humans want to beautify themselves and the environment in which they are located. Humans also like beautiful clothes and jewelry and try to keep themselves attractive. In addition, humans also try to beautify their environment by arranging houses, gardens, yards, household furniture, vehicles, and others to make them look more attractive and fun (Surajiyo, 2015).

According to (Gie, 1983) beauty in principle is several certain basic qualities contained in something. The qualities most frequently mentioned are unity, harmony, balance, contrast and symmetry. The Kuau Bird batik motif fulfills the elements conveyed by Gie. The selection of Besurek batik motifs is also adjusted to the latest trends, the development of globalization encourages craftsmen to be more creative in creating the Kuau Bird motif. Furthermore, the Kuau Bird motif as a work is not only beautiful, but also has a philosophical meaning (Fig. 3).



Fig. 3. Kuau Bird Motif



Fig. 4. Motif Relung Paku

3.4 Describing Semiotic Analysis on Relung Paku Motif

The Relung Paku motif in Besurek batik contains a philosophical meaning which symbolizes that life is like a wheel, sometimes at the bottom, sometimes at the top. Everything is by Allah's will, nothing is impossible if Allah has willed, everything can change in a moment. Humans are expected to always remember and draw closer to Allah so as not to get lost in life.

The values contained in the Relung Paku motif remind people to have a religious attitude and personality, not to be arrogant, not to feel super super, not to underestimate other people, not to be too proud of themselves, and to respect each other. Humans are forbidden to walk on this earth arrogantly and arrogantly, in fact humans are very weak creatures.

Everything that exists belongs to Allah and only He is the Almighty God, whatever is in this world will surely leave humans because life in this world is only temporary. Therefore, we must always be sincere if our lives are not too lucky if we are under, all of that is a form of test for someone to improve the quality of their faith. The act of patience/self-control here is a sincere attitude to the will of Allah SWT. In living this life various trials are given, lest we be weak and fall into the valley of error. Remember, when life is below, we must be patient, when life is above, we must be grateful.

On the other hand, the philosophical meaning of the Relung Paku motif is to be tenacious and not easily discouraged. Tenacious here means that a person is not easily discouraged in achieving his goals or desires, various efforts are made, various difficult situations are in the way, but the intention is also conveyed. So, a tenacious person will not be pessimistic in his life. He is always optimistic in achieving his goals and ideals. Although a tenacious attitude requires an optimistic attitude, it should not be excessively optimistic, because it can lead to arrogance (Fig. 4).



Fig. 5. Motif Rembulan

3.5 Describing Semiotic Analysis on the Rembulan Motif

The moon motif on Besurek batik contains a philosophical meaning that symbolizes the power of God. God's power is unlimited, unreachable and incomparable. The power of Allah is very different from the power that exists in His creatures. This power is certainly closely related to the nature of the Almighty, which is owned by Allah SWT, He is Almighty over everything.

God's power is prerogative, God is Almighty in creating the universe and its contents, including the moon and other celestial bodies. Allah created the universe alone without needing any help from anyone. The more humans learn, the more knowledge is known about the evidence of God's greatness and power.

Humans see the power of God through His creation. There is an important secret and great pleasure when we know the creator who has created him. This attitude makes humans to rely on themselves and their destiny seriously to Allah and not depend on creatures.

The evidences of Allah's power spread everywhere, the creation of the heavens and the earth as well as the phenomena of the celestial bodies are very amazing. All these expositions draw people's attention to wonder at the power of God. It's all a small part of the kingdom of God (Fig. 5).

3.6 Semiotics of Besurek Batik as an Effort to Preserve and Alternative Indonesian Language Teaching Materials

The results of the analysis of Besurek batik motifs can be a medium for student learning in forming superior characters in accordance with the Indonesian education curriculum. Character is good values that are imprinted in oneself and applied in behavior. The formation of superior student character can be inserted through learning Indonesian from various levels, from elementary, junior high, and high school. For example, material meaning denotation, connotation, type of essay, and others. The theme of batik with various motifs and development backgrounds, has a significant contribution in the context of participating in the success of the formation of superior characters through the curriculum taught in schools.

The introduction of Besurek batik to students about the diverse and unique cultural treasures of each region. The introduction of Besurek batik also contributed to the preservation of culture from the brink of extinction. Through learning in schools, students are

expected to recognize and love their own regional culture so that it creates a sense of pride in their regional work.

Besurek batik motifs contain values that are full of philosophical meanings that show the Bengkulu people's way of thinking. The meaning contained in the Besurek batik motif is very important to explore, knowing the implied meaning will form an understanding among the people who own it so that the Bengkulu people love and try to maintain the culture they have. Besurek batik contains extraordinary meanings for the philosophy of life, religious values, local wisdom, cultural values, and becomes a way of life and moral order for the Bengkulu people which should be appreciated and maintained.

Besurek Batik has been preserved since 1990 by the Bengkulu provincial government. Besurek Batik is used as a mandatory uniform for elementary school to high school students. In addition to be a school uniform, Besurek batik is a mandatory attire for Civil Servants on certain days in the Bengkulu Province. The welcome gates also use Besurek motifs. The office or building signs are also given a background with a Besurek motif. In fact, transportation is also affixed with stickers with Besurek motifs. The Bengkulu Provincial Government established the regulation as one of the local government's efforts for the development and preservation of Besurek batik.

4 Conclusion

Based on the results of research and discussion on Semiotic Analysis of Besurek Batik Motifs as Preservation Efforts and Alternative Indonesian Teaching Materials, it can be concluded as follows: (1) Calligraphy motifs contain philosophical meanings of Islam, (2) Rafflesia motifs contain the meaning of Bengkulu's earth fertility which must be grateful, (3) the Kuau Bird contains the meaning of beauty, (4) the Relung Paku motif contains a philosophical meaning which symbolizes that life is like a wheel, sometimes it is below and sometimes it is above, (5) the moon motif contains a philosophical meaning which symbolizes the power of God, and (6) Besurek batik semiotics as an effort to preserve and alternative Indonesian language teaching materials.

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