



## Motifs and Colours of *Endek Ikat* Weaving

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**ABSTRACT:** This research analyzes the motif and colour of *endek* as one of the Balinese traditional *ikat* weaving cloth (*ikat* in Indonesian Language means bind). *Endek* is produced by tying strands of thread using a non-machine traditional equipment. The methods used for data collection are observation and in-depth interview. The analysis focuses on the meaning represented on each varied motif and colour. Semantic and Semiotic theories are applied for analysing the meaning of *endek* motif and colour. Results of the analysis showed that unique and specific motif and colour of *endek ikat* weaving represented the meaning of appreciating nature, culture, and philosophy. The varied motif and colour can not be argued as the belonging to a certain region in Bali because the various existed motif and colour refer to the same sources like the universe, Hindu Religion, tradition, and culture. The variety of *endek* motif and colour cannot neither be recognized as the belonging to a certain designer nor industry. It is because of the motif and colour creation is strongly influenced by how creative an *ikat* weaving designer is by utilizing the available sources that he or she refers to. Motif and colour creativity of *endek ikat* weaving is influenced each other among the designer so that there is not any typical motif and colour belongs to a certain *ikat* weaving industry or region in the meantime imitating activities often occur.

**KEYWORDS:** colour, meaning, *endek*, motif.

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Traditional *ikat* weaving named *endek* is one of the Balinese cultural handicraft products which is widely known by the public, especially the people on the Island of Bali. At the present time *endek* is produced in all regencies and cities in Bali so that people do not find any difficulties if they want to get this type of cloth. Balinese people in particular have a fairly high frequency of wearing *endek* with regard to activities closely related to traditions, beliefs, and ceremonies. On such events, *endek* has an important function and meaning for Balinese Hindu and consequently, the use of *endek* can be very frequent.

In terms of producing *endek* those who are involving in this type of industry which later are called designers are still using Non-Machine Weaving Equipment. Non-Machine Weaving Equipment in Indonesian is called Alat Tenun Bukan Mesin which is usually abbreviated as ATBM. ATBM includes traditional looms which requires human engagement to operate the ATBM. This manual work makes *endek* different from the machine-made ones. The work is done by tying the threads through several processes including the binding process, the dyeing process, the drying process, the weaving process, and there are still some other processes. With regard to technological advances, there are weaving industries which use technology to produce *endek*. However, the results certainly cannot be classified as *ikat* weaving cloth because the quality is much different which makes the price of this type fabric cloth is much cheaper.

In addition to *endek*, there are some woven craft products among others *songket*, *gringsing*, *cepuk*, and *rangrang* which is also done by manually tying the strands and using ATBM. *Endek* motif and colour, as the focus of this research are presented in harmony. The variety of motif and colour is the creation and the imagination either of the designer or the customer. The various motifs and colors are very interesting to be analysed in terms of linguistics point of view. Semiotic and Semantic theories are compulsory for analysing the variety of motifs and colours in order to find out the meaning conveyed through the creativity of the designer or the customer. The following is a description of the two theories used to analyze the types of motif and colour found in *endek ikat* weaving.

### 2. THEORY AND LITERATURE REVIEW

Semiotics is the science that analyzes signs. A sign is something that represents something. Something that can be an experience, thought, idea, or feeling. For example, smoke represents fire (experience), here the sign is called an index, because between A (smoke) and B (fire) there is a connection or contiguity. When we see a photo, painting or drawing, then the photo, painting or drawing is a sign called an icon, because the photo, painting or image represents a certain reality (whether it is human



or something else) or experience based on similarity (similarity). A sign can also be a symbol, if the relationship between the sign and the one represented is based on an agreement (convention), for example a red light that represents a 'prohibition' (idea) based on an existing agreement in society. If the 'something' is conveyed through a sign from the sender (P1) to the recipient (P2), the 'something' is called a message. So, the semiotic approach will see a variety of motives (1) as an effort to convey messages by using a set of signs in a system; and (2) as the use of a sign consisting of form (signifiant or marker) and content (signifié or signified). Thus, whatever type of sign is used, the sign must be seen as a unity between the signifier and the signified (cf. Saussure, 1960: 97-100); (3) as a signifier unit consisting of verbal elements (linguistic elements) and nonverbal or visual elements (non-linguistic elements). Non-verbal elements in various *endek* motifs are equated with open texts, which are open to various interpretations through the semiosis process (Hoed in Masinambow, 2002: 299-300). Danesi (2004: 8-9) states that a sign is anything – a color, a sign, a blink of an eye, an object, a mathematical formula, etc. – that represents something other than itself. The word red, as we have seen, is categorized as a sign because it does not represent the r-e-d sound that builds it, but rather a kind of color and other things. The thing denoted by the sign, logically, is known as the referent (object or signified). There are two types of referents: (1) concrete referents, such as the animal referred to by the word paint, and (2) abstract referents, such as the concept of 'bright idea' which is referred to by the figure of a burning light bulb. A concrete reference is something that can be shown to be present in the real world – for example 'cat' (cat) can be indicated simply by pointing to a cat. Abstract references are imaginary and cannot be indicated by simply pointing to an object – how can you point to the 'bright idea' in your head? Signs allow us to point to objects and ideas, even though they are not physically present until they can be perceived by our senses. When we say or hear the word cat, the image of the animal in question immediately comes to mind, even when the animal is not in front of us until it can be perceived by the senses. The image itself is called a concept.

Semantics is one of the fields of linguistics that analyzes meaning. Semantics here are used to analyze what meaning is conveyed through various motifs and colour on *endek*. According to de Saussure (1966), linguistic signs consist of: 1) components that replace, which are in the form of language sounds; 2) the interpreted component or the meaning of the first component. These two components are signs or symbols, while what is marked or symbolized is something that is outside the language, or what is commonly referred to as a reference. Thus, semantics is the science of meaning or meaning, which studies the relationship between linguistic signs and the things they signify. Ullmann (1977:54-64) states that the signifier is a symbol (sense) which is arbitrary and the signified is a meaning or concept (name). The relationship between the symbol and the meaning is depicted as a straight line. In analyzing meaning there is a fact that the signifier and its referent do not always or necessarily have a one-to-one relationship, which can be interpreted that every linguistic sign does not always have only one meaning but sometimes a linguistic sign has two or more references or vice versa that two linguistic signs can have the same reference.

Some previous researches on *endek ikat* weaving and other type of traditional cloth have already been conducted from different view of analyses. Aprilliani, et al (2007) with the article 'The Meaning of *Kebo Wayang* Symbol in *Gringsing* weaving in Tenganan Pegringsingan Village Karangasem Bali.' The analysis emphasis on the meaning and symbols which found 27 motifs. The analysis of the connotative meaning based on Barthes theory which shows that *gringsing* weaving with *wayang kebo* motif represents a variety of non-verbal communication symbols that have cultural values and natural beauty. Ariani, Ni Made, et al (2016) in their article 'Development of *Endek Weaving* Business in Denpasar 1975-2015 analyzed two problems: the development of *endek* business by the Denpasar City Government and the benefits obtained by *endek* craftsmen. Ariani et al uses a case study approach. The case study refers to the Denpasar City government which developed a promotion program for traditional *endek* weaving. Suryani, et al (2022) with their article The Development of *Endek Kolok* Weaving in Bengkulu Village. The research location is the Kajian Community Economic Zone in Bengkulu Village, Kubuaddan District, Buleleng Regency. The study analyzed 2 problems, (a) the development of the *endek kolok* weaving motif and (b) the factors influenced the development of *endek kolok* weaving motif in Bengkulu Village. The research of Suryani, et al and our research has a different emphasis. Suryani's research did not use semantic and semiotic analysis on every motif found. It only emphasized on the development of *endek* weaving motifs produced by the disabled community in Bengkulu Village. Meanwhile, this research analyzed the motifs and colours.

### 3. RESEARCH METHODS

It is a field research done in two locations of *endek ikat* weaving industries in Denpasar, Jepun Bali Weaving Industry and Sekar Jepun Weaving Industry. This research applied a descriptive qualitative method and involved two informants from whom

the information was obtained. The two informants involved in this research are over 60 and 70 years who already had very mature experiences in weaving. Both of them are in good physical and mental health and met the specified requirements to become informants. They are also primary informants who had provided sufficient data on *endek ikat* weaving so that other informants are no longer needed. Observation methods and in-depth interviews were used in data collection. Here are the steps applied in collecting data. In the observation method besides doing the observation the researcher involved at the place where the informants carried out activities and also interacted with the weavers. In observation, the researcher conducted interviews by asking various activities related to the formulated problems. The researcher started by asking the initial interest in the weaving business, the creation of motifs, the selection of colors, materials, weaving equipment, and also the process of workmanship. The interviews were conducted in an unstructured manner so that the two resource persons could freely tell stories from the beginning of their interest in *endek ikat* weaving, their talents in sketching or drawing, their knowledge of several things needed including among others design, color, and thread. Furthermore, how to start a weaving business, the development of which is determined by market conditions that look at and like their creations. We asked freely without being tied to a detailed list of structured questions so that the interview ran smooth. In such natural conditions, the informants are able to tell stories in a relaxed manner and do not feel bored so that the data obtained is more affluent.

The qualitative data were analyzed by following the qualitative data analysis procedure as proposed by Miles and Huberman (1992) which are respectively started with data reduction, presenting data, interpreting data, and drawing conclusions. Through interpretive analysis techniques means that every data and important information obtained from the informants is directly analyzed to make small hypotheses which are then used to make the next questions. Thus, the analysis and interview techniques refer to what Taylor and Bogdan (1984: 128) call the go hand-in-hand.

#### 4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The data shows that the varied types of motif and colour of *endek ikat* weaving in two industries, Jepun Bali Weaving and Sekar Jepun Weaving are quite varied which mostly based on the nature such as flora and fauna. In the classification of floral motifs, especially flowers, there is one frangipani flower motif (*sekar jepun* motif) with brown, yellow, and green colours as shown below.

(1) *Sekar Jepun* Motif



(Source: research document , May 2022)

Based on the results of interviews with informants who are also the owners of the Sekar Jepun Weaving Industry, it was the first motif produced. The name Sekar Japun was given by the late husband of Mrs. Etmy Kustiyah, Mr. Sukarsa who also has expertise in determining good and bad days in Hindu religion. Both of their imaginations are also obtained from the existence of frangipani flowers which are easy to grow, especially in tropical climates like Indonesia and do not require special treatment. The frangipani flower which in Balinese is called the *sekar jepun* has various types and colors with fragrant aroma. *Sekar jepun*, especially for Balinese (Hindu), has very high benefits, especially for ritual purposes because *sekar jepun* can be used for offerings. It can be interpreted that the positive characters exist in Japanese flowers such as beautiful colours and fragrant smells are expected

to have a positive influence on the industry they initiated, namely benefiting the community and developing well through planned management. To strengthen the existence of this weaving business, the name of the street where this business is located is taken from the name of this weaving business so that the name of the street is Jalan Sekar Jepun which later developed into several other *sekar jepun* taken from types of *sekar jepun* such as *sekar jepun pipil*, *sekar jepun dadu*, etc.

*Sekar jepun* motif as shown in figure (1) above is a combination of geometric and floral motifs. The number of colours used are seven, namely light brown as the base colour, dark brown tends to purplish, light green and dark green, orange and dark yellow, and bright colours approaching dirty white positioned in the middle of the flower. The use of geometric motifs in triangles and squares emphasize the existence of the *sekar jepun* motif. The shape of the flowers and leaves are the imagination of the designer who is also the owner of the Sekar Jepun Weaving Industry definitely comes from the originality of frangipani flower itself. Actually, the number of frangipani flower petals are still five strands, but the shape of each strand is not the same. When it is compared with the reality each petal of frangipani flower is generally the same size. Likewise, the colour of flowers is the combination of two colours on each flower, as well as colour gradations that can be more than two gradations in reality. The shape of the leaf is wider than the reality.

Analysis from semiotic and semantic the depictions created by the designers represented their imagination on the nature they would like to represent. In the *sekar jepun* motif the shape of the petals and the leaves are quite different from the reality. It is very seldom to find the petals in different size and two different colours for the leaf. It means that the designer has their own imagination and creativity to represent their own creation. Through the imagination and creativity, the designer wants to appreciate more to the nature and its Creator.

Other motifs are produced by Jepun Bali Weaving Industry. The types of motif refer to the nature especially fauna. Here are the turtle and lobster motifs.

## (2) Turtle Motif



(Source: research document , May 2022)

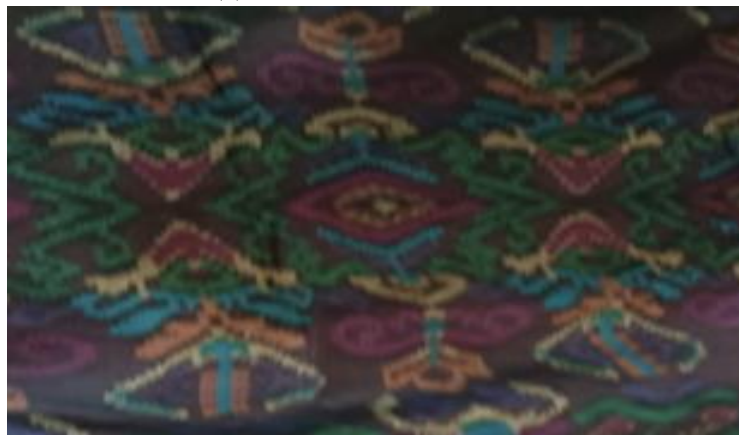
Turtle is an ancient marine animal that eats plants as well as plankton, has hard shells, and live in all the oceans of the world. Turtle is a marine animal that is widely hunted because of its delicious meat and hard shells to be used as souvenirs. The turtle population continues to decline and is feared to be near to extinction therefore it is protected by law. Turtles reproduce by laying eggs on the beach sand. There are several types of turtles among others green turtles, leatherback turtles, hawksbill turtles. Turtles are used as *endek ikat* weaving motifs because apart from glorifying the universe, there are values taken from these marine animals, especially for Balinese people who are Hindus. In Hindu mythology, the turtle is mentioned as the incarnation of God Wisnu, the manifestation of the Almighty as the preserver of the universe. As a buffer for the universe so that there is a balance and harmony between God and humans, nature and humans, and between humans.

The turtle motif above (2) is dark brown in color, irregular, and striped. The turtle motif presented consists of four different parts, both in terms of creation and size. Each of the two types of motifs are on different rows alternately in a symmetrical position. For example, in the first row, two different motifs and sizes are shown and the number of colors used is not the same. The smaller motif consists of two colors, namely bone white and pink, while the larger motif consists of three colors, namely bone white,

pink, and orange. In the next two lines, the use of the number of colors is changed where the smaller motif consists of three colors, namely bone white, pink, and orange, while the larger motif consists of two colors, namely bone white and pink. The two motifs in the row above are the same size, but one motif has what can be assumed to be the body parts with a pair position at the top and another pair at the bottom. One other motif in the same line does not have it because the top and bottom of this motif are a unity that has no extra space.

Analysis from semiotic and semantic the depictions created by the designers represented their imagination on the nature they would like to represent. In the turtle motif there are two similar size and shape on each row which represent the turtle shape in reality. In this motif the designer did not make any further creation on the shape of the turtle but created some differences in colours such as orange and pink. It means that the designer has their own imagination and creativity to represent their own creation. Turtle is known as the sea animal which represents peace. Through the imagination and creativity, the designer wants to appreciate more to the nature, especially to one of the ancient animals, turtle.

### (3) Lobster Motif



(Source: research document , May 2022)

Lobster is a marine animal that belongs to the shrimp family with a larger size and has a hard skin type like shrimp. Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia (Indonesian Dictionary) (2005: 679) states that lobster is a sea shrimp, crayfish are bluish black in color, has eight legs, and has a large pair of pincers. This animal is considered to have a high enough protein content so that it is beneficial for human health. In addition, the commodity of this animal has a good economic value.

Motif of lobster in picture (3) above is a creative one produced by the Jepun Bali Weaving Industry. The lobster motif is created with a very tight motif in a vertical position. It can be noted that this motif consists of two different motifs. The motif which is positioned in the middle looks simpler when compared to the motif of the clamp on the left and right where the clamp has the same motif creation. The motif in the middle seems to have a smaller size when compared to the size of the clamp. The shape of the motif is by utilizing and creating straight lines and curved lines. This motif uses dark brown as the basic colour. The colours used in all motifs, both in the middle and on the left and right, consist of five colors, namely purple, light blue, green, bright orange, and light yellow.

Analysis from semiotic and semantic the depictions created by the designers represented their imagination on the nature they would like to represent. In the lobster motif the size and shape which represent the similar lobster shape with its ornaments in reality. In this motif the designer makes a lot of detail creations on the lobster mostly a number of differences in colours. The colourful colours consist of yellow, orange, purple, green, blue, and pale pink which represent the luxury of lobster as one of the menus for wealthy people. It means that the designer has their own imagination and creativity to represent their own creation. Lobster is known as the sea animal which contains a lot of nutrition and represents a high-class sea animal. Through the imagination and creativity, the designer wants to appreciate more to the nature, especially to one of the prestigious animals, lobster.

In the classification of geometric motif, there are three types produced by Jepun Bali Weaving Industry, (1) *wajik ukir* motif (a carved diamond motif), (2) *sarong* motif, and (3) lobster motif. Here is the *wajik ukir* motif with a matching color combination.

(4) *Wajik Ukir* Motif



(Source: research document , May 2022)

Another motif produced that is based to the imagination and creativity of the designer is the *wajik ukir* motif in picture (4) above. There are various creations of *wajik ukir* motifs and this is one created by Jepun Bali Weaving Industry. This motif belongs to a classic motif because it is one of the early creations of the previous designers, especially in the Klungkung Regency. *Wajik ukir* motif resembles a lupis pattern that is laid out in a row and each shape of the lupis is created in interesting forms such as matching flower shapes with almost the same size. This is done because the shape of the diamond or lupis created has the same size so that the shapes and sizes of the flowers in the lupis must be adjusted. The colours used in this motif are dominated by red which leads to dark orange which also functions as the basic colour of the weaving. There are four types of colours in the creation of the lupis pattern such as dark yellow, moss green, red, and dice combined with pale pink in all creations. The edges of the lupis pattern use a pale pink colour.

Analysis from semiotic and semantic the depictions created by the designers represented their imagination on the nature they would like to represent. In the *wajik ukir* motif there are all similar size and shape on each row which represent the equality or balance. In this motif the designer makes some further creation on the fillers inside the lupis. It means that the designer has their own imagination and creativity to represent their own creation. *Wajik ukir* is known as the most classic motif which represents equality and balancing of the nature which can be used by human beings as a guidance in their life. Through the imagination and creativity, the designer wants to appreciate more to the philosophy, especially to one of the classical motifs, *wajik ukir*.

## 5. CONCLUSIONS

Based on the results of the analysis it was found that the motif and color of *endek ikat* weaving are very diverse. Motifs and colours refer to everything available in nature such as plants, animals, and other objects around the weavers. Likewise, colors are developed in accordance with the imagination of the crafter or weaver based on the five basic colors. The meaning of each motif and color is interpreted by the weaver which are generally appreciating nature, culture, and philosophy. Therefore, it can be said that each production area does not have motifs and colors that can be categorized as distinctive because the weavers use the reference of the universe to develop their imagination of creativity.

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