The Analysis of Food Symbols in the ‘Pakan’ Ritual of the Penan Saoh in Ulu Jelalong Community, Bintulu Sarawak

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Abstract: The Pakan ritual is a performance performed in the Penan Saoh Ulu Jelalong community to be presented to Baleik. The presentation consists of symbolic elements based on each type of food served. These symbolic elements are involved with the belief and cosmological system that surround the lives of Penan Saoh community. The main focus of this research is to analyse the symbol of food in the Pakan ritual from the viewpoint of non-verbal communication. This research used an ethnographic approach, and the researchers also participated in the ritual. The data was collected through an in-depth interview with the main informant, Vaie Jau’u, and other ritual practitioners. The research was conducted in Kampung Julaihi Penan Saoh Ulu Jelalong, Bintulu, Sarawak. The data analysis found that the food delivered to Baleik had its own meaning and could be interpreted through shape, colour, and the way it was presented. The food in the Pakan tray means love, gratitude, prayer, and hope for more sustenance in the upcoming year. The research also found that the ritual is still practiced to this day by the Penan Saoh Ulu Jelalong community and becomes the identity of its existence in the state of Sarawak.

Keywords: Symbol; Food; Pakan ritual; Tapok; Penan Ulu Jelalong

1. INTRODUCTION

Human life is inseparable from the symbols that influence the culture and life of its people. According to Mohamad Maulana et. al (2021), the relationship between nature and man is inseparable because it has highly sacred values, namely the existence of spirits or spirits that have extraordinary powers that control this nature. According to Needham (1972: 62-68), the earliest Penan community groups in the Bintulu district were in the Ulu Sungai Jelalong area. They are believed to have settled since the 19th century and followed Miri District’s Niah and Suai areas. Jay Langub (2010-2021), Advance in Asian Human Environmental Research volume 30, states that Penan Saoh initially from Apau Julan and Usun Apau crossed the Seping River, Mali River, and Koyan River and moved to left Jelalong, which entered the Sekelap plain under the leadership of Semalong Julan entered the Jelalong area. Then, he and his companions moved to the right side of the mountain. Semalong leadership was replaced by Semoling Junlan and still inhabits the Merurong area then the leadership moved to Sesian Semalong and Upper Jelalong, near the Tinjar area, then to the Temodoh area. Then, move on to the right side of the screen. Sesian was replaced by Turung Semuling, under the leadership of Turung, Penan Saoh settled in Sekuan. Penan Saoh lived for a long time in Sekuan under several leaders, namely Tugang Menyakit and Segali Tugang. The leader of Penan Saoh changed to Bibeng and then moved to the Liuk Area (Sungai Jelalong area) under the rule of the Sultanate of Brunei, then taken over by Senian, moved to the Sengaya area. Under Luton’s leadership, Penan Saoh moved to Long Saoh. After Luton died, he was buried in Long Saoh and Luton Cemetery (Klireng Luton) is still in Long Saoh. Nayang had replaced Luton and after that they had moved to Kebulu. Bibeng had replaced Luton upon his death and at this time it was under
British are even many of the Penan Saoh area, or forest reserves are not allowed to be disturbed. The Penan Saoh People's results, even by being virtuous on people in Ulu Jelalong, the unanimously agreed move to another area, namely to the Long Metobi area, but their practices, especially religious ones. If in the situation proves that the Penan Saoh have great respect for the spirit of Forest Reserve is now known as "Meluan National Park". Any timber company is not allowed to encroach. This as hardeners to the villagers, and their forest area. For timber companies that have been working in their areas, they are obliged to provide payments Kampung under before being replaced by Mr. Julaihi Keti, attach great importance to and respect the forest. In 1978, the people of especially in study area, namely the Julaihi Keti long house, Long Sauh. The Penans at Rumah Julaihi, or rumah Keti as believing in the power of nature, the sound of birds and so on. Brosius (1990) in his article entitled "River, Forest and Mountain: The Penan Gang Landscape," explains the role of nature in the lives of Penan people, especially the relationship of Penan with nature and the development that is around them from the aspect of caring for resources in the forest. Penan people have a close relationship with nature, especially the shape of the Earth's surface, mountains, rivers, etc, Bakar, F.A. at. al (2023). Every event in the mountains, river valleys, and so on connects with the life of the people of Penan.

For Langub (1990: 3) Penan communities in the Baram, Belaga, and Limbang areas are believed to have settled for 30 years. They lived in longhouses and villages, especially in the Bintulu and Suai-Niah areas, making migratory farming a major source to replace sago as their main staple food. Penan's population growth has increased from 1990 to 2012. According to the Deputy Director of the State Planning Unit in Sarawak Premier Department, Encik Awie Abang, Penan's population in Sarawak increased from 1990 by 13,186 people to 17,851 people in 2012. In 2019, the total population of the Penan community in Sarawak increased to 21,367 people.

Penan People

Generally, the Penan community is an ethnic group known for living normally at one time. Progress in the present has changed their lives from nomads to a life of permanent residence. But one thing that has not changed in the Penan community is that they attach great importance to the forest as a complement to their daily activities. Like other communities, the Penan community also experienced changes in their practices, especially religious ones. If in the past, all Penan people still believed in the practice of animism, which is a Pagan custom, but nowadays, most of the Penan people in the Ulu Jelalong area have adopted Christianity as their religion, there are even many of the Penan people who have adopted Islam. Even so, some Penan people still practice Pagan customs by worshiping idols such as believing in the power of baleik who believe in the power of nature, the sound of birds and so on. Brosius (1990) in his article entitled "River, Forest and Mountain: The Penan Gang Landscape," explains the role of nature in the lives of Penan people, especially the relationship of Penan with nature and the development that is around them from the aspect of caring for resources in the forest. Penan people have a close relationship with nature, especially the shape of the Earth's surface, mountains, rivers, etc, Bakar, F.A. at. al (2023). Every event in the mountains, river valleys, and so on connects with the life of the people of Penan.

According to Datan & Leh (1997: 13), the Penan people have made the forest a site to find their livelihood. The passage of time has transformed all migratory activities into regular activities for the Penan community in Ulu Jelalong. The proof of this is that the forest according to Zafar, Z at. al (2022) has become an important resource for the Penan community to create oil palm plantations. For the Penan people in Ulu Jelalong, the pakan ceremony will be held every time they open a new area according to their beliefs and beliefs. The purpose of this ritual is done, so that they are blessed and protected by the power of God, and they will get more lucrative results, even by being virtuous on the ground, so they will continue to be blessed by God and the spirits of their ancestors. According to oral sources by Mr. Nyurak Keti (Kapit Division resident): December 17, 2021, the Penan community in the Ulu Jelalong area, especially in study area, namely the Julaihi Keti long house, Long Sauh. The Penans at Rumah Julaihi, or rumah Keti before being replaced by Mr. Julaihi Keti, attach great importance to and respect the forest. In 1978, the people of Kampung under the leadership of Mr. Keti Jemat and his men, fought for their rights when a timber company entered their forest area. For timber companies that have been working in their areas, they are obliged to provide payments as hardeners to the villagers, and their forest reserves are not allowed to be disturbed. The Penan Saoh People's Forest Reserve is now known as "Meluan National Park". Any timber company is not allowed to encroach. This situation proves that the Penan Saoh have great respect for the spirit of nature. 
Penan Saoh residents who inhabit the study area in Kampung Julaihi Keti at this time, the majority profess Christianity, Islam and a few still profess animist beliefs. However, its residents will remain united and support each other if they hold a ceremony pingat by providing Pakan held in accordance with the beliefs and respectively. For example, people who profess Christianity they will join the Christian way by providing food and being taken to new areas that they want to explore, such as a newly opened garden area, and, in that place, they will pray together, and in the end, they will eat together with the food they bring. Activities like this have shown the spirit of unity between them. But for people who still adhere to animistic beliefs, they bring food and offer on Tapok to be offered to Retalak as a statement of intent to ask for protection from God. According to Mr. Nyurak Keti (resident of Kapit Division), Penan Ulu Jelolong consists of four different groups consisting of Penan Saoh (Penan Jelalong), Penan Mekapan, Penan Su'an, and Penan Kebulu, which have different origins. According to the respondents, the first group of Penan who moved to Sungai Jelalong was Penan Saoh, a study area in Kampung Julaihi. They are believed to have originated from Usun Apau, in the Belaga District, and moved to Tokong Padeng upstream of jelalong River in the seventeenth century under the leadership of Sesian. From Tokong Padeng they moved to Tujuk Mekaut at the head of Saoh River. From Tujuk Mekaut they moved from Long Saoh and they were known as Penan Saoh. In 2012 they moved to Long Metobi because their settlement in Long Saoh had been destroyed in 1997 and 2008. Therefore, they made the settlement of ba-ru at Long Metobi in the Saoh river until now they are under the leadership of Julaihi Keti. This fact has been supported by Mr. Keti Jemat (former village head), Puan Duad Keti who was interviewed on December 28, 2021 by telling the same thing.

Ritual Pakan

Pakan Ritual is a traditional heritage practice of the Penan saoh community that is carried out every year as a sign of gratitude for the abundance of sustenance given during the previous year, in addition to seeking protection from Retalak and Baleik. The Penan Saoh believe that human sustenance comes from Retalak and Baleik. Therefore, offerings in the form of food and objects through a special ritual known as the Pakan ritual feed is carried out to entertain Baleik. This was also explained by Keti Jemat (2021) that the Pakan ceremony in the Penan Saoh community is a ceremony of presentation and gratitude for the spirit of forest nature because the Penan community was originally a nomadic people who constantly moved in the forest area that inhabited the Bintulu Sarawak area. Although the practice of this tradition is changing with the tide of modernization by Tugau, M. at. all (2020). The Penan Saoh community in Kampung Julaihi, Jelalong Bintulu Sarawak still maintain their original traditional practices. In fact, according to the belief of the Penan Saoh community, the Pakan ceremony by paying the intention will not be perfect without the Pakan ritual. This is because they are still holding on to the principle of holding the intention, which is to hold on to the Pingat that have been set by the legacy of previous ancestors through oral and transmitted from generation to generation. This abstinence governs their every move and behavior regardless of the land and river and is translated in the cosmology of their society. Therefore, to maintain mutual security, each individual Penan adheres to the abstinence set by the community. If it is broken, it will lead to the anger of Retalak and Baleik.
2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Food refers to symbols rich in various meanings representing an ethnic group or community. Sorre (1962) views food as a symbol of creation that has its own meaning in Christianity. He also discusses food and its relationship with social imbalance. According to him, diet is essential, but it is not just an analysis of the food source; how the food is prepared should also be studied. The perspective of Sorre is supported by Grainers (1976), that it is not only covered from the geographical view where the food is not only seen as food alone but must be viewed through its relation to the environment. This is because food is an essential component of the ritual as it is one of the non-verbal ways of communicating with the extraordinary spirit.

This is precisely similar to the perspective of Rozin (1982) on the attitude towards food preparation as also influenced by the economic and environmental conditions. For example, there is an adaptation to preparing the food to be served. The soybean is a favorite food of the Chinese community. To save fuel, they have accepted the consumption of bean sprouts as one of the food sources that can provide nutrients from soybeans. Cooking the bean sprouts takes only a short time compared to soybeans. He also stated that the characteristics of a culture are not static. Consequently, to sustain the tradition, it can also develop as a mechanism for change. Furthermore, among the driving factors of the changes are the availability of materials, food innovation, and diffusion effects from the assimilation with other ethnicities. This statement is in accordance with the opinions from Shuhirdy et al., (2013) that food is rich in symbolism and plays an important role in human life as well as contributing to a community's customs, traditions, and culture. Meanwhile, in the perspective of Whitt (2011), food is essential to identify the cultural identity of an ethnic group. This is because food not only represents one's personal identity in life, but reflects a community's identity, cultural differences, and boundaries. Additionally, food symbolism also exists in a custom that brings a certain message that has been stated by Foster & Anderson (1978), that food determines the relationship between individuals and groups.

Semiotics in linguistics and culture can be interpreted as a theory of communication. This statement is due to studies of signs and symbols (including the ways people talk, write, sing and smell, gestures, images, music, art, and others) through which people express their feelings, ideas, thoughts, and ideologies. This research covers how meaning is interpreted through sign and symbol systems that can be understood during the perception and interpretation of the situation. The semiotic theory focuses on the cultural and psychological forms that are the basis of language, art, and other cultural expressions used as tools that assist in presentation and give meaning to the event. Among the well-known linguistics in this field are Ferdinand de Saussure, 1857-1913 (father of modern linguistics), Charles Sanders Peirce, 1839-1913 (founder of the pragmatism doctrine), and Roland Barthes, 1915-1980. Semiotic terms represent knowledge that covers various disciplines, such as linguistic studies, signs, symbols, architecture, and visual design (Sobur, 2009). He also added that the sign system of Pierce (1839-1913) is focused on three aspects: icons, indexes,
and symbols. Subsequently, it also focuses on the aspect of representamen that consists of three things: qualisign, sinsign, and legisign.

Peirce (1839-1913) also pointed out that this sign may be read as representamen, while object refers to a concept, thing, or idea. On the other hand, the meaning is a perception, thought, or feeling and an interpretation achieved from the sign given (Danesi, 2004). In addition, the signing model presented by Peirce (1839-1913) is also known as trichotomy or triadic. Peirce (1839-1913) also derived that the meaning of the sign is based on the relationship between three points, which are representation (R), object (O), and interpretation (I). Significantly, (R) is a part of the sign that is perceived through physically referring to something that represents (O), while (I) is a part of the process that interprets the relationship between (R) and (O). The theory used in this research is Peirce’s semiotic theory (1839-1913), which is directly related to the focus of the research. Therefore, this writing will provide a basic overview of this theory as it relates to the study of communication, especially in non-verbal communication. Thus, the thinking applied in this research is based on non-verbal communication from the approach of Matsumoto et al., (2011), suggesting that the function of non-verbal communication is divided into three parts. The three parts are defined, regulated, and the message. The relevance of this research is related to non-verbal communication from the statement of Hans & Hans (2015), that in daily life, people communicate by using words seven percent only, and the remaining method of communication is through non-verbal communication (93%). Hence, based on this principle, the meaning of a symbol (food) is a form of non-verbal communication in which the meaning can be interpreted through the theory of Charles Sanders Pierce (1839-1913).

![Key: I - Interpretation, R - Representamen, O - Object](image)

### 3. METHODOLOGY

This discussion was conducted at the research location in Kampung Julaihi Penan Saoh Ulu Jelalong, Bintulu Sarawak where the community is still practicing the ritual of Pakan. This research was conducted in 2019.

![Figure 3: Map of Sarawak State](image)
This study was conducted using an ethnographic approach which is based on the survey and observation of the research. The in-depth interview was held with Vaie Jau'u and Pengejau Umak, who is the leader and supporter of the ritual of Pakan. Besides, this research also involved library research to obtain the data or information conducted by previous researchers as for reference. The findings of this study will be analysed to identify the food symbols used by the Penan Saoh Ulu Jelalong community in the Pakan ritual and it exists with other creatures. This influence has good value in their perspectives because it is the spirit and also the motivation to do good deeds.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of food</th>
<th>Figure</th>
<th>Meaning of Symbols</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Lupeh</strong></td>
<td><img src="image" alt="Lupeh Image" /></td>
<td>This dish is made from rice, grated coconut, salt, pure leaves and water. It is shaped like a long rectangle and has a salty fat taste. It is prepared by the Penan women a day before the feeding ritual begins. Lupeh dishes are usually sent to Baleik and eaten en masse to the guests during the feeding ritual.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Penyarem</strong></td>
<td><img src="image" alt="Penyarem Image" /></td>
<td>The cake has a sweet taste and brown color. Made from rice flour, wheat flour, water, cooking oil, apong sugar and fried in a small and convex type pan. It is prepared by the Penan women a day before the feeding ritual begins.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Kelapa parut</strong></td>
<td>Vo'nyu is coconut as a grated coconut. Vonyu scar symbolizes the purity and sincerity of people's hearts in hoping and asking for something of their intentions to God (Retalak) and Baleik (Forest Spirit) so that they will always be given protection and safety as long as they seek sustenance on God's Earth. It is prepared by the Penan women a day before the feeding ritual begins.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sipak dan gulung</strong></td>
<td>A dish dedicated to the guardian or deity of a river or sea is known as a Baleic. Food is the link between humans and Baleik. It must be prepared before the ritual begins.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Vas Kuneng dan Ilu</strong></td>
<td>Vas Kuneng is a yellow rice that carries the meaning of peace and unity and blessings so that you can get abundant life from God. While the Ilu is an egg is the meaning of human life, meaning that humans should be at peace with nature and at peace with God because that egg is placed on a yellow vase. The yellow vase was used to summon the spirit of the ruler who was in the forest. This rice is dyed with turmeric water to get its color.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Burak/Tuak</strong></td>
<td>Wine is a drink to the spirits of the ancestors and the gods when they come to the house when the feeding ceremony is done. The second use of Tuak water is to be served to guests who come. Water is also needed to welcome the arrival of baleik. When guests come to the house during the pakan ceremony, they are asked to pour small quantities of tuak water for the baleik. According to the story of the old people, the water that is thrown will fall on the fodder. So that way, Baleik will know that someone is doing a feeding ceremony.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Lupeh**

Lupeh is one of the traditional foods in the life of Penan people. This dish is a long rectangle because it symbolizes the shape of the heart based on Penan community beliefs. Lupeh is wrapped in lerik leaves or pure leaves that are ripe and green and filled with lupeh dough, which is rice that has been pounded into a smooth and white color. The
dish has a fatty taste because it is made from rice and grated coconut. Usually, Lupeh served to guests during the Pakan ritual is eaten with hot coffee or hot tea. In making lupeh, some rules and taboos must be obeyed not only to the lupeh maker, but also to the community around him to maintain the purity of the feed ritual. For example, the Lupeh must be in a state of purity and purity from any impurities. Therefore, the prayer recitation is read to cleanse oneself and the surroundings before making it. The prayer should not be given to any inexperienced or aged individual. This is done to maintain the sanctity and symbol of respect for Retalak, who has extraordinary power over ordinary people. According to Lakei Jau‘u, pinching or touching lupeh in a tray of feed is considered rude and will bring anger to Retalak. In Magiman, M. M. (2012) study of the Kadayan people’s ‘Ritual Makan Tahun’, the element of purity is also clearly seen during the process of wrapping kelupis and making penganan raja, also known as yellow glutinous rice. To maintain the purity of the dish, individuals should take the prayer water first, while only the elderly who have not reached menstruation are allowed to make a dish known as panganan raja. Research findings on cultural identity in the context of traditional ethnic cakes Brunei in Sabah by Surayah et.al (2019) also found that tapai making in Bruneian society also has certain abstinence. To maintain the purity of tapai, one needs to cleanse oneself and wear clean clothes. In addition, menstruating women are also prohibited from making tapai to maintain the purity of the tapai dish.

**Penyarem**

Penyarem is a dish that must be offered in the feed tray. The dish is shaped like a hat, and at the end, it forms like small flower petals, brownish in color, and has a sweet taste. The cake’s sweet taste comes from the apong sugar produced using candied water from the apong tree. According to the taboos of the Penan community, no one is allowed to enter a special room that stores the penyarem mixture deliberately to avoid being disturbed by evil spirits such as Jinn, demons, and devils, which can lead to death. This is because the food provided to the Retalak must be clean and avoid human impurities. The brown color in the penyarem cake results from using icing sugar, which has a viscous, sweet, and sticky texture. According to the belief system of the Penan people, the brownish color of kuih penyaram symbolizes the wealth of its people, which are rich in forest products that thrive around the area. In contrast to the results of a study obtained by Azah Aziz (2006), which explains that the color yellow in the Malay community is synonymous with symbolic wealth because the color yellow is the color of gold. Thus, Asmah Haji Omar (2005) concluded that the meaning translated through color is culture dependent. This means that a society has its own way of seeing color, and its way of seeing it is not the same as other societies. Penyarem also carries the meaning of a symbol of love in the beliefs of the community of practitioners. The texture of gula apong which is viscous, sweet and sticky reflects a love that never breaks even though it is far from each other which ultimately leads to unification between Penan communities regardless of Islamic Penan, Christian Penan and traditional Penan. In fact, the traditional Penan people believe that when they eat sweet penyaram cake, they will be able to persuade Retalak to provide abundant and long-lasting sustenance, especially in the river and sea, which in turn will unite the entire Penan community.

**Yellow Rice and Egg**

Yellow rice is a mixture of turmeric. The live turmeric used will give color to the rice that is white. There are two elements (properties) that determine the sign that is consumed from the feed point of view according to the practice of the Penan Saoh community in serving yellow rice in the feed ritual, especially the symbol of application or intention to baleik. It consists of its properties, color, taste, motifs, and decor. Looking at the nature of yellow rice as smooth and smooth, Penan saoh community believes that this nature brings meaning that is divided into two fractions, namely to nature and to the unification of Penan Saoh community and kinship ties of its inhabitants. The purpose of yellow rice dish is generally expected penan Saoh community in kampung Julaihi Keti Ulu Jelalong, Bintulu Sarawak, will live in harmony and unity. However, for family members, this trait responds as a symbol of family ties where it is hoped that these bonds will be strong with each other. The yellow color of rice is a symbol of wealth and prosperity. In the event of yellow rice feed is prepared on a small plate, and then will be placed chicken eggs that have been cooked on it. Yellow rice means that people are always given an abundance of sustenance and prosperity. Yellow rice will be sown around the feeding area. By sowing yellow rice (while reciting spells) around the feeding area, all disasters are believed to be avoided. The power and greatness
of this yellow rice can be transferred to the environment, the healer, and even the patient. The strength and power of the evil elements in the environment can be weakened when exposed to the spellbound yellow rice. While the Ilu is an egg, it is the meaning of human life, meaning humans should be at peace with nature and God because that egg is placed on a yellow vase.

**Sipak and Gulung**

Sipak ngan gulung is a typical dish provided in one plate for river keepers, gods, spirits, and Goblin. According to Mr. Lijak Amit, interviewed on June 2, 2023, Sipak ngan gulung is a dish that must be in the Pakan ritual to be presented to Baleik. Sipak ngan gulung combines betel elements, apong cigarettes, tobacco, lime, and areca nut and is believed to connect humans in the natural world and Baleik (supernatural).

**Buraq or Tuak**

*Buraq* is fermented water made from rice and yeast. Buraq water is a drink offered to the Gods (baleik), the spirits of ancestors, and when they come to the house when the feeding ceremony is performed. The second use of *Buraq* water is to be served to guests who come. Furthermore, *buraq* water is also needed to welcome the arrival of Retalak. When guests come to the house during the Pakan ceremony, they are asked to throw (*mujek*) *buraq* water in small quantities for *baleik*. According to the story of the ancients, the water of the discarded *buraq* will fall into the jar *baleik* pekurip (power of God). In this way, the *baleik* pekurip will know that someone is performing the tilting ceremony. If he feels that he should attend the ceremony, he will.

4. **DISCUSSION**

The symbolism found in the pakan ritual cannot only be described through physical activity but also reflects the purpose of the act. According Magiman, M.M. at. al (2020), in conveying the meaning of the purpose, it includes the obvious aspect which is the aspect that leads to the symbolism and the religious form of ritual. The symbols and meanings of the Penan Saoh Ulu Jelalong community are indeed adapted from the experiences of their community through the observation of events in their daily lives. The explanation of the meaning of the symbol reflects the traditional cosmology of the Penan Saoh Ulu Jelalong community which is transmitted through the symbols of food in the Pakan ritual. The use of symbols of tradition or animism is taken from the context of the life of the Penan Saoh Ulu Jelalong community itself. This is because they are very closely attached to nature, especially reflecting on the spirits of the river, sea, land and forest (Mohamed et al., 2010). From the reflections, the people discover their meaning of life and are represented by nature. The characteristics of nature, such as the supernatural power that is called Ipok has become the picture for living as a community for Penan Saoh Ulu Jelalong people as the source of knowledge in their life.

The definition of a symbol may change from time to time according to the circumstances or will from society. The symbols are often interpreted ambiguously because they can be interpreted more than once at certain times. Therefore, symbols have specific meanings based on the will, understandings, and definitions of the people at that time. Every ceremony must have its rules for it to be accepted by these supernatural powers. The Penan Saoh Ulu Jelalong Bintulu, also do not miss out on the legacy of animism inherited from their ancestors. These elements of animism are still practiced because of the daily necessity for those who still believe in the powers possessed by supernatural elements such as spirit, ‘penunggu’, and others. They believe that if these elements are not neutralized it will result in undesirable conditions in their lives that will affect the sustenance from the jungle and river.

5. **SUMMARY**

Food in the dowry *Tapok* of Pakan, of the ethnic group of Penan Saoh Ulu Jelalong, Bintulu Sarawak brings the meanings of love, togetherness, happiness, and also prayer and hope that can be seen from the perspective of physicalartefacts that are related to non-verbal communication. Even though the study refers to the same ethnicity of the Penan Ulu Jelalong tribe, the differences still exist. This proves that there are differences in the existence of the Penan ethnicity that indirectly brings the similarities and differences in meaning between the food symbols in the Pakan ritual.
6. REFERENCES


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