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Expressions of Cultural Communication in the Use of Songket in Palembang Wedding Customs

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Abstract

As one of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (WBTb) owned by Indonesia, songket, especially Palembang's songket, is a cultural heritage that must be preserved. In addition to having noble values and high aesthetics, when worn in formal events such as weddings, songket is also a medium for conveying messages that are shown in Palembang wedding customs. The purpose of this study is to find out how the symbolic form of songket communication , its meaning conveyed in Palembang wedding customs and what kind of expressions it showed, with descriptive-qualitative method. The result of this study is that songket is used to communicate symbolically at several stages in Palembang wedding customs, such as in the mandik , n yenggong/ berasan , proposing & m utus k ato and also in mupload (wedding ceremony). Symbolic forms and expressions that show are happiness, sadness, interest, approval and also appreciation and prestige. Furthermore, there's an invention that shows songket in its manufacture gets innovation by using Machine Weaving Tools (ATM), thanks to this innovation other creations from songket have been created, such as songket souvenirs.

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Keywords: Cultural Communication, Symbolic Communication, Expression in Communication, Palembang Songket, Palembang Wedding Traditions.

INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is a country consisting of various ethnic groups with various cultures. There are approximately 1,340 ethnic groups in Indonesia (Fadli, 2018) with their cultural diversity. Among the parts of this culture is Wastra, namely traditional cloth which is full of meaning and its cultural philosophy. Wastra in Indonesia is estimated to be 1,239 in number (Suryanto, 2015); (Zusmelia et al., 2022); (Irwan, Zusmelia, Siska, Mazya, et al., 2022). One of the literature in Indonesia and which has cultural significance is Songket Palembang, even since 2013 Palembang songket has been designated by UNESCO as an Intangible Cultural Heritage (WBTB) (Suryanto, 2015); (Aju, 2010); (Anita Resianty, Iskandar Syah, 2015). Palembang songket is widely used in weddings, because it is considered to contain noble values and high aesthetics.

Songket is made of gold thread and has a high value, therefore the user of the songket indirectly raises the level of the wearer. Usually, the more expensive the price of songket As a cultural object that is always used in traditional events, especially at weddings in Palembang, songket is used as a message delivery in communication (non-verbal communication) and contains cultural values (Novika R. & Supriyanto, 2017); (Ayu L. & Dessy W, 2021); (Bart, 2006); (Fadli, 2018); (Irwan, 2015).

Songket is considered to be able to show the wearer's social status (Fadli, 2018). Songket is considered a form of cultural communication expression contained in its meaning. This research is interesting because it will find out the expression of cultural communication in the use of songket in Palembang wedding customs.

Expression according to KBBI (2016) is the process of disclosing or expressing one's intentions or ideas and feelings to other people. Expression of communication means conveying meaning through communication. Songket is considered as part of an effort to express feelings in traditional Palembang marriages through cultural communication which can be seen through songket which is then translated with the symbols that appear. According to Clifford (Kartiwi, 1987); (Syarofie, 2012); (Kiagus Zainal Arifin, 2006); (Keesing, n.d.); (Irwan et al., 2019) symbol interpretation is patterns *of meaning* of an object, behavior or action that looks real. Through songket in traditional Palembang weddings, it will be known how the expression of cultural communication was 'present' at that time.

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RESEARCH METHODS

This study uses a qualitative method(Afifuddin, 2009); (Ardianto, 2010); (Emzir, 2010); (Moleong, 2021); (Irwan, Zusmelia, Siska, Elvawati, et al., 2022). The research was conducted in Sungai Badak Village, Kec. Mesuji, ULU, South Sumatr. The choice of location was based on the consideration that in this area there are still many songket users and songket makers. Data were obtained from interviews, field notes, photographs, video tapes, personal documentation, notes or memos and other documentation. This method is used in order to reveal the meaning of songket in Palembang wedding customs. Theory is used as *a tool* when analyzing data, so that research is focused, and able to answer questions and research objectives.

The data in this study were divided into two, namely primary and secondary data. Primary data were obtained from observations at the time of the wedding ceremony and interviews with informants. The selected informants are craftsmen, Palembang songket entrepreneurs and community leaders in Palembang who have knowledge about songket and Palembang songket users . The data collected was pursed until the meaning of songket in Palembang's traditional marriage was known. The data obtained will be reduced (sharpened, selected, focused, discarded, to compile data), then the data will be analyzed with the theory used until conclusions are drawn.

DISCUSSION

Subject Description (Songket Palembang)

Etymologically, songket comes from the Malay language, namely, *sungkit* which means gouging or hooking, so that the term menyongket which means 'weaving' appears (Kartiwi, 1987). The threads used in making songket are gold and silver threads, thus songket is woven embroidered with gold or silver. Meanwhile the Palembang people call songket derived from the word songko which is the first time gold thread was used as a decorative thread on headbands, in Palembang (Kartiwi, 1987); (Novika R. & Supriyanto, 2017); (Paul M. & J. Lin, 1991); (Suryanto, 2015). According to the Palembang people, the word songket comes from the word disongsong and di teket, which means to be embroidered (Ammaria, 2017); (Ragid P., 2022); (Riady, 2021); (Rigitta, 2022); (Romas T., 2017); (Irwan, Mesra, Hamsah, Kuswanti, et al., 2022). The word refers to the weaving process, in which threads and other supporting equipment are inserted into the longsen by way of receiving or facing, then embroidering so that Songket means the fabric that

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is made by facing and embroidering(Riady, 2021). Songket then became expensive and only people from the upper class (haves) could buy and wear it. Songket cloth is a cloth made from traditional handicrafts in the form of woven embroidered gold, silver and gold threads.

There are several types of gold thread used to weave songket. The gold thread that occupies the highest caste with the best quality is the heart gold thread, a thread made of 14 carat gold. It was this type of gold thread that was used to weave songket for the nobility, which made the color of the songket shiny. Before becoming a beautiful piece of cloth that is ready to wear, songket-making goes through several stages that require patience, thoroughness and persistence. Starting from dyeing & giving color; dyed for ± 1 hour then dried in the sun, in the dyeing process, a coloring process made from natural ingredients is carried out. For example, the yellow color is obtained from turmeric extract, the red color is obtained from boiled noni root and sappan bark, blue/green is obtained from the indigo plant, purple is obtained from the skin of the mangosteen fruit, and other colors are obtained from mixing these ingredients. Next, winding/managing the yarn; it is rolled up using an undulating thread, the thread is stretched, then the undulating is rotated and then moved to the kelosan, holding it; from the kelosan, the threads are counted and attached to the dayan, only then does the carving process begin; Create a pattern reference, then weave.

The traditional loom for making Palembang songket is also known as *gedogan* . *Gedogan* has several components that support each other in the creation of a beautiful piece of songket. If one of the components is missing, *the gedogan* cannot function properly. Some of these constituent components include; *dayan* (place for thread), *cacak* (stretching board), *lungsen* (seam of threads), *suri* (lines of fine bamboo measuring 90 cm/45-60 cm), *apit* (thread holder, located at the front of the weaver), *stock* (holder warp threads to keep them tight, position on the back of the weaver), *sticks* (decorative markers), *beliro* (flat boards to hold the threads together), *pemipilan* (also called anak beliro, holders for warp threads), *reed holders* (to open the space between the warp threads which has been formed when sewing), *pennyncing* (resembles a sharp pen to lift the warp threads when you want to insert gold thread), *pelleting* (like a drumstick to roll gold thread which will be inserted between the warp threads), *kerompong* (shaped like a tube to insert thread pellets silk), *rogan* (often replaced by ordinary wooden beams, as *beliro* , *pencincing* and *reeds holders*), *undaran* (for winding yarn that has been dyed) and also *kelosan* (a wooden tool for winding yarn before it is attached to *dayan* or *pelenting*).

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Using a traditional loom, the process of making a piece of songket measuring 120x270 cm/85x180 cm with 1400~1700 threads takes ±3 (three) months. Meanwhile, scarves measuring 90x270 cm/45x190~200 cm/60x190~200cm with 750~900 threads require relatively shorter time, which is around 1 (one) month. Regarding size, songket production tends to be flexible because it adjusts to market demand and buyers. Meanwhile, the length of the manufacturing process depends on the level of complexity in the songket motif. The more complicated the desired motif, the longer the manufacturing process will be. Weaving songket motifs requires special skills and expertise that can only be taught from generation to generation. Even in the process, weavers are required to focus, concentrate and maintain their emotions so as not to affect the woven results. So, no doubt the price of songket soared to millions of rupiah, for example a songket using gold heart thread can be priced at up to Rp. 70 million, while for those using other types of gold thread it is estimated at Rp. 15 million. In storage also requires special patience. Among them are stored in sufficient storage space, adjusting the size of the songket. Then it can also be stored by rolling it using a tube with a cover at both ends. Songket can also be stored by hanging and folding, but if hung and folded for a long time it is feared that it could damage the gold threads and form folds in the songket.

Stages/Processes of Palembang Traditional Weddings and the meaning of Songket in them.

Stages of *Madik* as a Symbol of Attraction

The first process in Palembang's wedding customs is Madik, which is the introduction process. This process is needed to see *the seeds, weight* and *weight* of the bride and groom (women). *Mandik* itself is an unofficial (unannounced) visit from the representative of the groom's party to observe the suitability, behavior, manners and friendliness of the prospective bride, this is because in Palembang custom chooses a potential partner. In the a n *madik* stage , the man comes to the woman's residence carrying a piece of songket cloth/songket shawl. The role of songket in this stage is a symbol of a man's attraction to women as enriched by the informant: " *The songket that we bring to the madik ceremony can mean approval, acceptance, rejection, a sign of hospitality as well as a form of appreciation.* "Songket as part of culture has a meaning that is expressed in various symbols *(patterns of meaning)* (Geertz, 1973); (Irwan, Siska, Zusmelia, & Meldawati, 2022) . The Madik event by giving songket as an expression of cultural communication symbolizes respect for someone's desire to marry a woman. Through giving songket, it is hoped that the women's family can understand the wishes and 'language'

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(communication) conveyed by the men, that they intend to marry the woman who was given the songket and to symbolize respect for the woman and her family.

Menenggong Stages , and the Use of Songket as a Symbol of Acceptance

After the *mandik stage* , songket is also used in the next stage, namely *nyenggong* / seriousness . Mennggong implies the seriousness of the man to the woman to proceed to marriage. Menenggong means putting up a 'fence' so that weasels (*senggung*) or other males will not disturb the woman. In this stage, songket is used to discuss proposals, the men give *songket brawls* . If the bride-to-be who has previously been visited at the *mandik stage* also feels attracted to the groom-to-be, then the songket *tawur* given by the man will be worn by the woman at this stage. This was disclosed by an informant, " *Well, if the woman herself agrees to wear the songket, the tawur when she barks, if she doesn't use it, it means she refuses. Only after that was there a request from the woman's side (songket) to be performed when setting the D-day (propose & decide kato). Here we know the custom of leaving in three generations, each of which has lepus and its female friends who must ask to bring it.* " If later it is seen that the woman has appeared wearing the songket that was brought by the previous male party, meaning that the woman agrees, then during this *Nenggong* / *Berasan visit* , only then can the possibility of establishing a deeper family relationship be discussed. Conversely, if the songket performed by the male party in the *mandik stage* is seen not being worn by the female party, then this can be interpreted as a form of rejection, and this *nyenggong* / *berasan visit* can be considered as an activity to continue friendship. Therefore, songket in this stage is an expression of the seriousness of the man on the woman's side and becomes a symbol of communication in terms of acceptance/rejection, indicating approval or disapproval from the woman's side.

Stages of _Proposing_ & _Mutual Kato_ , Songket as a Symbol of Agreement ('Tanda Jadi')

Songket in the proposing stage is used as a "signature", as explained in the previous stage, namely the *nynggong* / *rasan stage* . If the offerings/ songket brought by the man fulfill what is requested by the woman, then the two families are considered to have agreed and will move on to *Mutus Kato* or setting a wedding date. Songket sung by the male family will later be worn by the female family on the wedding day as a sign that 2 (two) families have tied the knot. In this stage, apart from being a requirement, songket is also a gift from the man to the woman as a symbol of 'so' that the woman has been bound by the man. The songket given is a songket of

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good quality so that the man is not embarrassed. The higher the level of education, the position of the family or the position of the woman herself in society, the higher the demand for quality songket. This is the reason why the price of songket is also determined by the social class/status of the women in Palembang's wedding customs. Giving songket at this stage is a sign of being from the man to the woman, while the woman will feel happy with this treatment. The women like them to be treated with respect and proper with the songket given to them. Songket is given according to their social status, and the women will treat the men with respect so that both parties do not feel humiliated. This applies to all groups, especially in areas where adat is still strong, even though the price of songket requested is high, the male's family will try to fulfill the request from the female. Usually, families who are going to get married or propose marriage will usually do " *support* ", in which each member of a family who can help financially will donate a certain amount of funds to fulfill a request from the woman. This was expressed by the resource person, " *Because goods are mandatory, so they can't be random, they have to be in accordance with the class of the family that you want to give . Even if they have to support them, they will try . Starting from grandparents, uncles, aunts, cousins, everyone who can afford it. ” “ Songket can show the class of a family in society. So for example the use of songket Lepus, whether it's nago besaung, silver tray, bungo berakam, most of the motifs are sewn with gold thread, so it's not arbitrary. From there they want to convey, "oh we come from wealthy families, well-off families, so more or less like that* ."

Stages of the *Delivery Ceremony, Songket* as a Symbol of Happiness

In this stage, songket is used as a "door opener/entry ticket" for the groom's family to enter the bride's house to get married. " *In the delivery, songket is a sign of happiness on the big day, then if there is no songket it is as if the in-laws' family cannot enter* ," was the explanation from the informant. Unlike the previous gift which was a condition, the number of songket given in the *delivery ceremony* was not limited. Songket at this stage is given to the mother of the groom to the mother of the bride to symbolize the happiness of both parties because they have established a family relationship. After the songket is received by the bride's mother, the songket will be placed on the *delivery table* and the in-laws' family are welcome to enter.

***Mupload* Stage (Wedding Reception/Party), the use of Songket as a Symbol of Sorrow**

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At the time of the wedding reception (*muploads),* songket is a medium that shows marital status and wishes related to that status. Especially for women who have been widowed, songket symbolizes their sadness because their husbands have abandoned them. " *In the muploads, both the family and the guests wear songket that suits each of them (in terms of marital status and social strata) . Especially for widows, it symbolizes the feeling of sadness when you are no longer married* ."

For example, if in the bride's family there is a woman who is a widow, then the songket *tretes mider of* the type *jando bride* / *jando beraes* will be worn by that woman to show that she is no longer married. Or even if the woman has the intention to remarry, then the man who sees her wearing the songket may approach her. " *From the songket it can be seen whether he is married or not (songket jando beraes and jando bride), wants to be married again or not, like that* . The difference between *jando beraes* and *jando bride* is that *jando beraes* is worn by widows who do not wish to remarry, while *jando bride* is worn by widows who intend to remarry. The brighter the songket color, the stronger the desire to have a husband again.

Expression of Cultural Communication Through Songket in Palembang Traditional Weddings
Expression of Interest (Early Stage or Madik)

If a man is interested in a girl and wants to marry her according to Palembang custom, he can tell when the man approaches with a Songket Songket to give to the girl of his dreams. Songket is a form of expression of the man's interest and this stage is called the *mandik stage* . " *In mandik, if the man has said "lah mawe songket" (already brought a songket) even though it is not said that the opposing party (the woman's family) already understands (the intent and purpose of showing interest)."*

At this early stage, songket will be given to the woman to express the male interest in her. In starting a conversation, the man will usually say a sentence like, " *I am mawe songket ni …*" (I have brought songket / I hope you can understand my intent and purpose for coming to visit). If a sentence like that has been uttered, then the women's family will also understand where the next conversation will lead and understand how to behave or entertain guests. Then, in the next stage (*nenggong* / *berasan*) it will be seen how the answer will be given by the woman from giving a songket that expresses this interest.

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Expression of Acceptance/Rejection (*Nenggong*)

If in the previous stage songket became a form of expression of interest, in the next stage it is called *nyenggong / berasan* songket which becomes a form of expression of acceptance/approval. This was disclosed by the source, " *Well, if the woman herself agrees (expresses acceptance) she wears (the songket given at the mandik stage) when she is nudged, if she doesn't use it then she refuses."*

If the woman agrees or accepts the proposal from the man who gives her a songket, then she will express this by wearing the songket at the *nynggong / ricean stage* . Once the women have agreed, then during this *nyenggong / berasan visit* , only then can the possibility of establishing a deeper family relationship be discussed. Conversely, if the songket performed by the male party in the *mandik stage* is seen not being worn by the female party, then this can be interpreted as an expression of rejection, and this *nyenggong / rice visit can* be considered as an activity to continue friendship .

Expression of Appreciation & Honor (*Prestige*) (Stages of *Mutual Kato* or Proposal)

Songket is a form of expression of appreciation and honor (*prestige*) in the stages of *proposing* and *marrying kato* . This is illustrated by the type and quality of the songket that was brought as a gift/offering from the man, which had previously been required/requested by the woman as a condition. As explained by the informant, *" Songket can show the class of a family in society. So for example the use of songket lepus, whether it's nago besaung, silver tray, bungo berakam, most of the motifs are sewn with gold thread, so it's not arbitrary. From there they want to convey, "oh we are from a well-to-do family, a well-off family", so it's more or less like that ." "For example, those who use songket lepus with gold thread of the highest grade, not just anyone can use it, generally officials, people from middle to upper class families or upper class (wealthy) people because the price can be tens of millions of pieces, so that's why this related also to honor, dignity.*

The higher the demand for songket quality, the higher the level of education, the position of the family or the position of the woman herself in society. This is what expresses that the women's family shows their honor/ *prestige* and their position through the requested songket, while the men fulfill or give the requested songket to express that they value the woman's family.

At the proposing stage, giving songket is also an expression of communication. If songket is given by a man to a woman of good quality at a high price, then it will increase the dignity of

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the man. Songket with good quality is considered as an object that can increase the prestige of the male on the female side so that the symbol that is present through songket is an expression of cultural communication as well.

Expression of Joyful Communication in Delivery

Based on the results of interviews with informants, songket is a form of expression of joy at one of the stages in Palembang wedding customs, namely, the *delivery ceremony* . Songket is used to express joy, pleasure, family happiness on the groom's side just before entering the bride's house to carry out the wedding . *delivery ceremony, the men will bring songket too, as a form that they feel happy, feel happy, basically expressing that they are happy to visit the besan's house on the D-day and they are grateful for it. "*

The giving of songket which expresses communication of joy is represented by the mother of the groom who will give the songket which is brought to the mother of the bride. Songket as a symbol that shows the happiness of both parties has now become one family.

Apart from expressing joy, pleasure/happiness from both sides of the family, the giving of songket in the *delivery ceremony* is also an expression of affection . In a sense, the male family appreciates and is grateful for all forms of welcome given by the female family.

Expression of Sadness (For Widows) at the Mupload Event

Apart from being a form of joy, songket can also be a symbol that expresses a form of expression of sadness, namely at the *Mupload stage* or at a wedding party/reception, but only certain songkets have this meaning, such as songket *tretes mider ,* the type of *jando bride* / *jando beraes* . This type of songket is used by widows as an expression of sadness because their husbands have left them or symbolizes that they do not want to remarry. The use of songket as an expression of sadness is shown by women who have been widowed (both from the male and female families), songket symbolizes their sadness because they have been abandoned by their husbands. " *In Mupload, both family and guests wear songket that suit themselves (in terms of marital status and social strata) . Especially for widows, it symbolizes the feeling of sadness when you are no longer married* ." For example, if in the bride's family there is a woman who is a widow, then the songket will be worn by the woman to show that she is no longer married. Or even if the woman has the intention to remarry, then the man who sees her wearing the songket may approach her. " *From the songket it can be seen whether he is married or not (songket jando*

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beraes and jando bride), wants to be married again or not, like that ." This type of songket does not have flower motifs and decorations in it. The body of the songket is left blank without a motif with a single base color. This is what represents the sadness and grief of the woman who wears it.

Table 1. Describes The Use Of Songket In Palembang Traditional Weddings

Palembang Traditional Wedding Stages	Meaning/Symbol	Cultural Communication Expressions
Early stage / *Madik*	Interest	Interest
Nyenggong Rejection or Acceptance	Seriousness of refusing or accepting to marry	Songket is worn by the bride and groom, so the application is accepted, while the opposite is rejected
Propose/ *Mutus Kato*	Agreement (signed)	Awards / honors
Delivery	Happiness	joy
At Party/ Upload	Sad for the status of a widow	Sadness

CONCLUSION

Songket is not only a heritage object that has high aesthetic value, in Palembang wedding customs it can even be a symbolic object in which it contains a form of communication that expresses meaning and message. In Palembang's wedding customs, songket is used in various stages, such as *mandik* (examining candidates), *nyenggong* / *rasan* , *proposes* and *ends kato* , *delivery* ceremony to *mupload.* Based on the results of interviews with informants, songket is used in Palembang wedding customs as a symbol of attraction, acceptance, appreciation and honor, as well as joy and sorrow. The forms of expression shown include joy (joy/happiness), sorrow (sadness), interest, acceptance/approval as well as appreciation and honor related to *prestige* (self-esteem). Songket not only symbolizes beautiful and expensive literature but also has the meaning of conveying the messages contained therein.

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