

## Fancy Yarns in the Fabrics of Lithuanian Folk Skirts

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When manufacturing a fabric, it is very important to obtain a fabric with decorative, aesthetical and also functional characteristics. All these requirements can be satisfied when using different fancy yarns. Another important aspect – it is important for the history of textile art and technology to disclose a variety and evolution of this decorative principle in Lithuanian ethnographic textile and define rules and traditions in coordinating fancy yarns with different fabric structure properties, also to show peculiarities of chronological and territorial prevalence. After analyzing 258 Lithuanian folk skirts from the National M. K. Čiurlionis Art Museum (NČDM) folk art collection, it was determined that in 14 % of the skirts, woven in the XIX – the 1st half of XX century, various fancy yarns with optical, structural and mixed type effects were used to make fabrics more decorative, based on which 8 categories of fabrics were picked out. While examining dependence of fancy yarns on fabric weave, it was determined that fancy yarns mostly were coordinated with plain weave. Analysis of the dependence of fancy yarns on fabric pattern shows, that fancy yarns are common in 4 types of pattern. It was determined, that most fabrics with fancy yarns (21 % of all fabrics weaved in this region) were made in Aukštaitija, and least (10 %) were made in Dzūkija, while there were no such fabrics in Klaipėda region. From the chronological point of view the investigation showed, that the earliest samples of Lithuanian ethnographical skirts woven with fancy yarns were dated in the middle of XIX century. In later periods the use of fancy yarns in the skirt fabrics increased and became more varied, yarns with more variations became widespread. Fancy yarns of this type can be manufactured with different modern machines, and it enables reconstruction of fabrics, for which fancy yarns were used.

*Keywords:* fancy yarns, fancy dyeing, knop, slub effect, mouline, melange yarn, folk skirts.

### INTRODUCTION

During the last ten years Lithuanian folk fabrics have been analyzed from ethnologic, art history, technological, and interdisciplinary point of view. The most attention was paid to evolution of fabric geometric ornament form, semantics and ethnical peculiarity (Tumėnas, Savoniakaitė, Jurkuvienė) [1–3], to the laws of ornamental structure (Milašius, Katunskis, Taylor, Kazlauskienė, Neverauskienė) [4, 5], also investigations of fabrics structural peculiarities, weave and pattern dependences have been started (Kumpikaitė, Nėnienė) [6–8]. The theme not yet explored is structural peculiarities of threads of Lithuanian ethnographic fabric and their prevalence in traditional folk textiles. Data of such investigation is valuable for the development of textile art and technology history, reconstruction of ancient fabrics, preservation of Lithuanian traditional peculiarities in ethnic and contemporary textile.

From the ancient times to the middle of the XX century peasant women spun a lot. As Čepaitienė [9], who investigated Lithuanian traditions of spinning, wrote, in the XIX century – the 1st half of the XX century in Lithuania, like in other European countries, peasant home economy was a quite independent unit, where manufacture was organized in family. The purpose of spinning was directly tied to home fabric manufacturing. Farms were able to provide flax threads and wool themselves. In Southeast Lithuania, when flax harvest was bad, hemp was used for spinning. In the peasant economy, thread and fabric quantity was one of its industrial capacity factors. It is known, that peasants in the beginning of the XIX century,

and richer peasants of Žemaitija in the XVIII century, used commercial fabrics for clothing. Purchased manufactured raw materials for home weaving were spreading already in the second half of the XIX century. Country weavers began buying strong, evenly spun cotton yarns, and used them mostly for warp of clothing, home and decorative fabrics. By the end of the XIX century and 2–3rd decade of the XX century more embellished factory made wool – “šilkvilnė” and “skaistgija”, also called “lučakai”, was used for weft of decorative fabrics of holiday clothing.

Peasant women usually bought or made themselves decorative threads meant for fabric embellishment or in other cases. In villages “bajoriškas” wool preparation method was known. In 1939 it was recorded by Vitauskas. Yarn and fabric used to be of shimmering colour, resulting from mixing wool yarns of various colours: “Half of the wool was black or dark brown, and the second half was in different colours: red, blue, green, yellow, pink, grey, light yellow, cherry and other colours” [10]. Peasant women also liked to use threads of two colours, sometimes parts of a thread were dyed in different colours. Shawls in such patterns were called “speckled” and “motley”. These examples were recorded while analyzing wool shawls of the XIX century and the 1st half of XX century [6].

In the articles [11, 12] yarn effect identification and analysis is based on classification of fancy yarns structure.

Fancy yarns are used in fabrics to make fabrics more decorative, aesthetical, while also not forgetting its functionality. Various fancy yarns are used in weaving. Criteria, which are important for grouping assortment, are: manufacturing method of fancy yarns, purpose and raw material of components, number and grade of components, type and nature of effect, component that makes up the

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effect. Fancy yarns can be made with optical, structural, and mixed effects. Yarns from multicoloured threads, with glossy-matte yarns, threads, or segments are classified as yarns with optical effects. Yarns with boucle, knop, spiral structure, snarl, slub and other effects are classified as yarns with structural effects. Several types of effects are combined in mixed fancy yarns. Variety of fancy yarns broadens the range of fabric colours, gives fabric friability, softness, good end-use properties, also a pleasant hand, various relief effects, makes it more decorative, aesthetic, embellishes the fabric [12, 13].

The purpose of investigation is to show variety and development of this kind of decoration and to determine the regularities and traditions of fancy yarns' co-ordination with other fabric structure properties, to show tendencies of chronological and territorial prevalence of fancy yarns use in Lithuania in the XIX century – the 1st half of XX century.

## RESULTS

During the experiment 258 Lithuanian folk skirts from the National M. K. Čiurlionis Art Museum (NČDM) folk art collection were analyzed. From these skirts, 35 units (14 %), dated on the XIX century – the beginning of XX century, were woven using fancy yarns. We identified three types of fancy yarns used in the skirt fabrics: with optical, structural, and mixed effects. In a few cases, several types of effects were used in one fabric. Distribution of fabrics with fancy yarns was analyzed according to the effect type, weave, pattern character, ethnographic region, and chronological prevalence.

Based on analysis of those above mentioned fabrics according to the effect type, 8 types of fabrics were picked out: optical effect type – fancy dyeing, mouline and melange yarns, structural effect type – yarns with slubs, and mixed effect type – knop mouline yarn. In some skirt fabrics several types of yarns were combined; for example, 1) fancy dyeing and mouline, 2) fancy dyeing and knop mouline, 3) fancy dyeing and melange.

Distribution of these effects in is shown in Fig. 1. Looking at the diagram we can see that fabrics with fancy dyeing effect are prevalent (36 %). In most cases those are yarns dyed in different colours in small sections, for example, white-mossy green (inventor numbers E1627, E2720, E3066, E3427, E4307), white-blue (E1378, E4081), white-brown (E1597, E2371), yellow-brown (E3943), white-light brown (inventor number Žt35), in some cases in shadowy transitional colours: yellow-salad green-green, black-purple-red-yellow (E1375), light yellow-orange-red-dark red (E3449) yarns. It was noticed, that two-colour dyeing was common for cotton yarns, and transitional shadowy – for wool yarns. The use of fancy dyed yarns is shown in Fig. 2.

Based on quantity, in the second place are knop mouline fancy yarns (29 %). In these yarns knops are in 2 or 3 different colours: white-light brown (inventor numbers E3061, E2857), white-grey (E3984), yellow-light brown (E1598, E3065), white-sandy (E3857), white-black (E2913), white-brown (E4770), white-black and yellow-light brown (E3866), blue-red-yellow and white-red-blue (E5297). The fabric with these yarns is shown in Fig. 3.

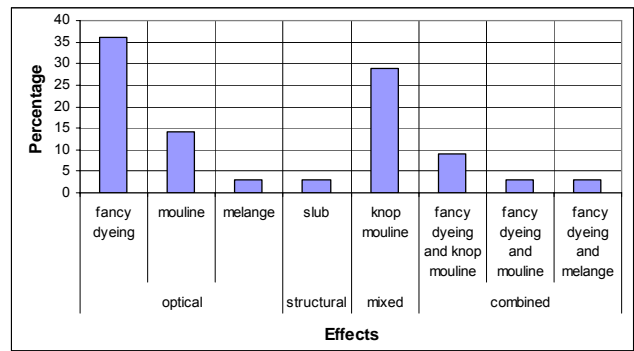


Fig. 1. Distribution of skirt fabrics according to the type of effect (NČDM investigation, the second half of the XIX century – the first half of XX century)

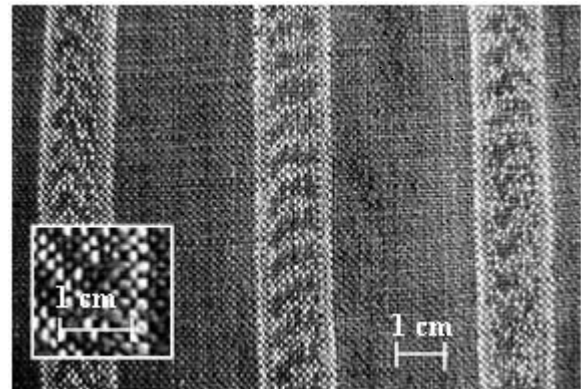


Fig. 2. Skirt fabric with white-brown fancy dyed yarns (NČDM E1597: village Laumėnų, district Kaišiadorių, II half of XIX century – III decade of XX century, warp – cotton, weft – flax)

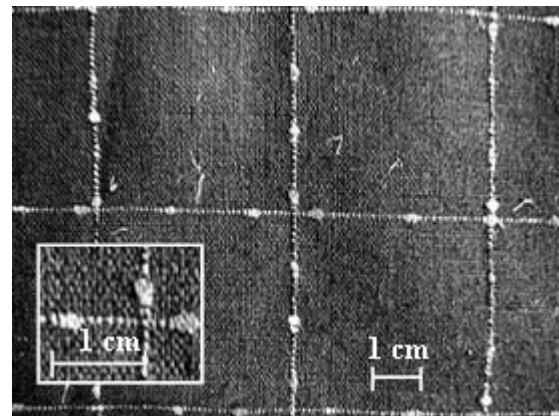
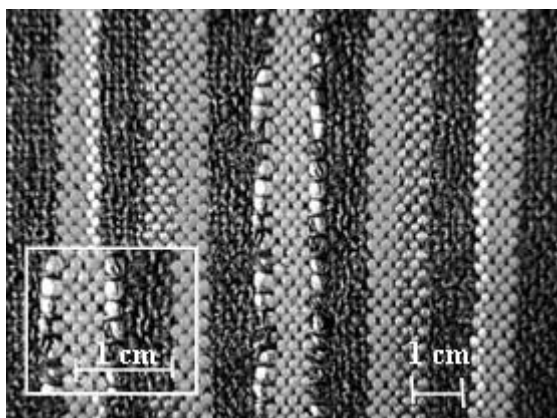


Fig. 3. Skirt fabric with mixed type knop mouline three colour yarn (blue-red-yellow weft and white-red-blue warp) effect (NČDM E5297: village Sarapiniškių, district Varėnos, I half of XX century, warp – cotton, weft – woollen)

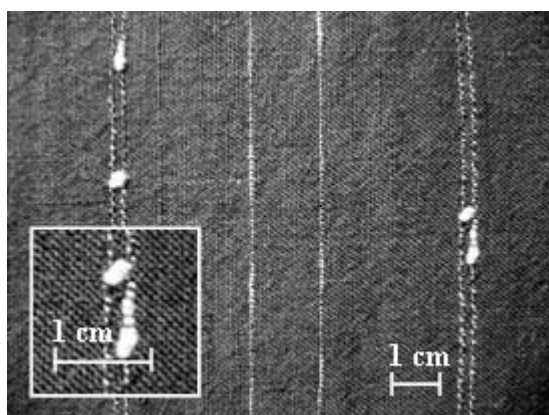
Mouline fancy yarns make up 14 % of all fabrics with fancy yarns. They usually are yarns with two contrasting colours, twisted together: white-blue (inventor number E1626), brown-yellow (E2378, E4068), yellow-black (E1997), white-black (E3500). The use of this effect in the vertically stripped fabric is shown in Fig. 4.

9 % of the fabrics had two types of fancy yarns: fancy dyeing and knop mouline yarns, of white-mossy green and blue-white-red (inventor number E2118), white-mossy green and white-black (E4800), white-mossy green and

white-grey (E4073) colours. The fabric of this combined decoration is shown in Fig. 5.



**Fig. 4.** Skirt fabric with moulaine (white and blue) yarns (NČDM E1626: village Sargučiu, district Marijampolės, II half of XIX century – the 3rd decade of XX century, warp – flax, weft – woollen, flax)



**Fig. 5.** Skirt fabric with two types of effects: fancy dyeing (white and mossy green) and knop moulaine (white and grey) fancy yarns (NČDM E4073: village Darsūniškio, district Kaišiadorių, the end of XIX century – the 3rd decade of XX century, warp and weft – woollen)

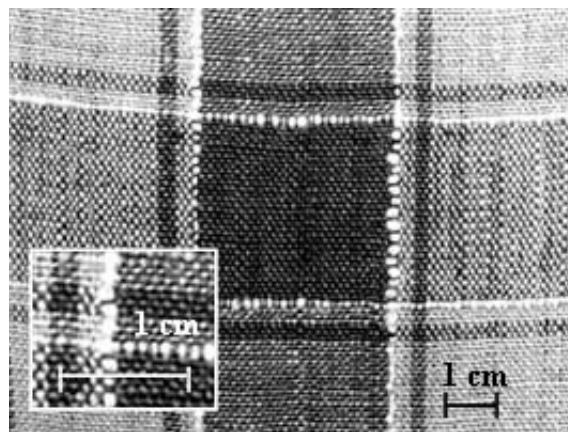
Fabrics with following types of yarns made up 3 %: melange, with slubs, and combined fancy dyed with moulaine, and fancy dyed with melange yarns.

Melange yarns are made of wool thread mix dyed in different colours (cherry-black) (inventor number E5003). One structural type effect was noted – slubs in E3305 fabric (Fig. 6).

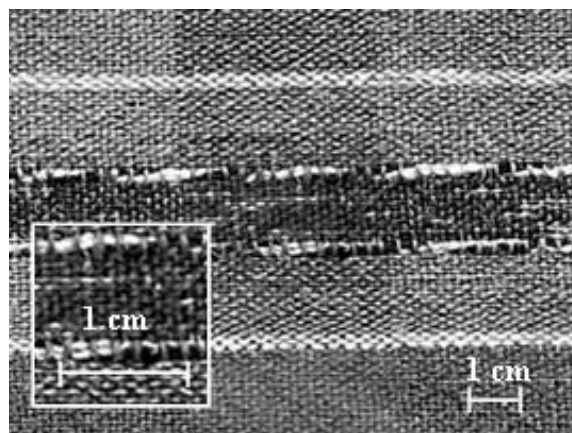
Combined decoration – fancy dyed and moulaine yarn – was noted in skirt E3495 fabric, where these colours were used: white-beet red, white-black, yellow-black.

An example of fabric with fancy dyed and moulaine yarn is shown in Fig. 7. Another combined type – fancy dyed and melange yarn are used in the skirt E1593 (white-mossy green warp and white-grey melange weft).

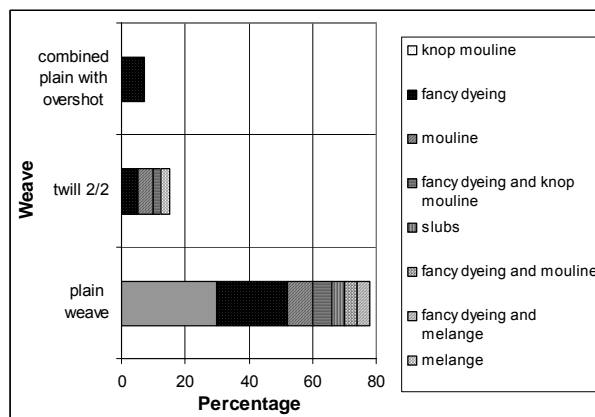
Distribution of the fabrics with fancy yarns according to their weave is shown in Fig. 8. In skirts this type of decoration was combined only with three weaves. Fancy yarns were most used in plain weave fabrics (78 %). In more rare cases, they were weaved in twill 2/2 weave fabrics (15 %) and combined plain with overshot weave fabrics (7 %).



**Fig. 6.** Skirt fabric with slub effect (NČDM E3305: village Vėžionių, district Kupiškio, 1925, warp and weft – flax, woollen)



**Fig. 7.** Skirt fabric with fancy dyeing and two types of moulaine yarns (NČDM E3495: village Plundakų, district Kupiškio, 1925, warp and weft – woollen)

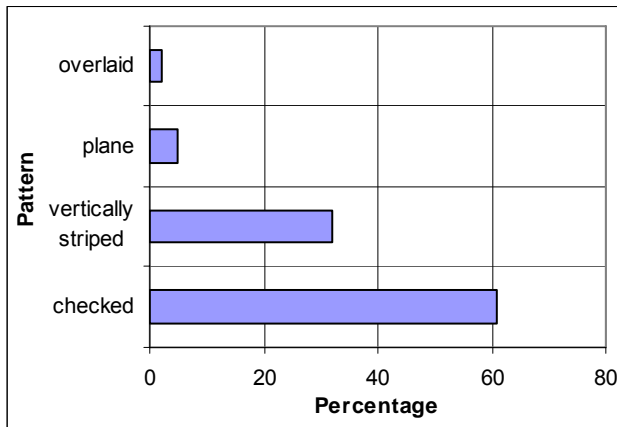


**Fig. 8.** Distribution of fabrics with fancy yarns based on weave in percents (NČDM data, II half of XIX century – I half of XX century)

In the fabrics of plain weave were used compositions of 7 types of fancy yarns: 40 % were knop moulaine yarns, 30 % – fancy dyeing yarn, 11 % – moulaine yarns, 7 % – fancy dyeing and knop moulaine, 4 % – fancy yarns with slubs, 4 % – fancy dyeing and moulaine, 4 % – fancy dyeing and melange yarn. In fabrics of twill 2/2 weave were fancy yarns of 4 types: 33 % – fancy dyeing, 33 % – moulaine, 17 % – melange and 17 % – fancy dyeing and

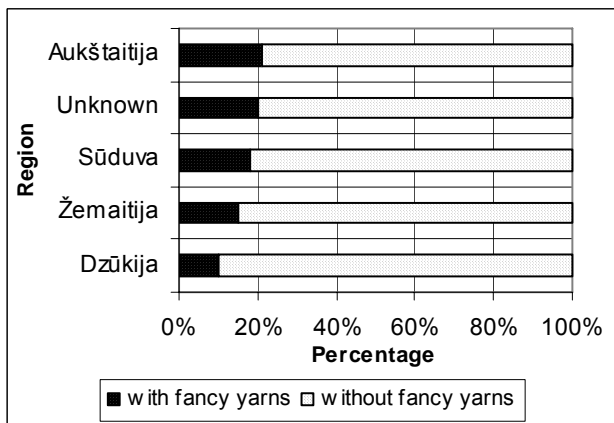
knop mouline yarns. In all of combined plain with overshot weave fabrics were used fancy dyeing yarns.

Distribution of fabrics with fancy yarns based on fabric pattern in percents is shown in Fig. 9. It can be seen, that most, even 61 %, of fancy yarns are in fabrics with checked pattern, 32 % – in vertically striped fabrics, 5 % – in plain fabrics, and 2 % – in overlaid fabrics, where fancy yarns are used to make overlaid pattern.



**Fig. 9.** Distribution of skirts with fancy yarns according to fabric pattern in percents (NČDM data, II half of XIX century – I half of XX century)

Regional distribution of fabrics with fancy yarns was also analyzed. It is shown in Fig. 10.

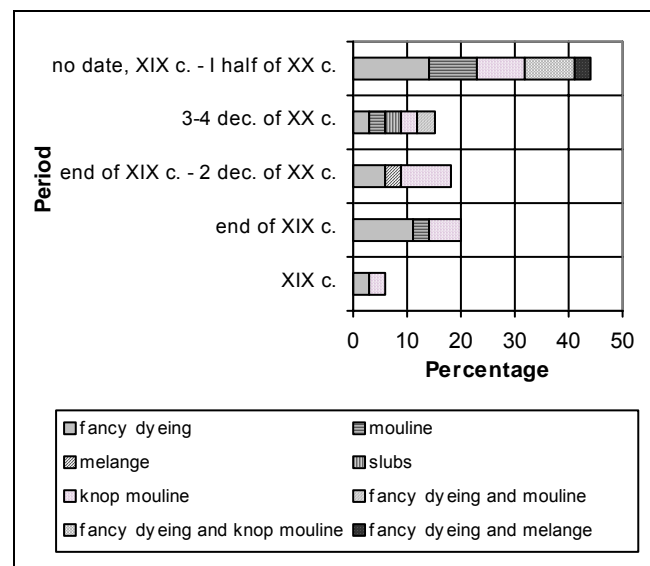


**Fig. 10.** Distribution of skirts with fancy yarns in each ethnographic region (NČDM data, II half of XIX century – I half of XX century)

Investigation shows, that these yarns are distributed in almost even percentages in all regions, they only were missing in Klaipėda region. It was determined, that skirt fabrics woven with fancy yarns in Aukštaitija region make up the largest part (21 % of all skirts belonging to this region). 18 % of skirts with fancy yarns are woven in Sūduva, 15 % – in Žemaitija and 10 % of skirt fabrics with fancy yarns were woven in Dzūkija ethnographic region. Ethnographic region of 20 % of fabrics with effects is not known. So in all analyzed fabrics, fancy yarn usage in all regions varied between 10 % and 21 %. Looking at prevalence of separate effects, it can be seen that knop mouline effect was mostly liked in Dzūkija.

Although a large part of museum collection skirts doesn't have exact date, we can still exclude some tendencies of prevalence (Fig. 11). While analyzing the use of fancy yarns from the chronological point of view, it was determined that these yarns have only come in use in the middle of the XIX century. During the five determined periods, the percentage of distribution of fabrics with fancy yarns varied from 6 % in the middle of the XIX century to 20 % in the end of XIX century. The biggest part (43 %) was made up by skirts without exact date, which belong to the XIX century – the first half of XX century.

While analyzing chronological distribution of fancy yarn types, it was determined, that, as time went by, types of yarns used were increasing, i.e. not only yarns with fancy dyeing and mouline were used, but also other yarns with mouline, melange, fancy dyeing and knop, fancy dyeing and mouline, fancy dyeing and melange, slub effect were used.



**Fig. 11.** Chronological distribution of fancy yarn types in skirts (NČDM data, XIX century – I half of XX century)

Fancy painting effects were mostly used with cotton yarns, which were used in warp, and mouline effect was more prevalent in woollen threads, which were then woven into weft.

Fancy yarns give for fabric various effects: streaks, dots, waves, stripes or checks and making clearer the outline or the middle of them and etc.

All fancy yarns used in Lithuanian folk skirts can be manufactured using contemporary fancy yarns production methods. Yarns with fancy dyeing are manufactured using special dyeing methods, where dyes are applied in uneven intervals throughout the yarn length. Knops of various forms and sizes are common in knop yarns, which can be made using one-process and two-process manufacturing method. Mouline yarns are made by simply spinning together two yarns of different colours. Melange fancy yarns are made from the mix of different colour fibres, which can be mixed during various phases of the technological process. So it is possible to recreate reconstructions of folk fabrics with fancy yarns, while applying contemporary methods of manufacturing.

## CONCLUSIONS

After analyzing 258 Lithuanian folk skirts from the National M. K. Čiurlionis Art Museum (NČDM) folk art textile collection, determining and analyzing the structure of fancy yarns and uses, these conclusions can be made:

1. It was determined, that three types of fancy yarns with optical (fancy dyeing, mouline, and melange), structural (slubs) and mixed (knop mouline) effects were used and three types of combination were applied (fancy dyeing and knop mouline, fancy dyeing and mouline, fancy dyeing and melange) in the folk skirt fabrics.
2. Fabrics with fancy dyed yarns make up the biggest part – 36 %, in the second place (29 %) are knop mouline, in the third place (9 %) are fancy dyeing and knop mouline, other types of fancy yarns are less popular: 3 % – melange yarns, 3 % – slub yarns, 3 % – fancy dyeing and mouline yarns, 3 % – fancy dyeing and melange yarns.
3. Fancy yarns are most often used in plain weave fabrics (78 %), in the second by prevalence are twill 2/2 weave fabrics (15 %), and 7 % are made up by combined plain and overshot weave.
4. Fancy yarns are dominant in checked pattern fabrics (61 %), in the second place are vertically striped fabrics (32 %), in the third place – plain and overlaid fabrics (2 %).
5. In different ethnographic regions fancy yarns are distributed in a similar way (from 10 % in Dzūkija to 21 % in Aukštaitija), and in Klaipėda region skirt fabrics with fancy yarn were not found.
6. Fancy yarns in the home woven skirts were used only from the middle of the XIX century. The use of fancy yarns in skirt fabrics was fluctuating from 6 % in the middle of the XIX century up to 20 % in the end of XIX century. As time went by, more types of fancy yarns came to use.
7. Fancy yarns give for fabric various effects: streaks, dots, waves, stripes or checks and making clearer the outline or the middle of them and etc.

## Acknowledgments

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