



## Semantics of Tradition-Based Bags and Their Application as a Complement to Fashion

Muchlis<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Universitas Telkom, Indonesia

\*Corresponding Author: Muchlis

E-mail: [muchlis@telkomuniversity.ac.id](mailto:muchlis@telkomuniversity.ac.id)



### Article Info

#### Article history:

Received 24 November 2024

Received in revised form 11

January 2025

Accepted 20 January 2025

#### Keywords:

Semantics

Traditional Bags

Fashion Complements

### Abstract

*This study aims to provide an overview of traditional bags in several regions in Indonesia, as well as perceptions (semantics) related to the suitability between shapes and colors when bags (traditional bags) are used with the main clothing as a complement to the fashion. This study uses a qualitative method, where the researcher focuses on understanding and trying to interpret the events that occur along with interaction with the subject from the researcher's point of view. The research techniques carried out are through observation to several related sources, conducting interviews with users and taking documentation for a visual analysis. The conclusion of this study is in the form of a simulation shown through images/visuals by trying to combine the bag with the color that represents the traditional bag when used in the main fashion with various possibilities of visual combinations. The results of the simulation in the form of visual combinations were then cross-checked with data from several related research sources as well as research references about color combinations and then the results became a conclusion from this study.*

## Introduction

A bag today is not only a product that functions to carry goods from one place to another (Putri et al., 2023; Sujana et al., 2021). A bag in its development can become an identity, a perception that can be read, understood and in a semiotic context becomes a marker and forms an "image" of its user (Riyanto et al., 2019; Serafini, 2010).

The bag as one of the cultural products is a tool used for daily needs in several tribes in Indonesia (Hardiyati, 2017; Baharuddin et al., 2024). The definition of a bag in the great Indonesian dictionary is; "square packaging or containers and so on, usually stringed, used to place, store, or carry something" from one place to another (Ula et al., 2023). Referring to the wikipedia dictionary, "a bag is a closed container that can be carried around, Materials for making bags include paper, plastic, leather, fabric, and others. Usually to bring clothes, books and others.". In wikipedia it is also stated that the naming of bags can be based on the user, for example women's bags, men's bags and children's bags. In addition, the naming of bags can be based on shape and size, such as; sling bags, backpacks, party bags, laptop bags, suitcases and etc. The naming of bags can also be based on material, for example; paper bags, plastic bags, knitted bags, recycled bags and so on. In this case, the author tries to conclude from some of these definitions that what is meant by the definition of a bag is; A place in the form of triangles, boxes, rectangles made of paper, plastic, synthetic and other materials, serves to carry things from one place to another by carrying, carrying and can be used by both men and women.

The use of bags can be said to be from prehistoric times, at that time bags were made using animal skin and wood as the material of the bag. Wood and leather materials were used because at that time no other materials were found that could be used to make a bag (Andreana &

Zulaikha, 2019; Assem et al., 2018). Bags made of paper material have also been used by the Chinese during the Tang dynasty, they used paper as a bag to store delicate objects such as tea or other light objects.

The Egyptians, as a nation that is very rich in cultural and civilization products, have been using bags since the 14th century BC. The shape of the bag that was widely used at that time was like a waist bag tied at the waist. The bag is used daily and is a symbol of their social status. Apart from the embroidery and jewelry placed on a bag, the more complicated and difficult the bag is made, the higher the social status of the wearer.



Figure 1. Prehistoric bag made of animal skin

Source: <https://www.google.com/imgres?imgurl=https%3A%2F%2Fasher-online.com>)

Regions in Indonesia also know the culture of tools to carry equipment, goods and field products which are now called bags (Djolo & Pramono, 2020). Traditional bags are widely created in several regions in Indonesia and have their own distinctive forms from Aceh to Papua, including; Jangkat bags from Aceh, Koja bags, Kepek bags, Jarok bags, Gandong bags from the Bedouin tribe, Banten, Sepu bags from Toraja, Anjat bags from East Kalimantan, Saloi bags from North Halmahera, Lopa-lopa bags from Seram island, Noken bags from Papua.



Figure 2. Some examples of traditional bags from various regions in Indonesia

Source: Muchlis, April 29, 2024)

At this time, especially the development of fashion and fashion accessories and accessories is growing rapidly, the development of fashion accessories products, especially bags, has been very widespread. The bags used in the development of fashion today are often adapted to the main fashion (Lynch & Strauss, 2007). The adjustment of the use of the bag is adjusted to the motif, lines, shape of the bag with the fashion so as to get the appropriate appearance that is also adjusted to the developing trend. This study tries to analyze the use of tradition-based bags used with the main fashion that is developing today.

## Methods

This research uses a qualitative method, by conducting data collection techniques by means of observation, questionnaires, interviews and conducting a documentation process. Qualitative research is a type of research in which the data found and processed does not use statistical steps, but focuses on understanding and interpreting events, 1991, or various subjects under certain conditions from the researcher's point of view (Mishler, 2022). In this study, the case study taken was carried out through a collective approach technique, where the samples taken were made from the assumptions and hypotheses in the previous statement. The data collected is used, processed and studied as material to make conclusions from this study.

## Results and Discussion

### Description of the semantics (meaning) of products and their relationships

Semantics can be said to be a term that refers to the study of meaning (*meaning*) in the technical area. Semantics can be said to be a new term in the English language. At first this term can be seen in the A.W. Read book entitled, *An Account of The World Semantics* published in the magazine *World*, No. 4, Year 1948, pages 78-97. Although there are already semantic terms, for example in word groups *semantic philosophy* in the 17th century, new semantic terms emerged and were introduced through the American philological organization (*American Philological Association*) in 1894 entitled *Reflected Meanings a Point in Semantics* (Pateda, 1990; Nerlich, 1992).

Semantics is one of the aspects of semiotics that studies the relationships between signs and objects they refer to or the meaning of signs before they are used in certain speech (Wikšana, 2017; O'Halloran, 2023). Semantics *Morris* This is more focused on a study of what *Saussure* referred to as associations or paradigms. According to *Ricoeur*, semantics examines propositions along with their referential meanings (Van Tonder, 2010). In this case, semantics are distinguished from semiotics according to *Ricoeur* only dealing with paradigmatic relationships. As a technical term, semantics contains the meaning of "the study of meaning". With the assumption that meaning is part of language, then semantics is part of linguistics (Cruse, 2002).

The chart explains the process of a perception or meaning of a product. This chart also explains some science that is directly related to the process of human perception of a product. *Aristotle* sorting out the four differentiating bases in understanding something. A product can be described through its materials, structure, benefits and purpose. Meanwhile, according to *Max Bense* (Vihma, 1995) A product can be divided into four dimensions: a) Dimensi Material (*hyletics*); b) Engineering and construction dimensions (*syntax*); c) Shape dimensions (*semantics*); d) Usage dimension (*pragmatics*).

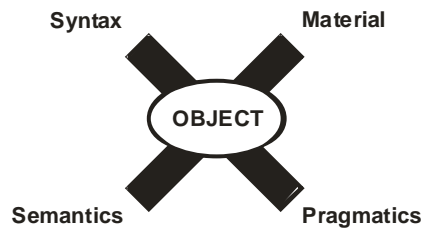


Figure 3. Four-dimensional chart of the product design (modified from Bense 1971)

Source: Susann Vihma, *Product as Representations*, University of Art and Design Helsinki UIAH, 1995

The dimensions of use are intended as a result of the other three dimensions. The line that breaks between materials and engineering dimensions only indicates that a product can not only speak from the material aspect alone, but before something must be constructed and made of a material. The dimensions of the use of a product are analyzed from this main point, such as from the ergonomic side or the sociological side (who uses the product, what kind of situation the product is used in).

As previously explained, a product can be interpreted from various points of view. According to *Susan Vihma* (1995), the main point of view in interpreting a product is from the aspect of its form first. The shape of a product has two meanings, namely from the size of its syntax as a construction technique and the composition of its visual form. In the semantic dimension, "form" is a meaning that is present to be interpreted and designated as "something".

### **Bag products and their position as a fashion complement**

Bag products in the context of fashion have a position as a complement to fashion (Riyanto, Arifah A. Dra, M.Pd, 2003), as a complement to fashion, bag products function to complement (millennial) and increase one's compatibility in dressing. Fashion complementary products are basically not only bags, there are other products such as footwear (shoes, sandals), hats, umbrellas, scarves, shawls, belts and others. In addition, there are also complementary fashion products that add or beautify (*accessories*) the main fashion such as rings, necklaces, bracelets, watches, brooches.

Bag products that function as a complement to clothing, of course, play an important role when someone uses the main clothing. Bag products make one's appearance good and perfect. Because the function of the bag as a complement to clothing, the selection and use of bag products will adjust to the selection of the main clothing. These conformity factors cannot be separated from aesthetic factors, including; factors in the selection of colors, textures, and fashion models that are adjusted to the situation when the clothes are used.

The use of good fashion today can be said to have become a necessity. Functionally (psychologically and psychologically) good clothing can provide a sense of security and comfort, provide protection against the heat of the sun, wind and rain. In other functions, the use of clothing can reflect profession, social status, economic status and so on. The suitability of the use of fashion (main clothing - fashion complementary) is determined by several factors, including; the use of materials, motifs, colors and models that are adapted to the situation and conditions when the clothes are used (Riyanto, Arifah A. Dra, M.Pd, 2003),

Traditional bags in Indonesia were initially made based on a need. Traditional bags in Indonesia are usually used as a tool to carry small items, food, clothing, and produce such as cassava, sweet potatoes, firewood and so on. Traditional bags in Indonesia are usually made from natural materials around the tribal residences where the bags are produced such as bark, rattan, bamboo and others.

Traditional bag shapes usually have a geometric basic shape, a box or a rectangle. This can be understood because in the process of creating traditional bags, it is usually based on the needs of the tribe/region where the bag was created and adjusts to the items they will carry and place on the bag. The colors of traditional bags usually adjust to the color of the natural material the bag is made of. Brown, maroon, and yellowish brown colors are obtained from materials such as bark, bamboo and other natural materials. The color natural brown has the psychological meaning of sturdy, strong, stability, calm and confidence. The derivative of the color brown is also often associated with the earth element which has the meaning of being a natural resource and providing and being a source of nutrients for creatures on earth (Daud, 2021).



Figure 4. Some examples of traditional bags in several regions in Indonesia with a brown base color, cream which comes from the bag's natural materials

Source: Muchlis, 29 October 2019

### Combination of traditional bag colors with other colors

Traditional bag colors derived from natural material colors can be combined with almost any fashion color. This is also outlined in the concept of color combinations below;

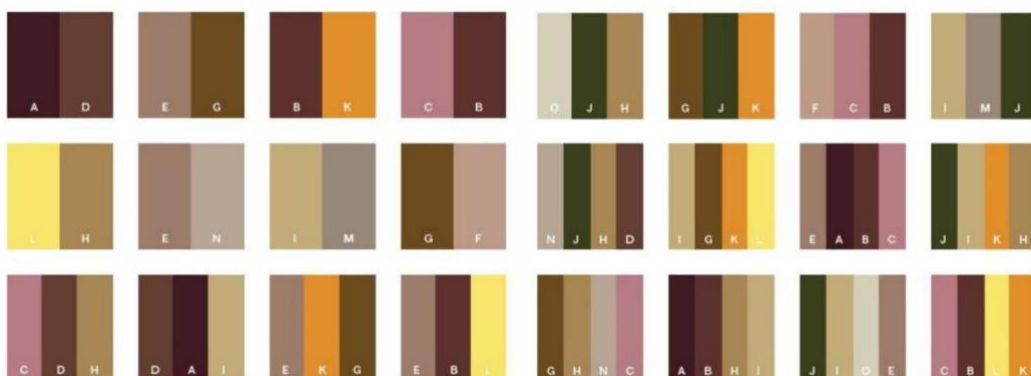


Figure 5. Combination of brown with other colors

Source: Browntone color combination

The application of these color combinations is then applied (simulated) to the visual use of the main fashion and bags as a complement to the fashion.



Figure 6. Simulation of the application of a combination of fashion colors (tends to be bright) with a bag (brown, a simulation of a traditional bag)

Source: Pinterest

In the simulation of the application of the main fashion above (clothing with bright colors) it can be perceived that bags with colors, shapes such as traditional bags in Indonesia can adjust to the use of colors, styles that are developing today, both casual, semi-formal, *and daily wear*. This can be observed from each *style* that is quite different but has the same styling (*casual*). In this simulation, age-related perceptions can be interpreted as age that tends to be late adolescence or early adulthood. The perception of activities in the simulation of the application of the main and complementary clothes above tends to travel to school, campus or other semi-formal activities.



Figure 7. Simulation of the application of a combination of fashion colors (tends to be dark) with a bag (brown, simulation of a traditional bag)

Source: Pinterest

In the simulation of the application of the main fashion above (clothing with colors that tend to be dark), it can be perceived that bags with colors, shapes like traditional bags in Indonesia can still adjust to the use of colors, models, styles that are quite different from casual fashion in the previous simulation. In this simulation, age-related perceptions are interpreted as ages that tend to be early adulthood and late adulthood. The perception of activities in the main and complementary clothes above tends to go to the office, semi-formal jobs.

## Conclusion

From several simulations of the use of the main fashion (main clothes with bright colors and main clothes with dark colors) then combined with bags (traditional bags) as a complement to the fashion, several results were found such as; Traditional bags produced by several regions

in Indonesia can be adapted to the fashion that is developing today, besides that the traditional bags can be used in various activities, which are adapted to the situation and conditions. From this research, there are several notes that are an input for traditional bag artisans in Indonesia where a form of promotion is needed that is introducing and becoming an economic turnaround channel so that artisans in the region can continue to live to produce these traditional bags and maintain the sustainability of the cultural values.

### Acknowledgment

This research can be said to be a combination of the thesis that I completed in 2006 and my dissertation in 2023 yesterday. The combination of ideas between bag products as a complement to fashion (thesis) and tradition-based bags (dissertation) I think needs to be written and poured into a research article immediately in addition to the obligation as a teacher to conduct a research. Therefore, the author will certainly present this paper to the supervisor during the thesis and the promoter when the dissertation is made into a work and an exhibition process has been carried out to account for the results of his research. Not forgetting the form of material support in the form of a scholarship to Telkom University where I serve which has given me the opportunity to complete my S3 level.

### References

- Andreana, C. R., & Zulaikha, E. (2019, December). Analisis Perlakuan Terhadap Material Kayu Dalam Alternatif Pembuatan Tas Wanita. In *Prosiding Seminar Nasional Industri Kerajinan dan Batik* (Vol. 1, No. 1, pp. B8-B8). <https://proceeding.batik.go.id/index.php/SNBK/article/view/20/17>
- Assem, K., Peday, M. H., & Rumatora, A. (2018). Pemanfaatan dan bentuk pengolahan kulit kayu berbasis pengetahuan lokal dan identitas budaya masyarakat Maybrat. *Jurnal Kehutanan Papuaasia*, 4(1), 34-44. <https://doi.org/10.46703/jurnalpapausia.Vol4.Iss1.88>
- Baharuddin, M. R., Hidayat, W., Seriyanti, S., & Anshori, F. (2024, February). Development of Innovative Bank Fabric Products as a Cultural Heritage Based on Local Wisdom. In *International Conference on Cultural Studies (ICCUS 2023)* (pp. 181-190). Atlantis Press. [https://doi.org/10.2991/978-2-38476-212-5\\_18](https://doi.org/10.2991/978-2-38476-212-5_18)
- Cruse, D. A. (2002). Language, meaning and sense: semantics. In *An encyclopedia of language* (pp. 87-104). Routledge.
- Daud, M. (2021). *Ternak Domestikasi*. Syiah Kuala University Press.
- Djolo, C. C., & Pramono, M. (2020). Analisis Peralatan Permainan Rakyat Dan Olahraga Tradisional (Studi Kasus Di Museum Negeri Mpu Tantular). *Jurnal Kesehatan Olahraga*, 8(03), 9-24.
- Hardiyati, N. S. (2017). Tas Kojas Khas Suku Baduy Lebak Banten. *Pend. Seni Kerajinan-SI (e-Craft)*, 6(1), 95-104.
- Lynch, A., & Strauss, M. (2007). *Changing fashion: a critical introduction to trend analysis and cultural meaning*. Berg.
- Mishler, E. G. (1991). *Research interviewing: Context and narrative*. Harvard university press.
- Nerlich, B. (1992). *Semantic Theories in Europe, 1830 1930: From etymology to contextuality* (Vol. 59). John Benjamins Publishing.
- O'Halloran, K. L. (2023). Matter, meaning and semiotics. *Visual Communication*, 22(1), 174-201.

- Pateda, M. (1990). Psycholinguistic Aspects. *Nusa Indah*.
- Putri, S. H., Putra, E. S., & Ismail, D. (2023). The design of a bag to carry baby equipment aged 0-1 years is made of polycherry fruit yarn with knitting techniques. *National Product Design Journal*, *01*(01), 50–61.
- Riyanto, D. Y., Budiarjo, H., & Mahmud, F. F. (2019). Pengembangan Desain Produk Tas Kuliah Yang Efisien Bagi Mahasiswa Desain Di Stikom Surabaya. *CandraRupa: Journal of Art, Design, and Media*, *1*(1), 7-14. <https://doi.org/10.37802/candrarupa.v1i1.37>
- Serafini, F. (2010). Reading multimodal texts: Perceptual, structural and ideological perspectives. *Children's Literature in Education*, *41*(2), 85-104. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10583-010-9100-5>
- Sujana, I. M., Pendet, I. K. M., & Laba, I. N. (2021). I Inovasi Tas Wanita dengan Media Keramik. *Hastagina: Jurnal Kriya Dan Industri Kreatif*, *1*(02), 131-138. <https://doi.org/10.59997/hastagina.v1i02.858>
- Ula, S. N. N., Nurhidaya, N., Purwanti, N., & Sedik, Y. G. (2023). Minat Masyarakat dalam Proses Pembuatan Noken Sebagai Nilai Budaya Pada Suku Miyah Kabupaten Tambrauw. *Jurnal Noken: Ilmu-Ilmu Sosial*, *9*(1), 151-160. <https://doi.org/10.33506/jn.v8i2.2444>
- Van Tonder, H. (2010). *Engaging Paul Ricoeur's work on memory, history, and forgetting: in search of an adequate methodology for church and theological historiography* (Doctoral dissertation, Stellenbosch: Stellenbosch University).
- Vihma, T. (1995). Subgrid parameterization of surface heat and momentum fluxes over polar oceans. *Journal of Geophysical Research: Oceans*, *100*(C11), 22625-22646. <https://doi.org/10.1029/95JC02498>
- Wiksana, W. A. (2017). Studi Deskriptif Kualitatif tentang Hambatan Komunikasi Fotografer dan Model dalam Proses Pemotretan. *Mediator: Jurnal Komunikasi*, *10*(1), 121-131. <https://doi.org/10.29313/mediator.v10i1.2661>