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Communication Acts in Traditional Rituals of the Banjar Community *Batamba*

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Abstract

This research explains communication activities and how the symbolic meaning of *bubur habang* and *bubur putih* in the *Batamba* Ritual in Banjar custom. The method used is qualitative with the type of communication ethnography research and symbolic interaction theory as an analytical tool to describe human interaction with the meaning of symbols in an object. Data collection is done by observation and interview. The data obtained were then analyzed through three stages, namely description, analysis, and interpretation. The results of this study show that the *Batamba* ritual is carried out at the *pananamba*'s house and is attended by the *pananamba*, the patient, and the patient's family, the atmosphere when *Batamba* is performed is quite solemn and sacred. The *Batamba* process is sequentially described by communicative events. Communicative acts in *Batamba* describe the overall verbal and nonverbal communication and symbols. The symbol of *bubur habang* and *bubur putih* used in the *Batamba* ritual has a meaning as a form of request to spiritual entities not to disturb the lives of individuals or communities.

Abstrak

Makna simbolik *bubur habang* dan *bubur putih* dalam ritual *Batamba* Adat Banjar

Penelitian ini menjelaskan aktivitas komunikasi dan bagaimana makna simbolik *bubur habang* dan *bubur putih* dalam Ritual *Batamba* dalam adat Banjar. Metode yang digunakan adalah kualitatif dengan jenis penelitian etnografi komunikasi dan teori interaksi simbolik sebagai alat analisis untuk mendeskripsikan interaksi manusia dengan makna simbol pada suatu objek. Pengumpulan data dilakukan dengan observasi dan wawancara. Data yang diperoleh kemudian dianalisis melalui tiga tahap, yaitu deskripsi, analisis, dan interpretasi. Hasil penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa ritual *Batamba* dilakukan di rumah *pananamba* dan diikuti oleh *pananamba*, pasien, dan keluarga pasien, suasana saat *Batamba* dilakukan dengan khidmat dan sakral. Proses *Batamba* secara berurutan digambarkan dengan peristiwa komunikatif. Tindak komunikatif dalam *Batamba* menggambarkan keseluruhan komunikasi verbal dan nonverbal serta simbol yang ada. Simbol *bubur habang* dan *bubur putih* yang digunakan dalam ritual *Batamba* memiliki makna sebagai bentuk permohonan kepada entitas spiritual untuk tidak mengganggu kehidupan individu atau komunitas.

Kata Kunci:

Batamba *bubur habang*; *bubur putih*; etnografi komunikasi; interaksi simbolik;

1 Introduction

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Banjar tradition is a system of values and norms passed down from generation to generation by the Banjar people. The Banjar community has many traditions that are still practiced today. There are several rituals that are still practiced by the Banjar community, one of which is *Batamba*. *Batamba* is one of the traditional medicine rituals of the Banjar community. Etymologically, *Batamba* in Banjar language comes from the word *tamba* or *tatamba* which means medicine (Hamlan et al., 2021; Tohir et al., 2022). So that in simple terms *Batamba* means treatment. People who do *Batamba* are called *pananamba*. The *Batamba* ritual procession is carried out depending on the type of disease suffered through *mana'* or *tuah* that is owned, then channeled with supernatural powers (Jamalie & Rifat, 2017).

The implementation of rituals has complementary requirements, one of which is food, especially in the implementation of *Batamba*, which has a complementary food of *bubur habang* and *bubur putih*. *Bubur habang* and *bubur putih* are one form of food that developed in the South Kalimantan region as a culture. The basic ingredients in making *bubur habang* are rice, coconut milk and brown sugar. While *bubur putih* is made from rice dough cooked with a mixture of coconut milk (Yayuk & Ariesty, 2022).

The culture or custom in South Kalimantan to cure diseases caused by the interference of supernatural beings requires a spiritual approach by performing *Batamba* rituals, (Erawati, 2022). *Bubur habang* and *bubur putih* are complementary offerings found in the *Batamba* tradition. Based on an interview with Julak Larau on May 30, 2024, the use of *bubur habang* and *bubur putih* depends on the request of the *pananamba* which is adjusted to the type of illness suffered by the patient.

Bubur habang and *bubur putih* are not only found in the Banjar tradition, but can also be found in other regions in Indonesia with different names but the same form. There are several studies that examine the meaning of *bubur habang* and *bubur putih* in various cultural rituals. Previous research mentioned that in Java, *bubur habang* and *bubur putih* are called *bubur abang putih* or *bubur merah* and *bubur putih*. *Bubur abang* and *bubur putih* is a mandatory dish when welcoming the birth of a baby. *Bubur abang* and *bubur putih* is a symbol, *bubur abang* is a symbol of the female egg cell, while *bubur putih* symbolizes the male sperm cell (Yani, 2023). The meeting of the two causes the formation of a fetus and gives birth to a human being born into the world (Auliyah & Sudrajat, 2022).

In addition, in the Jepara area, there is a tradition of sea alms. *Sedekah laut* is held a week after the Eid al-Fitr celebration as the closing of the Eid al-Fitr celebration. In its implementation, there are several foods served as a complement to the ceremony, one of which is *bubur abang putih*. *Bubur abang putih* is present as a form of respect for the forerunner of the village who has opened the Jepara area and given glory as it is today. In addition, the people of Jepara also believe that *bubur abang putih* can defeat spirits (Indrahti, 2023).

Based on this background, each region has a different way and context of serving *bubur habang* and *bubur putih* or *bubur merah* and *bubur putih*. In addition to the way of serving, these differences can also be seen from the rituals that accompany them. Research related to the symbolic meaning of *bubur habang* and *bubur putih* in the *Batamba* ritual has never been studied, therefore researchers want to analyze the cultural values and meanings contained in *bubur habang* and *bubur putih* to function as a social context and ritual in the *Batamba* tradition. Based on an interview with Lilis on July 27, 2024, the existence of *bubur habang* and *bubur putih* for the Banjar community is still very important to perform a ritual or traditional ceremony using offerings, if ignored it will become *mudharat* for the Banjar community group. *Mudharat* is something that can cause physical, mental, social or spiritual harm, such as trance or illness. Therefore, *bubur habang* and *bubur putih* have their own symbolic meaning.



Food not only serves as the production of organisms to survive, but food also acts as a cultural phenomenon (Misnawati, 2019; Nurti, 2017). According to Foster and Anderson, food symbolization includes social bonding, group solidarity, peace of mind, and food symbolism in language. Therefore, food is also important in social relations (Chusmeru, 2020). This can be seen in food that is often linked to a belief, belief, or superstition (Akta & Polat, 2020). Food, from a communication perspective, can create symbols and meanings. Food can communicate values and ideas that are part of culture. According to Spradley, human interaction can provide meaning from a culture to understand individuals and communities in their lives (Misnawati, 2019). So communication and culture influence each other in determining reality in people's lives.

The symbols contained in a culture, whether in the form of objects or non-objects, become a reference for the attitudes and behavior of the community that cannot be separated from community life with a distinctive cultural orientation. Firth said that symbols are clues for humans to make abstractions. Therefore, symbols have instrumental value or means of expression, communication, and knowledge (Hafid & Raodah, 2019; Tresnasih et al., 2023). In symbolic interaction theory states that individuals and societies interact with each other using symbols and form the meaning of these symbols (Milasari & Sudrajat, 2022). Symbolic interaction is an interdependent relationship between symbols and interactions carried out by humans. The symbol used is an interaction process that aims to convey the message given. So that the symbol is a representation of the phenomenon that occurs.

Blumer's symbolic interaction theory was chosen as the most appropriate theory to help analyze the meaning of *bubur habang* and *bubur putih* in the *Batamba* ritual. According to Blumer, humans can create symbolic meanings from scratch or interpret the meanings and symbols that already exist on an object or give it a symbol (Khamimiya et al., 2024). Humans perform actions referring to the meaning that things have for themselves. The meaning that is believed is the result of social interactions that occur in a person with other people and then the meaning obtained from the interaction is refined again by thinking (Milasari & Sudrajat, 2022).

There are several studies related to the *Batamba* ritual, among others: research by Tohir, R., Husni, M., & Erawati, D. (2022), this research discusses the *Batamba* ritual in Banjar society in Pegatan Village, Katingan Regency, Central Kalimantan. In his research, he mentioned the *Batamba* ritual procession from preparation to completion. In addition, the study also examined the meaning of *Batamba* using Durkheim's theory and found four elements, namely the *secret*, classification, rite, solidarity. Research by Hamlan, Asmaran, & Suraiyadi. (2021), this research discusses the practice of *tatamba banyu* by Guru Syairozi in Banjar Regency. In this study, it is mentioned that the *tatamba* practice carried out by Guru Syairozi is very thick with a Sufistic dimension that views *maqamat* in Sufism which is the basic concept for healing. The media used is water that is recited with a prayer and then drunk, used for bathing, or applied to the body that is experiencing pain. In this study, researchers will discuss communication activities in the *Batamba* ritual using the ethnographic method of communication. In addition, this research highlights the use of media or symbols of *bubur habang* and *bubur putih* in the *Batamba* ritual. The purpose of this research is to understand and describe communication activities and symbols in the *Batamba* ritual by analysing communicative situations, communicative events, and communicative acts.

2 Methods

The research approach used in this research is qualitative. The type of research in this study is communication ethnography. The three basic units in analyzing communication activities are communicative situations related to the context in which communication occurs, communicative events related to the components contained in a communicative event, and communicative acts (Herliana, 2019). To avoid misunderstandings in interpreting, researchers make boundaries or focus



to be more focused on research problems. The purpose of this research is to understand and describe communication activities and symbols in the *Batatamba* ritual by analysing communicative situations, communicative events, and communicative acts.

Data sources for this research are categorized into primary data and secondary data. Primary data collection was carried out by interview and observation. Determination of informants in the study was carried out using purposive sampling technique. This is done by selecting informants based on certain characteristics related to the object of research. The informants selected in this research are culturalists (Julak Larau), pananamba (Nenek Amin, Habib, Paman Udin), and Banjar community (Lilis, Fatmawati, Elly). Researchers also conducted direct observation and recording of the object under study, namely by observing activities during the ritual and the meaning of the *Batatamba* ritual. Secondary data was obtained through literature studies from books, e-books, and articles related to the research. This research was conducted in Banjarmasin. The results of the research findings were analyzed in three stages, namely; (a) description, namely the researcher presents the results of his research by describing completely and sequentially; (b) analysis, namely the stage of the researcher sorting; (c) interpretation, namely the researcher draws conclusions from the research that has been done (Cresswell & Poth, 2018). Data testing uses triangulation, namely source triangulation and method triangulation.

3 Result

3.1 *Batatamba* Ritual Process

Based on the results of data collection by researchers, the *Batatamba* ritual process is divided into three stages, namely preparation, implementation, and ritual closing. In the preparation stage, the patient will come to tell what the patient is suffering from, after which the *pananamba* will identify what the patient is suffering from. *Pananamba* is a person who provides treatment. Not everyone can become a *pananamba*, this is because *pananamba* are usually passed down through lineage, have passed certain rituals and processes, or people have high religious knowledge. Julak Larau said:

"A tamba worker is not just anyone, not everyone can cure diseases. Usually the tamba worker is because he has a lineage that is also a tamba worker so he can become a tamba worker. There are also people who become a tamba worker because they have a dream, so it's like a gift from God." (interview dated 30 September 2024)

Pananamba will give a diagnosis and determine the right time to perform the ritual, if what the patient is suffering from is not too severe, *pananamba* will perform the ritual on the same day. Generally, the *Batatamba* ritual is performed in the afternoon before the maghrib prayer time or after the maghrib prayer time at the *pananamba*'s residence. Julak Larau said,

"Batamba is generally done at dusk usually before sunset, why? Because of the belief that originated from the Dayak community, that it is at the turn of time between day and night that disease appears and disappears." (interview dated 30 October 2024)

When the ritual time has been determined, the *pananamba* will prepare the equipment needed to perform *Batatamba*, such as water or food *bubur habang* and *bubur putih*.

Batatamba begins with a prayer recited by the *pananamba*. The patient is in a sleeping position if it is difficult to sit. If able, the patient will only sit. According to Habib as a *pananamba* said that in the *Batatamba* ritual the verbal acts spoken during the ritual were in the form of prayers derived from verses of the Qur'an such as, Q.S Al-Fatihah, Q.S An-Naas, Q.S Al-Falaq, Q.S al-Baqarah verse 255, Q.S al-Baqarah 285-286, *shalawat nabi* and others and there were some *pananamba* also added with mantras. As long as the *pananamba* recites the prayer, the patient and participants in



this ritual only listen solemnly. After completion, the *pananamba* will give advice to the patient about what to do and what to avoid, so that the same incident or disturbance does not occur.

3.2 Symbols in the *Batamba* Ritual

The symbols used in the *Batamba* ritual, apart from water, are *bubur habang* and *bubur putih*. *Bubur habang* and *bubur putih* are one of the offerings that must be present in the traditional traditions of the Banjar people. The word *habang* in Indonesian means red. The basic ingredients in making *bubur habang* are rice, coconut milk, and brown sugar. Meanwhile, *bubur putih* is made from rice and coconut milk. *Bubur habang* has a sweet taste, while *bubur putih* has a savoury taste. *Bubur habang* and *bubur putih* are usually served on a plate or banana leaf shaped like a bowl. According to Julak Larau, the use of *bubur habang* and *bubur putih* has been done by the ancestors of the Banjar people, who are believed to have come from the Dayak tribe.

"Bubur habang, bubur putih is originally the culture of Banjar's ancestors, which is believed to have originated from Dayak. So the Dayak people have used this symbol of bubur habang and bubur putih as a form of respect to their ancestors. The original meaning is that the bubur habang is the lower realm, while the bubur putih is the upper realm. The meaning is based on the fact that there are those who live in the lower world and also the upper world." (interview dated 30 May 2024)

Figure 1: *Bubur habang* and *Bubur putih*
[Source: Author's Documentation, 2024]



The presentation of *bubur habang* and *bubur putih* in the *Batamba* ritual has its own purpose and meaning. *Bubur habang* and *bubur putih* are present in the *Batamba* ritual because of a belief that illness can be caused by mystical disturbances, Fatmawati said,

"Usually these supernatural people are angry because they are not given food so they bother us until we get sick, so we make this bubur habang and bubur putih, so it is a kind of food for "them" so they don't bother us anymore." (interview dated 15 November 2024)

" Uuu Nini datuk ini kami berdoa selamat beolah bubur habang bubur putih dan makanan lainnya, bila pian-pian handak ambil ha, anak cucu kada tahu di basa , jangan diganggui kami lah Datuk"

Meaning:

Uuu Nini Datuk, here we are praying for safety, making bubur habang bubur putih and other food, if Nini Datuk wants it, just take it, children and grandchildren don't know manners, please don't bother us.

*The sentence is uttered when the bubur habang and bubur putih are placed after the *Batamba* ritual is completed. The Nini and Datuk referred to in this case are ancestors.*

4 Discussion

In communication ethnography, especially for researching communication activities, it consists of three components, namely communicative situations, communicative events and communicative acts.

4.1 Communicative Situation

The communicative situation is a description of the implementation environment, the situation can remain the same even though the location is different (Wirman et al., 2018). The position of the patient when the *Batamba* ritual is performed is adjusted to the patient's condition, the patient can just sit or if they are unable to sit for a long time, the patient will be laid down. The atmosphere when *Batamba* is performed is quite solemn, especially when the *pananamba* recites prayers for the patient's recovery.

The *Batamba* ritual is generally performed at the *pananamba*'s house. This ritual is performed indoors. There are things that must be prepared in the *Batamba* ritual, namely, determining the day and time of the *Batamba* ritual, *Batamba* equipment usually such as water or *bubur habang* and *bubur putih*. When the ritual takes place, participants only sit or lie down, *pananamba* does a lot of communication by reading prayers or mantras. This can be called transcendental communication, namely communication with something "supernatural" including communication with God (Nurhikmah, 2017).

The meaning of the communicative situation in which *Batamba* is performed is the Banjar community's belief that there are diseases that can only be cured through the *Batamba* ritual. Although today, the development of medical technology is very rapid, this is because the Banjar people believe that the world is not only inhabited by humans, but also by invisible people. Communicatively, the *Batamba* ritual is not only a ritual for treatment, but also conveys a message to ask for help from the Almighty to provide healing and safety for the people who perform the *Batamba* ritual. One form of sacredness in the *Batamba* ritual, according to Nenek Amin as *pananamba*, is that this ritual should not be documented in the form of videos or photos.

4.2 Communicative Events in the *Batamba* Ritual

Communicative events are a whole set of components, starting from the general purpose of communication, the general topic of communication involving the same participants, the same language varieties with the same *tone* in interacting and the same rules for interacting in the same setting (Herliana, 2019). The analysis of communicative events uses a description of important components, namely communicative type, topic, function and purpose, *setting*, participants, message form, message content and action sequence, as well as rules and norms of interpretation (Kuswano, 2011).

Genre or event type in an event can be indicated by jokes, greetings, fairy tales, prayers, narratives, and so on (Kuswano, 2011). Genres in the *Batamba* ritual include prayers in the form of requests. *Batamba* is included in the category of transcendental communication. According to Hayat Padjé, transcendental communication is a form of communication carried out with something "supernatural" including communication with God (Nurhikmah, 2017). The narrative genre is in the form of advice given to patients after *Batamba* is performed. The advice given is about what to do after this and things that must be corrected and kept away from the patient.

The topic discussed in the initial or preparatory stage of the *Batamba* ritual is the *pananamba* identifying the disorder or disease suffered by the patient. The time of *Batamba* implementation is generally carried out before the maghrib prayer time, around 17.00 - 18.00. Before *Batamba* begins, there are ritual complements that must be prepared, namely water or *bubur habang* and *bubur putih*.



The ritual begins and ends with a prayer or mantra. After completion, the patient will be told what to do when returning home and what not to do in his daily life.

The *Batatamba* ritual is one of the rituals still performed by the Banjar community to this day, because the *Batatamba* ritual is a ritual performed to cure an illness. The belief and conviction of the Banjar community is that diseases other than medical or psychological illnesses can only be treated with traditional medicine with the help of a *pananamba* who has the ability to provide magical bargains and *pananamba* is also believed to be able to communicate with the supernatural world.

The setting is a special arrangement of places used by cultural actors, such as equipment and space size (Badj et al., 2021). Setting includes location, time, and other physical aspects of the situation (Kuswarno, 2011). The setting in the ethnography of communication is different from the *scene*. *Setting* refers more to the place and time of an event. Meanwhile, the *scene* refers to the atmosphere experienced by participants. Based on the research results, the *setting* in the *Batatamba* ritual is in the afternoon or before maghrib prayer time and *Batatamba* is carried out at the *pananamba* house.

Participants in the *Batatamba* ritual are quite limited; this is because the *Batatamba* ritual is a type of ritual that is carried out privately, only the patient and the *pananamba*. In addition, *pananamba* also needs a calm atmosphere because they must focus on praying in order to heal the patient.

The form of the message can be in the form of verbal and nonverbal channels. The form of verbal messages in the *Batatamba* ritual are prayers delivered by *pananamba* which contain meanings for supplication, protection, and asking for safety for the patient. In addition to prayers, some *pananamba* also use mantras that are shown to spiritual entities with the intention of not disturbing humans. Meanwhile, nonverbal channels in the *Batatamba* ritual are symbols in the *Batatamba* ritual, such as water, *bubur habang* and *bubur putih*.

The content of the message in the *Batatamba* ritual is closely related to the context of the ritual to heal the patient, which includes prayers or mantras. These prayers or mantras are messages in the form of hopes or requests to the Almighty or spiritual forces. In addition to prayers or mantras, the *pananamba* also gives advice or advice to the patient not to do things that can cause the patient to experience a bad condition. Non-verbally, the *Batatamba* ritual uses media such as water and *bubur habang* and *bubur putih*. The water will be read a prayer by the *pananamba* which will then be drunk by the patient.

In the *Batatamba* ritual that takes place, the sequence of actions is as follows; (1) The patient comes to *Pananamba*. The first step in the *Batatamba* ritual is that the patient comes to the *pananamba* to tell the purpose and purpose of his arrival. What is conveyed is certainly related to what the patient is suffering from. *Pananamba* will also ask and ask the patient or family to tell things that were done before the patient experienced what he was suffering with the aim that *pananamba* knows why the disease or disorder can occur. This first step is similar to how patients come to the hospital with the aim of seeing a doctor; (2) *Pananamba* performs rituals, at this stage, *pananamba* recites prayers or mantras to cure the patient's illness. In addition, the *pananamba* will also give water to drink or *bubur habang* and *bubur putih* to eat or can also be placed in the corner of the house as food for ancestral spirits; (3) After the ritual is complete, the *pananamba* will give advice to the patient and family about what is forbidden to do or taboos, so that diseases or events that are considered to interfere with their daily lives do not occur again.

In the *Batatamba* ritual, the prayers used come from verses of the Qur'an as well as the prophet's prayers, some *pananamba* also use mantras that are not spoken in everyday life. In *Batatamba*, the *pananamba* has the main role as a spiritual communicator. During the ritual, the patient mostly listens or follows instructions. *Batatamba* is also conducted privately, this is because the *pananamba*



must have full concentration to treat his patient. While treating the patient, the *pananamba* makes inner contact, where the *pananamba* puts full faith in the power of the Almighty to heal the patient who is being treated.

Interpretation norms are guidelines or rules used by community members to understand, interpret, and feed every act of communication, this includes general knowledge, habits, culture, values, norms adopted, and something taboo (Kuswarno, 2011). In the *Batamba* ritual, prayers, mantras, and other language use are understood as a form of communication that is sacred and has meaning for healing or asking for salvation. Symbols in the *Batamba* ritual such as water or *bubur habang* and *bubur putih* are understood by the Banjar community as a medium for healing or protection, as well as one of the requirements for the ritual to run smoothly.

4.3 Communicative Actions

Communicative acts are single interaction functions such as statements, requests, orders, or nonverbal behaviour (Kuswarno, 2011). Communicative action in the *Batamba* ritual is a form of request for the patient to be cured and kept away from invisible disturbances. This can be seen from verbal and nonverbal acts. Verbal acts are shown by prayers, mantras, and advice to patients. The form of nonverbal acts in the *Batamba* ritual is shown by the symbols used such as water and *bubur habang* and *bubur putih*. *Bubur habang* and *bubur putih* are used as a form of food for the spirit world. Its use is related to illnesses caused by mystical disturbances.

4.4 The Meaning of *Bubur habang* and *Bubur putih* in the *Batamba* Ritual

Batamba is a tradition that has been around for a long time. *Batamba* was present as a form of traditional medicine before the existence of sophisticated medical treatment as it is today. *Batamba* is still believed by the Banjar people as an alternative treatment to treat diseases that cannot be cured by medical treatment. So that *Batamba* is formed because of an understanding and agreement in the Banjar community that there are several diseases that can only be cured through this ritual. The interaction that occurs in the *Batamba* ritual produces a communication symbol in the form of food. Food is a cultural identity for ethnic groups, so in the social environment food cannot be separated from customs. Food has a sacred value when served in a ritual or traditional ceremony (Khairani, 2021; Khamimiya & Sudrajat, 2024). Food can provide a different perspective in understanding culture, both individual and community culture. Food is part of social relations and has meaning. According to Kristeva and Barthes, meanings in food are created in two categories, namely; 1) importance, which is a meaning that is managed and regulated by the constitution and develops into a coherent ideological framework in society; 2) deconstruction, which is an ideological meaning that is the basis of significance, in other words, a more creative meaning subversive fan (Khamimiya & Sudrajat, 2024). According to Blumer's view, meaning is a perception that arises due to interaction with each other. Meaning is obtained through the process of interpretation and communication of the symbols around it (Dzarna et al., 2022; Lestari et al., 2017).

In the Dayak community, especially in South Kalimantan, every tradition and ritual has food and drink offerings that are a requirement for the implementation of the tradition or ritual. For example, the aruh baharin tradition is carried out by the Dayak Meratus community. This tradition is carried out as a form of mutual cooperation among the community, maintaining ancestral rituals, and a form of expressing gratitude to God Almighty for providing abundant harvests (Pratama & Nurcahyo, 2019). The main dishes in this ritual are *bubur habang* and *bubur putih*. These two dishes are important because in the aruh baharin ceremony the most important dish is rice, then animals and plants (Pranata et al., 2022).

Bubur habang and *bubur putih* became a heritage brought by the Dayak Meratus community which is still carried out until now by the Banjar community. The presentation of *bubur habang* and



bubur putih is often found at weddings, seven-monthly baths, and also in the *Batamba* ritual. The presentation of *bubur habang* and *bubur putih* in the *Batamba* ritual has its own purpose and meaning.

Based on Fatmawati's statement regarding the use of *bubur habang* and *bubur putih* in the *Batamba* ritual, the symbolic meaning of *bubur habang* and *bubur putih* in the *Batamba* ritual is a form of request to spiritual entities not to disturb individuals or communities. *The Batamba* ritual aims to cure diseases, one of which is caused by a mystical thing. In the *Batamba* ritual because of the beliefs behind this ritual, food symbols become a means of communication between ritual participants and spiritual entities. *Bubur habang* and *bubur putih* become a medium between the *pananamba* and the ancestral spirits so as not to disturb and also to ask for healing. *Bubur habang* and *bubur putih* are not only seen as food, but also as tools to create harmony and resolve spiritual conflicts.

Illnesses caused by mystical disturbances can be alleviated or cured by serving *bubur habang* and *bubur putih* as complements in the *Batamba* ritual. The act of serving *bubur habang* and *bubur putih* illustrates that individuals or communities act based on symbols that are mutually understood. According to Blumer, human action towards something is based on the meaning that something gives to it. The more important something means to him, the stronger he maintains it (Alif & Yulianti, 2022; Dalmenda & Elian, 2016; Raharjo, 2018).

The meaning of *bubur habang* and *bubur putih* is formed through social interaction and agreed upon by the community. Based on the assumptions of symbolic interaction theory put forward by Blumer, namely; (1) humans take action referring to the meaning that things have for themselves; (2) the meaning believed is the result of social interactions that occur in a person with other people; (3) the meaning obtained from the interaction is refined again by thinking. The symbols of *bubur habang* and *bubur putih* already exist in the Dayak community in South Kalimantan and then there is an acculturation process with Banjar culture. In the *Batamba* ritual, participants reinforce the meaning of *bubur habang* and *bubur putih* as the main elements in healing. *Pananamba*, as the main actor in this ritual, provides context and interpretation to the symbols of *bubur habang* and *bubur putih* through prayers or mantras, as well as the use of porridge as spiritual offerings.

5 Conclusion

Based on the results and discussion, the *Batamba* ritual is still believed by the Banjar community as an alternative treatment for diseases that cannot be cured by medical treatment. In its implementation, the communicative situation depicted is solemn with the hope for healing. Communicative events in the *Batamba* ritual explain the sequence of actions from the beginning to the end of the ritual, conveying the content and form of messages conveyed through prayers or mantras, as well as symbols that have meaning for the safety and healing of individuals or communities. Verbal communicative acts are described by the pronunciation of prayers or mantras, as well as advice to patients. Non-verbal communicative acts are shown by the use of symbols in the *Batamba* ritual.

Studies related to the *Batamba* ritual are not only limited to describing the series of ritual processes; this research also describes the symbolic meaning of using the symbols of *bubur habang* and *bubur putih* in the *Batamba* ritual, which is still lacking in literature studies, especially for Banjar culture. Because the *Batamba* ritual has many symbols, further research can examine the delivery of messages and meanings conveyed through symbols in the *Batamba* ritual. So that it can provide a more comprehensive insight into cultural symbols in Banjar customs and maintain the sustainability of Banjar cultural values.



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The author(s) claim there is no conflict of interest.

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PAGE 7

PAGE 8

PAGE 9

PAGE 10

PAGE 11
