

CHAPTER IV

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

In this chapter, the researcher attempts to answer the questions about the descriptions of *Gambang Semarang* dance costume elements and the fabric, color, and pattern of *Gambang Semarang* costume. Then the researcher analyzed the data obtained from several interviews. The researcher interviews three informants mentioned in the next sub chapter. The results of the interview were transcribed to make them easier to analyze.

In collecting the data, the most difficult challenge faced by the researcher was to find reliable informants who know *Gambang Semarang* dance costume(s). The first person approached by the researcher was the coordinator of GSAC (*Gambang Semarang Art Company*). This person was willing to be interviewed but could not provide sufficient information about *Gambang Semarang* costume. The reason was that he deals more with the managerial matter of the dance group. Later, from the GSAC coordinator, the researcher was able to get names of potential informants. The researcher faced another problem when she was interviewing one of the suggested informants, an informant who wrote a research report on *Gambang Semarang* dance. After several times of trying to get time for an interview, the informant finally agreed to be interviewed. However, during the interview, the researcher felt that the informant was not cooperative enough to share information. When asked about the costume of *Gambang Semarang* dance, he often

mentioned that he forgot. He, then, asked the researcher to refer to the books he wrote. Although the interview was not able to supply new information, it provided information about another potential informant who was said to be the student of Nyah Sam, a late famous dancer of *Gambang Semarang*. As there was no given address, the researcher relied on the rough direction mentioned by the informant to find Nyah Sam's student house. Unfortunately, when the researcher went to find the house, no one around the neighbourhood knew. People who live in the mentioned area did not even recognize the name. It was found out later that the dancer had already moved somewhere else, and that no one knew her new address.

Besides those failed efforts, the researcher was able to secure interviews with three informants. The first informant was suggested by the manager of GSAC (*Gambang Semarang Art Company*). She is a *Gambang Semarang* dancer. Although she is still young, but she has involved in GSAC for quite a time and has become a senior dancer of *Gambang Semarang*. The second informant was the owner of a famous dance group in Semarang and a dance choreographer, who also happened to choreograph one style of *Gambang Semarang* dances. This informant was very well-educated of *Gambang Semarang*. Although this informant is a very busy person, but he agreed to be interviewed by the researcher. Later, the researcher found out that the informant agreed to give interview because the informant considered the university where the researcher is studying in is a trusted university. The third informant was a male dance teacher who teaches *Gambang Semarang* dance in *Sobokarti*. Initially, the researcher approached a female dance teacher

suggested by people who did activities in *Sobokarti*. This female dance teacher later agreed to have interview with the researcher on appointed time. On the day of the interview, this female dancer refused to give interview but pointed her sister instead. When the researcher approached the sister, she told the researcher to interview her brother whom she said to know better of *Gambang Semarang* dance. At the end, the researcher managed to interview the male *Gambang Semarang* dance teacher and got information on *Gambang Semarang* dance costume.

Based on the information received from the informants and supported by data provided by the research report of Puguh et al (2000), the researcher was able to collect information to answer questions in her problem formulations.

4.1. Description of the elements of Gambang Semarang Dance Costume

In this chapter the researcher describes *Gambang Semarang* dance costume based on the interview with the informants. In order to ease the readers in reading, the researcher changes the informants' name into code name. The informant names are *In.A.* GSAC'S dancer; *In.B.* dance choreographer and owner of *Sanggar Greget*; and *In.C.* a male dance teacher at *Sobokarti*. Besides interviewing the informants, the researcher also took pictures of *Gambang Semarang* costume displayed by *In.A.*, the *GSAC* dancer. The decision to ask *In.A.* to display the costume in pre-arranged occasions is to get a better quality picture and to show the detail of the costume better. The researcher learnt from her own experience that taking *Gambang Semarang* costume's pictures in a real setting, when the dance was being performed for public, failed to produce good and clear pictures. The reason is that the location

of the performance was in an open space surrounded by audience, a typical setting for traditional dance. Consequently, the audience often block the view of the researcher (see appendix for the video of *Gambang Semarang* dance performance attended by the researcher on 15 May 2016). Another obvious fact which can be put forward as a reason for the poor quality picture is that the researcher is not a professional photographer. In short, the researcher uses both the result of the interviews and the photos to explain *Gambang Semarang* dance costume. In explaining the costume, the researcher started from top to toe. Below is a picture of the full costume of *Gambang Semarang* dance.



Figure 4.1 Full Costumes (Taken by Rona, 2016)

The pictures of the detailed elements of *Gambang Semarang* dance costume can be seen below. The first part of the costumes is the upper part of *Gambang Semarang* dance costume which consists of pectoral girdle, *kebaya*, *sampur*, and the belt for the decoration.



Figure 4.2 pectoral girdle
(Taken by Rona, 2016)



Figure 4.3 kebaya
(Taken by Rona, 2016)

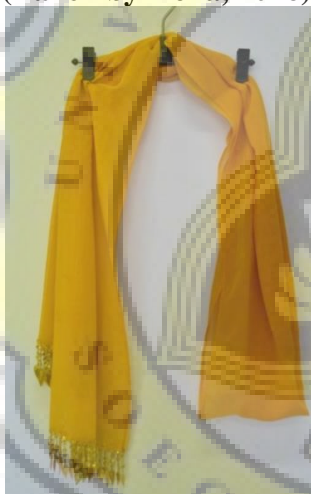


Figure 4.4 sampur (long scarf)
(Taken by Rona, 2016)



Figure 4.5 Belt
(Taken by Rona, 2016)

The second part of the costume is lower part costume, a long skirt with a special batik Chinese pattern.



Figure 4.6 jarik (long skirt) (Taken by Rona, 2016)

In the paragraphs below, more detailed descriptions of each element based on the result of the interview with the informants are discussed.

4.1.1. Upper part costume

Puguh et al (2000) state in his research report that the upper part of *Gambang Semarang* dance costume is *kebaya encim* or *kebaya Semarang*, an embroidered *kebaya* made of high quality fabric commonly worn by Chinese descendent (*peranakan*), which color tends to be bright. However, in the interview with the informants, the researcher got different findings. In the researcher's interview with *In.A*, GSAC dancer which dancing company uses Puguh et al's model of *Gambang Semarang* costume. *In.A* said that the upper part costume of *Gambang Semarang* dance is Javanese *kebaya* commonly worn by Javanese women. *In.A* said,

“Kesenian Gambang Semarang itukan perpaduan antara berbagai budaya.

Nah yang paling kuat disini adalah budaya Jawa dan Cina gitu. Jadi

perpaduan antara dua itu dalam penampakan kostumnya ya jadilah emm dengan bentuk kebaya jadi memang kebaya kan. Umumnya orang Jawa yang wanita-wanita Jawa pakai”(In.A., interview on 12 January, 2017)

[*Gambang Semarang* is a mix of many cultures, and the most prominent cultures are Javanese culture and Chinese culture, that is, so the mix of these two cultures can be seen in the design of its *kebaya*, true, in the design of *kebaya*, commonly worn by Javanese especially Javanese woman.]

In.A’s opinion is supported by the design of *kebaya* she wore during *Gambang Semarang* performance as shown in figure 4.7 and figure 4.8.

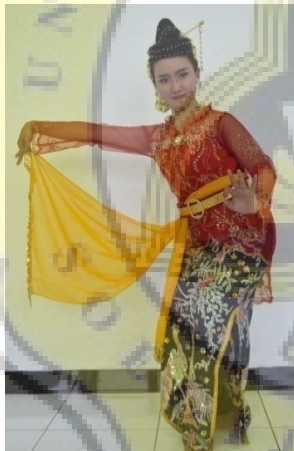


Figure 4.7 (Taken by Rona, 2016)



Figure 4.8 (Taken by Rona, 2016)

In the researcher’s personal opinion, the *kebaya* that the dancer wore is obviously not *kebaya Jawa* because it follows the design of *kebaya encim*. It does not have *kutubaru*, a square cloth which is put to connect the right and left hems of a *kebaya*. However, it cannot be categorized as *kebaya encim* as well because the fabric is tulle, not cotton, it also does not have embroidery but have sequins.

Therefore, the appearance of *kebaya* worn by the dancer looks like the modification of *kebaya encim*. For performance sake, costume might better have brighter colors, so additional sequins are given in order to make it look luxurious. The flexibility of the costume is also informed by *In.B* the *Gambang Semarang* choreographer. He claimed that *Gambang Semarang*'s upper cloth worn by dancers of *Sanggar Greget Semarang* is still *kebaya encim* or *kebaya trumpet* which various colors.

“Modelnya masih encim semua. Ada juga yang Cina yang masih njebret gitu kayak lonceng. Itu istilahnya kan trompet kalo bahasa kebaya. Kalo kostum mbak, saya berbagai warna ndakpapa. Tidak ada spesifikasi hanya bentuknya yang memang harus spesifikasi”(*In.B* interview on 8 April, 2017)

[“The model is still (*kebaya*) *encim*. There is also the Chinese model which is like a trumpet. On the costume, it is fine to use various colours; there is no specification. (It is) only the shape (which) should be specific”]

Below is the picture of *Gambang Semarang* dance costume worn by *Sanggar Greget*'s *Gambang Semarang* dancers. The picture shows that the *kebaya* worn by the dancers are *kebaya encim* with sequin as accessories.



Figure 4.9 (Taken by Sanggar Greget Semarang, 2015)

Almost similarly, *In.C* explained that *Gambang Semarang* dance costume is a modified *kebaya encim* with certain patterns.

“Awalnya busana encim. Yang encim itu begini: jadi dulu dipakai oleh orang Cina, jadi baju kebaya tapi yg dimodifikasi oleh orang-orang Cina. Yang biasanya encim itu kebaya yang tanpa kutu baru. Yang disini, encim disini ada nuansa bunga-bunga.” (In.C interview on 21 May, 2017)

[“Initially it is (*kebaya*) *encim*. (*Kebaya*) *encim* is used to be worn by the Chinese, so it is a *kebaya* but it has been modified by Chinese people. Usually (*kebaya*) *encim* is a *kebaya* without *kutu baru*. Here the (*kebaya*) *encim* has shades of flowers.”]

Besides *kebaya*, other dance costume which is explained quite thoroughly by the informants is *sampur* (long scarf). *Sampur* is one of the costume elements in a dance performance. According to Astuti (2015), *sampur* is a scarf whose size is not too wide but long enough to be used as a complement in dancing (p. 46). Moreover, Gardner mentions in her study that *sampur* is a familiar costume element in

Javanese court dance. She further defines *sampur* as a long piece of patterned cloth which function through the ways it is used by the dancer. According to Gardner, *sampur* is a dance element resonant with numerous dimensions of cultural values (Gardner, 2015). *In.B*, as he referred to figure 4.9 said, that the application of *sampur* in the costume should not follow certain ways of wearing. The position of the *sampur* is not in the middle of the skirt which makes the costumes different from the costumes of Yogyakarta and Solo. Thus *In.B* explained that as long as the position of the *sampur* not in the center position it does not matter.

“Karena kita menari ya pakai sampur. Masing masing sanggar kreatifitasnya seperti apa kebutuhannya seperti apa. Kan kalo sampur itu disini (agak ke pinggir) karena pertimbangan nya bahwa ini pesisir. Betawi sama juga pesisiran tapi ketika kami pakai disini(di tengah) kan pertimbangannya apa gak bisa. Karena ini sudah menjadi ikonnya Solo dan Jogja kita disamping karena gerakan nya beda dari jogja solo yang gerakannya didepan. Makanya meletak kannya disamping argumentasinya kita begitu maka penempatannya disamping.”

[“Because when we are dancing (the way) we wear *sampur*. Based on the creativity and needs of each dance group. In here (a little to the side) the consideration for the (position of the) *sampur* is (because we are in) coastal area. Betawi is also the coastal area. But when we are positioning it in here (in the middle) our concern is, that it has already become the icon of Solo and Jogja. We are (positioning it) in the side because the movement (of the

dance) is different from Jogja-Solo. In Jogja-Solo, the (dance) movements (focus) more on the front. Basically, we position the *sampur* at the side because of that argumentation (of the movement).”]

The positioning of *sampur* is also approved by other informants. *In.C* stated that *sampur* is not supposed to be applied in the middle.

“*Sampur* kalo untuk putri kiri kanan biasanya. Kalo tari Jawa kan rada di tengah. Dan Semarang itu dipengaruhi oleh budaya Betawi karena Gambang Semarang itu kan dulu boyongan dari Betawi itu jadi sedikit-sedikit nuansanya agak ikut-ikutan betawi”

[“*Sampur* for female is usually position in the right or left side. While for the Javanese dance, it is usually positioned in middle. And Semarang is influenced by Betawi culture. Because *Gambang Semarang* came from Betawi so more or less, the nuance is following Betawi’s”]

In.A also stated that the position of the *sampur* for the *GSAC* dancers is in the right side. She showed the researcher how to position it.

“Kalo untuk *selendang* itu sebenarnya ga ada yang cara yang paten. Cuma mungkin bentuknya memang jadinya ke samping kanan gitu. Jadi tapi untuk simpulnya boleh seperti apapun. Mungkin nanti hasilnya jadi nya ada untaian *sampur* di sebelah kanan kalo *sampur* gitu”

[“For the *selendang*(*sampur*) actually there is no patent way to wear it. But the shape has patent. So it is more on the right. The knot can be any knot as long as the *sampur* falls on the right side.]



Figure 4.10 (Taken by Rona, 2016)



Figure 4.11 (Taken by Rona, 2016)

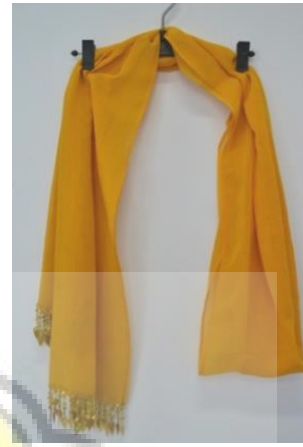


Figure 4.12 (Taken by Rona, 2016)

Another element of upper part costume is the belt. However, the researcher could not gather information related to the belt as well as the pectoral girdle. Puguh et al (2000) write that the belt is used to be wrapped *kebaya* and *jarik* or a long skirt to make the dancer be able to move smoothly.

4.1.2. Lower part costume

According to Harymawan (1988) costume is meant to wrap the body in order to make it beautiful. When people wear costume in a performance, they will cover up the body from the top to toe. In *Gambang Semarang* dance costume, each informant explained that the lower part is *jarik*, a traditional long skirt or a long skirt. The difference between *jarik* and a long skirt, according to the informants is that *jarik* is a whole length of cloth, which should be wrapped around the body every time a person wears it, while a long skirt is ready to wear. *Jarik* is used to cover the lower part body from the hip to ankle (Puguh, 2000, p. 114). Like a long

skirt *jarik* itself in ordinary situation is commonly worn to substitute skirt or pants as expressed by In.A

“Itu bisa aja pakai jarik, jadi kadang kalo aku pengen pas kadang juga bisa pakai misalnya untuk mengganti celana dengan gaya baru pake jarik yang penting serasi gitu.”

[“I can use *jarik*, sometimes if I want I can also substitute pants with a new style of *jarik*. The important thing is it matches each other”]

As shown on the picture taken by the researcher, the lower part costume worn by GSAC dancer (as can be seen on the figure 4.13 and figure 4.14) is a long batik skirt, with the Chinese model and pattern. The skirt has the cutting on the left and the right side in order to make the dancer move easily.



Figure 4.13 (Taken by Rona, 2016)



Figure 4.14 (Taken by Rona, 2016)

Jarik, the long skirt, worn by *Gambang Semarang* dancer, is usually *jarik batik* or *batik long skirt*. Steelyana (2012) in her study on Javanese *batik* mentions

many types of Javanese *batik*. They are Javanese court batik which is the oldest batik in Java. Then, *pesisir batik* is *batik* in the areas of northern coast of Java and Madura, *Pekalongan batik*, which is influenced by Dutch and Chinese patterns. *Cirebon batik* is famous for its *mega mendung* (rain cloud) and used within the former Cirebon *Kraton*. *Lasem batik* is profoundly influenced by Chinese culture. There is also *Tuban Batik* which created from handmade *tenun* (woven) fabric, and the last but not least *Madura batik* that uses vibrant colors (Steelyana, 2012, pp. 119-123). In the case of *Gambang Semarang* dance costume, the batik chosen is not limited to one pattern of *batik*.

These are the pictures of different lower part costumes (*jarik*).

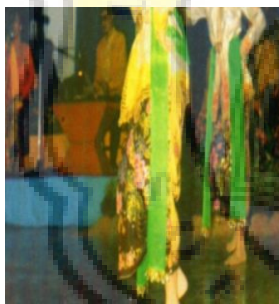


Figure 4.15 Batik.
(Taken by Puguh et al, 2000)



Figure 4.16 Songket.
(Taken by Puguh et al, 2000)



Figure 4.17 Batik
(Taken by Sanggar Greget, 2015)

Puguh et al (2000) provide information on different types of *Gambang Semarang* dance costumes. They explain that the lower part costume consists of pants and *songket*, a traditional woven fabric. The pants are elastic (*tayet*) used to support the leg movement. The pants are then covered by *songket* fabric wrapped with the bright *satin* in order to support the dancer's hip movement (pp. 117-118).

4.2. Costume Fabrics, Colors, and Patterns of Gambang Semarang dance costume

The discussion on fabrics, colours, and patterns of Gambang Semarang dance costume is initially not the writer's focus of study. However, during the interviews with the informants, the writer had much other information which has not been known by the researcher prior to the study. The information found is categorized by the writer into three different headings. They are costume fabrics, costume colors, and costume patterns.

4.2.1. Costume Fabrics

From the interviews, the researcher found that informants mentioned different fabrics used to make *Gambang Semarang* dance costume. They stated that the fabric used for the costume follows the change of time; it is not limited to one fabric. *In.B* said,

“Kalo bahannya endak sih ya standard kalo kain jarik itu kan bahan nya mori ya sudah kita bahan nya mori. Kalo kebaya itu kan organdi, kain kaca ya udah to ikutan kaca organdi gitu, Iya gak berani kalo brokrat terus, orang saya brokrat aja sekarang udah tak fayeti ok mbak.”

[“The fabric used is the standard one. For *jarik*, the standard fabric for it is cotton, so we use cotton. For *kebaya*, (when the trend is) organza, *kain kaca*, we also use organza fabric. We dare not stick to (old time) brocade; even (when I use) brocade, I put sequins on it.”]

The interview above shows the flexibility and dynamics of *Gambang Semarang* dance costume in terms of its fabric. The old time brocade is substituted

by organza fabric, or made more glamorous by putting it in the sequins. The reason for the changing, as it is revealed in the interview is to keep the costume up to date. One of the informants points out that they “do not dare to stick to ‘brocade’, an old-time fashion fabric,” and it might mean that there is a possibility that the modernization of costume, in this case to follow the trend, is for a commercial reason. If they stick to the old-time brocade, the dancers will look old-fashioned; thus, no one will hire the dancers as they fail to attract audience.

Another type of fabric was shown by *In.A*. During the interview, she brought her dance costume. It can be seen clearly that the fabric of her *kebaya* is neither brocade nor organza, but tulle. This *kebaya*s decorated with sequins. *In.A* cannot provide information why her *kebaya* is made from tulle although she admitted that she was aware that the old time *Gambang Semarang* dancers have worn brocade. In the writer’s opinion, the reason for using tulle as the fabric of *kebaya* worn by *Gambang Semarang* dancer is similar to *In.B*’s reason for using organza, that is, to update the costume with the newest fashion to attract audience.

Later on, the researcher found out that during the interview with *In.A*, the informant had hinted that brocade was not even the earliest kind of fabric used for *Gambang Semarang* dance costume.

“Kebaya itu kan semakin jaman semakin ada modifikasi gitu jadi mungkin dibagian kebayaanya saja kalo jaman dulu banyakkkan model kebaya dengan tertutup gitu. Kalo sekarang banyak kebaya-kebaya modern yang sudah pake brokat dan pola payetnya juga udah beda, Mungkin alasan estetika aja

mungkin ya gitu jadi ga ada ya alasan khusus gitu jadi untuk mendapatkan estetika dijamannya gitu mungkin.”

[“*Kebaya* has additional modifications in every era. In the past time many *kebaya*s full covered the body. In these days, many modern *kebaya*are using brocade and different sequin patterns. There is no specific reason perhaps because of aesthetic reasons in the certain era.”]

In.A’s statement that “In these days many modern *kebaya*are using brocade and different sequin patterns” implies the idea that “in the old days *kebaya* was of different fabric.” The researcher assumes that the older days fabric is cotton, the common fabric used for *kebaya encim*. The reason for this change, as also mentioned by other informants, is for the sake of aesthetic look.

Similar to *kebaya*’s fabric, *jarik* or the long skirt’s fabric is also not standardized. The fabric is commonly *mori*, the basic fabric for *batik* made of cotton as mentioned by *In.B*. However, it can also be *songket*, a woven cloth as found in the study of Puguh et al (2000). The reason for choosing those fabrics is very practical, as mentioned by *In.B*. Those fabrics are the commonly available fabrics, and therefore they can be easily purchased in the market.

4.2.2. The colour of the costume

Regarding to the color of the costume, the interview with *In.A* about the color of the dancer costume reported the fact that the colors used for the dancer costume are those of bright colors.

“Tapi kalo misal warna dari warna sendiri itu harus warna cerah atau warnanya juga dipengaruhi, ama kebudayaan iyaa lingkungan semarang atau yang kita kan karna kita pesisir mungkin warnanya harus cerah”(In.A., 12 January 2017)

[“For the color, it is supposed to be bright or the color is influenced by the culture and environment of Semarang or we are in coastal area so maybe the color has to be bright”]

The informant confirmed the costume should be in bright color because it correlates to the typically coastal *batik*. Even though *pesisiran batik* or coastal *batik* has no standard color but the bright colors dominate *pesisiran batik*. Ramadhan (2013) states that the overseas traders, who stopped at the coastal areas, gave a strong influence on the development of coastal *batik*, especially in terms of color. The bright colors, that dominate the beauty of coastal *batik*, are influenced by the culture brought by the traders, who originally came from China, Portugal and the Netherlands (Ramadhan, 2013). On the color of *batik*, Puguh et al (2000) similarly explain that *jarik* worn by *Gambang Semarang* dancers tend to have bright colors (p. 115). However, they also mention that in general there is no standardization of *batik* color which should be used by *Gambang Semarang* dancers. Adding various colors is the marking of modification as informed by In.C, “.... *kita ganti lagi atau setiap tahun ya kita nambah-nambah gitu minimal warnanya bermacam-macam kita punya* [... we change it or every year we will add new costume at least we have

various colors.”]. Therefore, it can be said that colorful costumes are the mark of *Gambang Semarang* costumes.

Beyond the researcher’s expectation, the interviews on the color of costume worn by *Gambang Semarang* dancer revealed a very interesting fact. While the informants, *In.B* and *In.C*, were questioned about the choice of colors that would be used for the dancer costume, they also mentioned that,

“Ga ada, gada penentuan apapun boleh, diatur sendiri lah pokoknya, Tergantung penguasa, biasa to angger sing jaman dulu kalo apa kepala daerahnya itu orang PDI ya banyak merahnya biasa itu” (In.C, 21 May 2017)

[“No, there is no standardization, anything is allowed, you can arrange it by yourself. The color of the costume depends on who is in power (politically). So, it was common, in the old days, if the head of the region is from PDI (*Partai Demokrasi Indonesia/Indonesia Democratic Party*), the costume will be dominated by red color.]

In.B also confirmed that the choice of the color depended on who was in power in the region at that time.

“Boleh merah gak ada masalah itu kan selera misal walikotanya PDI mas pakai yang merah, ya kita merah ya, dulu kuning ya kuning kalo saya begini ok yang punya kerja siapa PU biru saya pakai biru kalo PDI ya saya pakai merah gitu. Ndak ada warna khusus latar belakang nya terserah tidak ada warna khusus tergantung yang nanggap.”

[“It can be red. It doesn’t matter. (It) depends on the Mayor. For example, if the mayor is PDI so we use red. In the previous era, it was yellow (Golkar), some used yellow. For me personally, if the institution who hires us is for example PU (Construction department), blue, so I will use blue if it is PDI so I will use red. There is no special color; it depends on who hires us.”]

The fact that the color of the dancer costume is chosen for commercial and political reasons attracts the researcher. The interview revealed that the color of the costume is appropriated with the ‘demand’ of the person or institution who hires the dance group. It seems that by satisfying the demand of the person or institution who hires this group, the dance group expects to get another contract. On the relation between dance and politics, Gilman (2009) in her book titled *The Dance of Politics: Gender, Performance, and Democratization in Malawi* explains clearly that the dancers who perform in political campaign wear costumes with particular color that represent the political party. The costume usually ornamented with color and symbol of certain party to promote the political bodies. Gilman writes that *Malawi* politicians use dances to put forward the issues of local tradition and national identity in *Malawi’s* multi-cultural society in their political campaign. The researcher’s study on the color of *Gambang Semarang* dance costume seems to be in line with Gilman’s study. It is clear that the dance group consciously serves the political campaign of political parties for commercial reason, whereas the political parties use the dance group to serve its political advantage.

4.2.3. The patterns and their meaning in the costume

The interviews provided interesting points on patterns especially those found in *kebaya* or *jarik* or the long skirt. The informants related the patterns to the symbol of Semarang. The information about the straight-line pattern found in *jarik* or the long skirt and its meaning was provided by *In.B*. He said that the straight lines represent *manggar* (flowers of a kind of palm tree commonly found in the coastal area of Java). *Manggar* is taken because it is a typical flower of Semarang, north coastal area of Java. He explained that the *manggar* flowers are drawn as lines because in Islam religion it is forbidden to draw a living creature in realistic way. It should be represented in the form of symbol.

The straightness of *manggar* flowers, he said, symbolizes the honesty and innocence of coastal area people. *In.B* also informed the researcher that the straightness of *manggar* flowers represents the next generation who should live in a complete obedience to God, or “being straight to God”. It is expected that the obedience will result in creating a person with good character; a character like a coconut who can help people with its liquid.

In.B said that the symbol or the icon of Semarang is *daun manggar*. He explained that *daun manggar* represents the honesty and the innocence of Semarang people, a coastal society. The costume can be seen in figure 4.9.

“Manggar iya garis garis, fayet. itu kan manggar kejujuran, keluguan rakyat kota Semarang itu sebenarnya pesisir kok, semua budaya pesisir pakai manggar, jadi kalo gambang semarang tidak bisa lepas dari manggar,

karena itu memang ciri khas ikon atau memang apa ya karena penyebarannya kan muslim, gambang semarang itu kan muslim jadi selalu dengan simbolis simbolis ohhh bunga manggar itu artinya kita punya generasi penerus, bukan telur tadi manggar punya generasi penerus tadi terus lurus, lurus kepada tuhan masing masing terus selalu berkembang dengan hal yang baik kan manggar gitu dan dia akan menjadikan sebuah kelapa yang isi punya air punya ini kan gitu nggih filosofinya kan gitu”

[“*Manggar*, the stripes. The sequin represents *manggar*. (*Manggar* symbolizes) honesty, innocent people of Semarang. This actually (represents) coastal area. All coastal culture uses *manggar*, so *Gambang Semarang* cannot be separated from *manggar*. Because it is the characteristic or the icon. (Historically) the spread of (the popularity of *manggar*) has something to do with Islam. *Gambang Semarangis* related to Muslim (culture), so it uses symbols. *Manggar* flowers, not the egg, symbolizes the next generation *manggar* represents the next generation who is straight, straight to their God and (the generation) always grows with good things. *Manggar* will produce a good coconut that contains water, so the philosophy is like that”]

Another pattern which attracts the researcher is the pattern of the batik long skirt worn by GSAC dancer. The pattern of the batik portrays four peacocks or phoenixes as mentioned by *In.A.*



Figure 4.18 front design (Taken by Rona, 2016)



Figure 4.19 back design (Taken by Rona, 2016)

Unfortunately, *In.A* does not really understand the meaning or philosophy of the peacock pattern. *In.A* is not well informed about the meaning even though she is the person who wears the costume, “Kalo untuk makna lebih mendalam mm belum, mungkin ga sampai kesitu kali.” [“For the deeper meaning, maybe I have not got there yet”]. The researcher assumes if *In.A* knows the meaning behind the pattern, she will appreciate the costume more.

As the researcher was still curious about the meaning of the pattern, she tried to find information from supporting data. On the pattern of peacock or phoenix, the researcher found the information from Chi Han’s journal article (2014). Chi Han explains that China’s pattern is full of lucky patterns which are divided into lucky animal such as dragon, phoenix, *qi lin*, etc., a flowers and plants such as peony, pine tree, twisted branch stripe, etc, and geometric patterns (Han, 2014). Han (2014) explains that since ancient era, Chinese has considered phoenix as the symbol of good luck, peace and authority. Similar explanation is given by Malagina (2014) who says that these animals in Chinese mythology symbolize the majesty, seductive

glances of beautiful women, even related to sexual matters such as the position of making love (Malagina, 2014). The floral patterns which are applied in GSAC skirt in figure 4.16 and figure 4.17 are similar to the patterns of peony, plum blossom, chrysanthemum flowers, and bamboo leaf. The same floral patterns are found in China porcelain (Kang, 2013). In her study, Kang (2013) finds out that peony means wealth and honor; plum blossom means perseverance; longevity, and safety; chrysanthemum means perseverance and longevity; and bamboo leaf means perseverance, longevity, safety, integrity.

Puguh et al (2000) similarly mention about the meaning of the symbol applied in the lower part costume. They cited Ebergerd (Puguh, 2000, pp. 187-188) who states that the peacock symbolizes glory and magnificence as it also functions as a prevention of negative impact. Besides, he also mentions other patterns on the lower part costume such as bamboo leaf, bird and butterfly. On the aforementioned symbols they explain that those patterns symbolize God who is entirely glorious, full of magnificence and always right; a figure who creates peaceful life.

Furthermore, *In.C* stated that bright color flowers in the *kebaya* is inspired by three elements of multicultural society in Semarang, which are Arabic, Chinese and Javanese

“... jelas encim tadi ada bunga-bunga gitu ya tapi sekarang itu dianggap kurang, kurang ngejreng gitu sekarang pakai baju-baju tille yang kayak

baju putri domas. Semarang itu kan dipengaruhi oleh 3 unsur budaya itu ya. Ada budaya cina jawa dan arab”

[... (*kebaya encim*) clearly has flowers. But right now, it is considered not that bright so now it is using tulle like the cloth of *Putri Domas* (bridemaids). Semarang is influenced by three cultures. They are Chinese, Javanese and Arabic.”]

The result of the interview shows that the informants associated the colorful pattern with the mixture of culture in Semarang as a coastal area. It is related to three cultures: Arabic, Chinese, and Javanese. These three ethnic groups are supposedly the earlier settlers of Semarang. The Arabic and Chinese were the merchants who came to Semarang to trade but then decided to stay and settle in the area. The mix of cultures is discussed further in the next paragraphs.

Puguh et al (2000)state that *Gambang Semarang* dance costume is a cultural blend between Javanese and Chinese cultures. This statement is approved by all informants. One of the informants, *In.B*, stated that

“Ndak ndak seimbang ya jadi gini kita lebih banyak ke cina dan jawanya karena arabnya itu kita di musiknya di rebana nya, kemudian sabuknya kita pakai eropa, ini eropa timangnya juga eropa tokonya juga, jariknya semarangan atau pesisir semi cina, batiknya jelas cina gak ada jawa, itu coraknya kebaya arab campur cina terus fayetnya garis garis.”

[“No, it is not balanced. So, we are more into the Chinese and Javanese because the Arabic influence is on the music which is the tambourine, and

then the belt we use is European, the buckle is also originally European. The *jarik* is *Semarang* or semi-Chinese coastal batik. The *batik* is clearly Chinese not Javanese, the *kebaya's* pattern is a mix between Arabic and Chinese and the sequins are put in striped.”]

The informants informed that the process of the blending culture is not always balanced. *In.B* clarified that the Javanese culture gives more dominant influence on the costume, and then followed by Chinese culture. There are a few influences of European culture and Arabic culture in the costumes, for instance the European belt and Arabic lines. He added that the Arabic cultural influence can be seen more clearly in the music especially through the existence of tambourine.

In.B also said that once *Sanggar Greget* included two more cultures, Portuguese and Spanish to modify the collar of *kebaya* into a collar like Dracula costume. He said that the Dracula collar is inspired by the Portuguese and Spanish culture. The choice to use Portuguese and Spanish cultures as inspiration, as said by *In.B*, was not a random choice. It was based on the consideration that the two cultures, Portuguese and Spanish, have entered Indonesia since the colonial time.

“...ini ya drakula itu, saya pakai itu saya bikin baru itu, pertimbangannya portugis masuk disini, eropa masuk disini spanyol masuk disini jadi kita masukan jadi tidak sekedar asal comot ndak.”

[...the Dracula collar, I make the new one (the Dracula collar), the consideration is that the Portuguese, European, and Spanish had been here. So, their cultures were used as an inspiration. It is not random.”]

The unbalanced mix of culture among those cultures mentioned by *In.B* is also echoed by *In.C*. Similar to *In.B*, *In.C* mentioned that the Javanese culture has stronger influence on the costume. He also explained that the process of the cultural blend naturally happens without external factor.

“Semarang itu kan dipengaruhi oleh 3 unsur budaya itu ya. Ada budaya China, Jawa dan Arab, tapi gatau dalam perkembangannya karena banyak yang jauh meninggalkan itu. Jawa itu bisa jadi gelungnya terus jariknya mungkin kalo China nya itu dari sunduk nya itu dan baju encim itu sudah menunjukan China, China Jawa maksudnya.

[“Semarang is influenced by 3 elements of culture. There are Chinese, Javanese and Arabic cultures, but I do not know about its development because the costume left the standard The Javanese culture can be seen in the hair bun, then in the *jarik*. The Chinese or Java-China culture can be seen in its hair pin and the *kebaya encim*.”]

Another similar answer was given by *In.A*. The informant explains the mixture on the costume as follows,

“Kalo Jawa jelas kelihatan dari ini ya kebaya ee kemudian kalo Cina eemm aku ngerasanya mungkin ada di bagian bawahan gitu jadi batik, emang batik semarangan gitu kan agak berbeda ya sama batik batik pada umumnya ee tidak dengan pola lurik lurik, ya tidak seperti batik batik umum gitu ee itu polanya lebih seperti ee pola pola budaya kebudayaan cina gitu ee gambar burung, merak atau gambar tumbuhan flora floral gitu ee

kemudian modelnya juga lebih condong ke cina gitu kalo cina kan banyak sekali bawahan atau terusan yang dikanan kirinya ada belahan, jadi perpaduannya tu disitu. Ya yang seperti tadi yang saya bilang tadi rohnya penari gambang jadi lebih model seperti baju-baju wanita cina.”

[“The Javanese culture is clearly seen from the *kebaya* then the Chinese I think in the below part costume, the *batik*, *batik* Semarang is a bit different from other *batik* in general, the pattern *lurik*, unlike the common *batik* the pattern, the pattern is more into Chinese culture; bird, peacock or plants. Then the design is also more into Chinese culture as can be seen in the split on the left and the right part of the long skirt. So the mixture is there. As I said before the skirt of the *Gambang Semarang* dancer models the dress of Chinese women.”]

Different from *In.B* and *In.C* who said that the costume is dominated by Javanese culture, *In.A* stated that the cultural blending in the *Gambang Semarang* dance costume is balanced the Chinese and Javanese cultures. For her, the cultural blend on the *Gambang Semarang* costume is interesting because the basic of the costume is Javanese but then it is added by the Chinese pattern which matches it perfectly.

“Menurut saya sih seimbang. gitu jadi memang disini dasarnya jadi kayak ya mungkin ibarat rumus gitu ya jadi rumusnya gitu jadi kalo dasarnya itu eemm jawa tapi ada bagian menariknya juga ya itu ditonjolkan dari pola-

pola busana China gitu ya. Jadi kalo menurut saya malah jadi ee apa ya istilahnya ngeblend, jadi tidak terlihat aneh”

[“In my opinion I think it's balanced. So, the basic formula is Javanese (style) but there are also interesting parts which highlight Chinese patterns. So, in my opinion it is blended, it does not look weird”]

Therefore, based on the interview with the informants, most of the characteristics of the costume mentioned by them have no standardization except for the *kebaya*, place of *sampur* and pattern of batik while others are flexible as every dance company has their own right to wear the costume depending on the needs of performance. From the interviews, it can also be inferred that modification whether it is the fabric, color, or pattern in a costume, is necessary because it is related to the aesthetic of the certain era. Modification will certainly give impacts to the appearance of the dancer. It helps to highlight the presence of the dancers, and by doing so, the dancers become the center of attention. The cultural blend in the *Gambang Semarang* dance costume can also use to promote multicultural in Semarang city.