



Casual But Sunnah: Indonesian Zaafer and The Metamorphosis Of Robes As Fashion In Urban Muslim Communities In Indonesia

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Abstract

This article discusses the shift in the image of robes as Muslim clothing (sacred/religious) to casual clothing (profane/everyday). In the context of this article, the robes produced by Zaafer Indonesia represent a change in the orientation of Indonesian Muslim OOTD from initially tending to be conservative to becoming fashionable and stylish. In this research, clothing is considered as a complex sign system. On a piece of clothing there is a message that the wearer wants to convey. By using the Saussurean semiology paradigm, this article understands that in clothing there is a system of signifiers and signifieds. Clothing is a language (language of fashion) that is built from the langue and parole system. The research results show several semiotics in the robes of Zaafer Indonesia products. There is Saussure's synchronic linguistic concept which is related to several dichotomies, such as signifier, signified, parole, and langue.

Keywords : fashion, Saussure semiotics, Zaafer Indonesia.

Introduction

Fashion experiences various changes and developments in every generation. In this context, robes are a Muslim fashion. Initially, robes were used to cover the private

parts and as a symbol of Islam in Indonesia by adopting the Arab clothing style.¹ In recent years, the image of robes in Indonesia has undergone significant changes. Previously, men's robes were generally considered formal clothing or limited to religious events. However, nowadays, Muslim fashion has undergone a transformation and is in various designs, styles and daily use.² One of them, the robe model which previously had a conservative image, such as a jubah with a straight and simple cut, has now changed to become more fashionable and casual. One example is the product launched by Zaafer Indonesia, which changes conservative robes to become more casual and stylish. The shift in the image of men's robes in fashion in Indonesia indicates an increasing awareness of style and appearance. This reflects equality in Muslim fashion in Indonesia.

Clothing or fashion plays an important role as a sign system in society. An interesting example is the robe, which can serve as a sign of religion as well as a sign of the world of fashion. As a sign of religion, robes are worn by individuals who identify with a particular religion, such as in the Islamic religion. However, robes can also be part of everyday clothing or party wear in the world of fashion. Although still linked to religious traditions, fashion developments have expanded the use of robes in various cultural and social contexts.

In an effort to transform robes into more casual and fashionable in Zaafer Indonesia products, adjustments have been made to the cut of the robes to make them look more modern. For example, the length and fit of the robe can be shortened or adjusted to have a more casual style. Zaafer Indonesia uses materials with textures that

¹ Qurtuby, Sumanto. 2017. "Saudi Becomes Modern, Indonesia Becomes 'Primitive?'" DW (Made For Minds). Retrieved (<https://www.dw.com/id/saudi-jadi-modern-indonesia-jadi-primitif/a-37238581>).

² Muhammad Syaoki, "Spiritual Communication of Selakaran Among Sasak Muslim Community During The Covid-19 Pandemic," VI.2 (2022), 139–57.

are comfortable for use on various occasions and conditions, and chooses colors or motifs that combine traditional and modern elements. This can be seen on the official Zaafer Indonesia account which offers a variety of bright and attractive robe colors. Like the choice of types of robes, the Moze Robe, Symphony Robe, and Orgen Robe which have patterns and motifs but different shapes, and the long sleeves used give a more fashionable impression than robes in general, the Basic Exclusive which has a plain model is enhanced with 4 buttons arranged on the the chest and collar and long sleeves, the Maulana Robe which looks like the Basic Exclusive but doesn't have buttons, but a zipper and no collar but also has long sleeves, apart from that there is the Okan Robe which has almost the same motif or pattern as the Moze, but this type of robe has short sleeves, then the Sauqi Robe which looks plain has short sleeves, but has an outer button motif.³

As a research instrument, there are previous compositions by Hasyim⁴ which discuss fashion in a semiotic context. This research concluded that fashion as a social and cultural phenomenon and a marking practice, symbolically reflects that fashion functions as a bond in a larger community, namely society, and this results in a reshaping of meaning. For example, Jokowi's fashion is a symbol of simplicity and connectedness to the people which is reflected in people's minds. Apart from that, fashion developments also influence various aspects of life.⁵ As a result, diversity in fashion is designed to suit everyday needs.

³ see: <https://zaaferindonesia.id/categories/2313/jubah>

⁴ Hashim, Muhammad. 2016. "Fashion as Communication: Semiotic Analysis of Jokowi's Fashion in the 2014 Presidential Election." Pp. 6–8 in International Conference on Multidisciplinary Research. Makassar: IMCR 2016.

⁵ Trisnawati, Ni Nyoman Rahayu. 2015. "Development of Tunics from Time to Time." ISI Denpasar. Retrieved (<https://isi-dps.ac.id/perkembangan-tunik-dari-masa-ke-masa/>).

According to Torieq (2019) ⁶, one fashion trend that is increasingly popular is robes. Robes are Muslim clothing that can keep up with the times without losing their essence as Muslim clothing. Robe styles may vary in different countries. In the current era, especially in Indonesia, the meaning of wearing a robe has changed, and is often used not only in religious ceremonies, but also in any situation and event. Apart from that, Sadikin Gani also added that the development of fashion trends is also influenced by digital technology, which allows every brand to build brand awareness. ⁷Like the marketing carried out by Zaafer Indonesia products digitally, namely by promoting brands or products on digital media platforms. By using social media well, users can gain benefits from this media.

Like the content created by the TikTok account @zaaferindonesia. In several uploads on this account there are videos showing several activities of a group of men visiting luxury places. If other TikTok users just saw the video upload, it might look like it was just a group of men showing off their luxury. However, actually, if you watch and understand it carefully. The uploads on the TikTok account @zaaferindonesia actually don't look like they are selling, because they only show the lifestyle of traveling in luxurious places, what is more highlighted is that the robe worn by the Brand Ambassador looks cooler. The use of digital technology in the fashion industry is not only in marketing, but also in making predictions of future trends. Overall, robes are a type of Muslim clothing that is increasingly popular and can keep up with the times without having to give up its essence as Muslim clothing.

⁶ Abdillah, Muhammad Torieq. 2019. "Muslim Fashion: Between Trends and Sharia in the Midst of Modern Times." Uinantasari.Ac.Id. Retrieved (<https://www.uin-antasari.ac.id/busana-muslim-antar-trend-dan-syariat-di-tengah-zaman-modern/>).

⁷ Gani, Sadikin. 2016. "Fashion in the Digital Age." Satusatu.Id. Retrieved (<https://satusatu.id/fashion-di-era-digital/>).

Methods

Semiology or semiotics is a method used to study clothing phenomena with the aim of revealing the cultural meanings contained in the clothing. As explained by Roland Barthes, a French semiologist who developed Saussure's semiological theory. All the concepts developed in Saussure's synchronic linguistics are related to several dichotomies, such as *langue* and *parole*, syntagmatic and paradigmatic, and signifier and signified. *Langue* is a form of language that is a social phenomenon that exists independently of individuals. As a systematic collection of conventions, *langue* plays an important role in communication. *Parole* is the actual use of language as an action of individuals.⁸

In his book entitled *The Language of Fashion*, Barthes connects the concepts of language, *langue*, and *parole* with fashion. According to Barthes, fashion is similar to language in that it is a system (social rules), where fashion is also a sign system. *Langue* refers to social rules in language, as well as abstract concepts that exist in someone's mind as social products and conventions. Furthermore, *parole* refers to individual speech acts in language as a manifesting form of *langue* (social rules of language). Barthes then developed this concept into the world of fashion by stating that *langue* is dress (clothing) and *parole* is dressing (dressing or wearing clothes).⁹

Fashion as *langue* refers to the social rules governing clothing. This includes fashion models and the social rules that determine what can be considered fashion. On the other hand, *parole* is an individual's action in terms of dressing and individual expression in choosing and wearing clothing (Barthes 2005). In connection with the distinction between *langue* and *parole*, Barthes explains three types of clothing, namely

⁸ Barthes, Roland. 2005. *The Language of Fashion*. New York: Berg.

⁹ *Ibid*

(1) image fashion, which is clothing displayed in the form of photography or drawings; (2) written fashion, which is clothing that is described in writing or expressed in language; and (3) real clothing, which refers to clothing that is actually worn on the human body, namely clothing as an object .¹⁰

In Saussure's semiological theory, which was continued by Barthes in his book, signs have two functions, namely denotation and connotation. Denotation is the literal function of a sign, referring to the direct meaning of a sign. For example, fashion has the function of protecting the body from external elements such as sunlight, dust, and so on. Denotational meaning is the direct meaning contained in a sign or image of a signified. On the other hand, connotative meaning is related to implied cultural aspects or the implied meaning itself. Thus, connotation is the social function of fashion. For example, fashion or clothing can be used to express a person's character or as an agency or school uniform.

Semiologically, fashion as a sign system is formed through the relationship between the signifier (the clothing itself) and the signified (the meaning associated with the clothing). For example, when you see a man wearing a formal collared shirt, the marker is a formal shirt with a neat collar. The shirt and collar are physical markers that identify this clothing as a formal shirt. The related sign is the concept or meaning of politeness or professionalism related to the clothing. Formal shirts with collars are often worn in situations or environments that require a polite or professional appearance.

Results and Discussion

Marker (Signified) on the Indonesian Zaafer Robe

According to Saussure, a signifier is a concept or meaning related to the concept that is understood by the language user or message recipient when interacting. In the case of the symbol on the Robe, it is a concept or meaning related to long, loose clothing, and is often used in formal contexts or at religious events.



(Figure 1. Classic Robe)

First, there is a marker as the meaning of the Indonesian Zaafer robe. In this concept, a robe can be interpreted as outer clothing that has long sleeves, is generally loose and reaches up to the knees or even ankles. In the context of Islamic culture, robes are interpreted as a symbol of goodness and simplicity of character (Hayid 2019). It is believed that wearing a robe can help an individual to avoid criticism from others, therefore being an indication of good character. Overall, robes are a type of clothing that is often associated with modesty and good character, especially in Islamic culture (Aliya 2021). It is a loose, long-sleeved outer garment that extends below the knees or even to the ankles.

Signifiers on Indonesian Zafeer Robes

In Saussure's semiotic theory, signified refers to a physical form or sound that can be seen or heard. One example of a sign that refers to its physical form is the robe. In this research concept there are signs in the meaning of the Indonesian Zaafer robe. Initially, robes were used as clothing that protected the body from high temperatures and dust particles in the middle of the desert (Fittinline 2019). On the other hand, robes also have functions and benefits, including the following:

1. Aurat Cover

The main function of Muslim clothing, including robes, is to hide parts of the body that should not be visible. For Muslim men, the aurat covers the area from the navel to the knees, while for women it covers the entire body except the face, palms and feet.

2. Symbol of a person's character

The robe is considered a symbol of positive character and morality in Islam. By wearing a robe, a person can avoid paying attention to other people's mistakes and focus more on their own behavior.

3. Protection

Clothing, including robes, has an important role in protecting the body from various external factors such as weather, insects, sharp objects and dirt.

4. Identity

The use of robes can also serve as a way to show one's identity and affiliation to a particular group or culture.

Langue and Parole on Robes



(Image 2. Classic Robe)



(Image 3. Zaafer.id)

The concept of parole in robes is also found in the products that Zaafer Indonesia has successfully created. Robes, as traditional clothing widely worn by Muslims, especially in the Middle East and Southeast Asia, have undergone a significant transformation into more modern and stylish clothing. There are several important points that can be noted regarding the change in robes as a fashion trend and religious symbol, especially for the Muslim community. The traditional clothing of Muslims, namely the robe, has evolved into clothing that is more fashionable and in line with the times. In addition, Robe is no longer limited to stiff and conservative models (as in figure 2), but has adopted the latest fashion trends with a modern touch. This reflects the adaptation of Muslims to changes in fashion and their desire to appear trendy without ignoring religious principles.

Robes are now not only a symbol of religious identity for Muslims, but are also able to show individual style and personality. Apart from being seen as mandatory

clothing in a religious context, robes are also an attractive fashion choice for various groups, including non-Muslims. In modern Robes, emphasis is placed on design and quality materials, indicating that these garments have an attractive spiritual and aesthetic value. By experiencing these changes, Jubah has created space for designers and fashion industry players to innovate and present more diverse choices for users. The development of the robe as modern clothing reflects the desire of Muslims to continue to adapt to changing times without forgetting their cultural roots and traditions. The success of Zaafer Indonesia in being able to change the robes which initially had an orthodox image to become stylish and casual, so that they can penetrate the world of global fashion, proves that traditional clothing can become part of a fashion trend that is relevant and in demand by various groups (as in Figure 3). With the changes that have occurred, the Jubah has become a symbol of inclusivity and diversity in the world of fashion, expanding our understanding of the beauty and meaning of traditional Muslim clothing.



(Figure 4. Zaafer Indonesia)

In the theory put forward by Saussure, there is a fashion concept called *langue*. This concept refers to the language system related to the use, interpretation and meaning associated with robes as clothing in Indonesian culture. can be linked to the Indonesian *Zafer* robe which has the appearance of symbolizing the identity of a Muslim. Because the function of the robe is clothing to cover the private parts of a Muslim in accordance with Islamic law. Although robes for worship and robes for fashion have differences, the use of robes as Muslim clothing still has significance as a religious symbol. As a Muslim, the use of robes in the context of worship has the characteristics of being conservative, loose, and covering the entire body.

Apart from that, robes must also meet certain requirements, including covering the private parts and not being conspicuous. The use of robes in the context of worship has a deep meaning as a religious symbol, because robes are used as a sign of obedience to religious commands and as a form of respect for God. On the other hand, robes that are used solely for fashion purposes have more fashionable characteristics and follow fashion trends. This robe can be used as everyday clothing or as a form of identity. The use of robes in a fashion context has a broader meaning, such as conservative clothing or as a form of identity, so it can be used on various occasions .

Conclusion

Finally, the robe has undergone a transformation from a traditional garment to a more modern and fashionable garment. To this day, robes are available in a wide variety of styles, colors, and fabric types, and are worn by both Muslim and non-Muslim individuals. Even though it has been transformed in such a way, the robe remains a symbol of Islam, in line with Islamic teachings which require covering sexual areas of the body from public view. What is no less important is that this clothing transformation has offered fashionable and trendy choices, which are often used in everyday life to exclusive events.

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Vol. 21 No. 2, hal.155-168, Desember 2023 167

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168

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