

Symbolic Interactionism in Ceremonies of Ritual Medicine in Malay Society in Riau Province

Nurmalinda

Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, Universitas Islam Riau (UIR)
Jl. Kaharuddin Nst No.113, Simpang Tiga, Kec. Bukit Raya, Kota Pekanbaru,
Riau 28284

Email: nurmalinda@edu.uir.ac.id; Ph.: +62 82172352602

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to describe the symbolic interactions in the ritual ceremonies of medical treatment in Riau Province and the symbolic meanings of ritual ceremonies in the Malay community in Riau Province. This study uses descriptive qualitative methods. The medical rituals in Riau province studied include *Kuantan*, *Bedikie*, *Menyemah*, *Pole*, *Cabut Kelo*, *Talam Muka Dua*, *Bokuan*, and *Buang Badi*. These rituals are procedures for a medical ceremony carried out by a group of people in Riau Province, marked by the presence of several elements and components, namely the existence of time, the place of the ceremony, the ceremonial instruments, and the people who performed the ceremony. The study of symbolic interactionism in ritual ceremonies of the Malay community focuses on interactions that give rise to special meanings that create interpretation. The symbols used in the ceremonies result from mutual agreements. How things become a shared perspective and how an action gives special meanings can only be understood by those who perform the ceremonies. Mulyana's symbolic interaction theory points out that self, social self, including control from other people's perspectives, interpretations, and other meanings that appear in the interaction form three premises (1) humans act based on meanings; (2) meanings derive from interaction with others, (3) meaning develops and refines when interactions take place.

Keywords: symbolic interactionism; ritual treatment; Riau Malay community

ABSTRAK

Interaksionisme Simbolik Upacara Ritual Pengobatan dalam Masyarakat Melayu di Provinsi Riau. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mendeskripsikan interaksi simbolik dalam upacara-upacara ritual pengobatan di Provinsi Riau dan makna simbol upacara-upacara ritual pengobatan kepada masyarakat Melayu di Provinsi Riau. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode kualitatif jenis deskriptif. Ritual pengobatan yang terdapat di Provinsi Riau yang diteliti di antaranya *Kumantan*, *Bedikie*, *Menyemah*, *Pole*, *Cabut Kelo*, *Talam Muka Dua*, *Bokuan*, dan *Buang Badi*. Ritual-ritual ini merupakan tata cara dalam upacara pengobatan yang dilakukan oleh sekelompok masyarakat di Provinsi Riau, ditandai dengan adanya beberapa unsur dan komponen, yaitu adanya waktu, tempat upacara dilakukan, alat-alat upacara, serta orang-orang yang melakukan upacara. Kajian interaksionisme simbolik dalam upacara ritual masyarakat Melayu menitikberatkan pada interaksi yang memunculkan makna-makna khusus yang melahirkan interpretasi. Simbol-simbol yang digunakan dalam upacara-upacara tersebut merupakan hasil kesepakatan bersama. Bagaimana suatu hal menjadi perspektif bersama dan bagaimana suatu tindakan memberikan makna khusus hanya dapat dipahami oleh orang-orang yang melakukannya. Teori interaksi simbolik Mulyana menyatakan bahwa diri, diri sosial, termasuk kontrol dari sudut pandang orang lain, interpretasi, dan makna lain yang muncul dalam interaksi membentuk tiga premis (1) manusia bertindak berdasarkan makna; (2) makna berasal dari interaksi dengan orang lain, (3) makna berkembang dan disempurnakan ketika interaksi berlangsung.

Kata kunci: interaksionisme simbolik; ritual pengobatan; masyarakat Melayu Riau

Introduction

Cultural heritage as a national asset must be preserved to maintain its strength and to be passed on to the future generations without losing its values (Gustianingrum & Affandi, 2016:2). The Malay society in Riau province has preserved and developed their culture over generations to this day, among them are healing ceremonies which are referred to with different names in different regions, such as *Kumantan*, *Menyimah*, *Pidaraan*, *Talam Muka Dua*, *Bedikie*, *Poleh*, and *Cabut Kelo*.

Ritual as a rite system is a form of celebration ceremony associated with a belief or religion as marked by a special trait of honoring the ancestors and is considered as a holy experience (Hadi, 2006:241). A ritual is an art or ceremony held by following several specific requirements, principles, and actions.

The ceremony usually utilizes music instruments to summon spirits who will transfer some power to a shaman as well as uses spells to cure diseases. A spell refers to a set of words or utterances with the ability to invite metaphysical forces, to cure diseases, and to deliver calamities. Based on its purpose, there are two types of spells. First, a spell that is aimed as a prayer to God; and second, a spell that invites and requests for the help of ancestral spirits or djinns.

The development of spells in Malay's medical system is closely correlated to the society's perception of disease. They believe that an illness is not only triggered by physical factors, but also abstract or metaphysical ones. In the context of medical ritual, a spell functions as a tool to break the disease from its supernatural cause. Besides, reciting a spell is believed to enhance medicine efficacy. A person who has the power to recite spell and to do supernatural things is called a shaman (Abdillah 2006).

Traditional healers (*dukun*, *datuk*, *bomoh*, or *guru*) diagnose the underlying problems of a disease. They use supernatural power to cure diseases attributed to personalistic etiologies. They also apply certain techniques and herbal remedies to those affected by naturalistic etiologies or both naturalistic and personalistic ones. No matter how simple a health system is, it always has at least

two primary categories: (1) disease theory system, and (2) health care system (Foster & Anderson, 1978:37). Theory of disease, according to Foster & Anderson (1978:37-38) involves the believe towards the nature of health, the disease etiology, the diversity of medicine, and the treatments. In contrast, a treatment system refers to the techniques and knowledge applied by the community to treat patients.

Literature Review

Symbol is derived from a Greek word "*sys-ballein*" which means 'throwing something (object, action) together' or *symbolos*, meaning 'signs or characteristics depicting certain thing to someone' (Panjaitan & Sundawa, 2016:66). A symbol is a stimulus containing meaning and value learned and responded by human (Mulyana, 2001:77). In the language of communication, a symbol is often referred to as a sign, an object which includes words (verbal message), nonverbal actions, and objects which meaning is collaboratively understood. Ogden and Richards in Aminuddin Aminuddin (1997:205-207) suggested that symbol can be associated with thought, symbol, and referenced world. In animism and dynamism beliefs, people use symbols as mediums of sacrifices for the gods who control the world. This symbolic life continues throughout human civilization eras in this world. Those symbols are apparent through their methods and mediums of prayers (Yudoseputro, 1991:35).

The theory of symbolic interactionism is based on pragmatism philosophy that emphasizes the reality created upon actual action, knowledge, and memory of real world, as well as the definitions of social and physical objects based on their uses. The second basis is social behaviorism, which views an action towards a stimulus not simply as a form as response, but as an act motivated by the meaning of the object for the person. The special characteristics of human symbolic communication is that it is not limited to physical signs. In contrast, it utilizes words, which are sound symbols containing commonly understood meaning and are standardized. The symbols can be objects, movements, or words.

Symbolic interaction, according to Effendy (1989:352) is an idea that social interaction between individuals, groups, and communities are motivated by communication within each individual, implying that there occurs internalization process.

It can be concluded that symbolic interactionism views human as an individual who thinks, feels, and interprets every situation, and he/she reacts and interprets every stimulus encountered. The symbolic interaction theory is also called interpretive sociology theory.

A ritual is any method in a ceremony or sacred event conducted by a group of religious people as marked by the presence of several elements and components, namely time, place, instruments of ceremony, and the people who participate in it (Koentjaraningrat, 1992:56). A ritual is a form of ceremony or celebration related to some beliefs and religions as marked by specific characteristics, which honors the ancestors and is considered a sacred experience. This experience is carried out and aimed to the deity.

A ritual has specific characteristics so that people carry it out as a form of religious prayer. A ritual is further characterized by referring to supernatural or religious characteristics and purposes. From religious perspective, it is viewed physically as ornaments or tools, but important meaning of "statement of faith" is carried in it (Jacobs in Hadi, 2006). Therefore, religious ritual or ceremony is held at certain time and place using various sacred tools, and considered as an extraordinary conduct. System of ceremony as a representation of religion needs to be studied specifically. A ritual is held by religious community members in order to intensify their solidarity.

According to Koentjaraningrat (1992:252), religious ceremony consists of four components, namely: (1) venue, (2) time, (3) a complete set of ceremonial objects and instruments, and (4) ceremony leaders. Soedarsono (2010:162) stated that ritual arts of performance in Indonesia mostly develop in the communities that still adhere to agricultural values. The ritual characteristics are:

1. the need of specific ceremony sites often considered sacred,
2. the need of specific days often considered sacred

as well,

3. the need of special players who are considered sacred or spiritually pure,
4. the need of various offerings,
5. the purpose is more important than the aesthetics,
6. the need of traditional or specific clothes.

A religious system consists of three elements, namely (a) system of belief, (b) system of ceremony, and (c) a community or group who follows the religion (Koentjaraningrat, 1987:80). In terms of system of belief, anthropologists usually focus on the conception of gods and supernatural spirits such as the ancestral spirits, the good and bad spirits, ghosts, and the highest god and the creator of the world; the creation of the world and nature (cosmogony); the forms and traits of the world and nature (cosmology); the conception of life and death; the conception of the spirit world and afterlife; and many others.

The system of religious ceremony also specifically has four aspects, namely (a) ceremony venue, (b) time of ceremony, (c) ceremonial objects and instruments, and (d) the people who lead and hold the ceremony. Some of those aspects might be viewed crucial in one religion but not in another, and the other way around. Furthermore, a ceremony usually contains a set of those aspects. Some elements of the religious system, ritual, or religious ceremony are arranged in an integrated system.

Methodology

This research uses descriptive method on qualitative data obtained through close observation of the targeted ritual.

This research was conducted in Kuantan Singingi Regency, Kampar, Indragiri Hulu Rokan Hulu. The subject is Symbolic Interactionism Study on Medical Ritual Ceremonies in Malay community in Riau province, a community directly involved in the ceremony. Data were collected through non-participant observation as the researcher was not involved in the ceremony.

Another data collection method is interviewing people using prepared set of questions. A variety

of devices can be used here, such as tape recorder, notebook, and camera (Sugiyono, 2010:328). In this research, a tape recorder was used to record all of the conversation between the researcher and the subjects, and a camera was used to document the ritual process. Additionally, important information was documented on notebook to support the study result.

The data were then analyzed qualitatively. Qualitative data collection technique means the data were collected through observation, interview, and documentation (triangulation) continuously until they reach saturation point (Sugiyono, 2010:333).

Results and Discussion

Symbolic Interactionism in Healing Ritual

Kumantan is a healing ritual in Talang Perigi Village, Rakit Kulim District, Indragiri Hulu Regency. It aims at curing a variety of diseases such as fever, restoring enthusiasm and joy, facilitating exorcism, and increasing fitness.

Bedikie is a ceremony to cure illness. This ritual allows ancestral spirit to enter the shaman's body during the treatment. It is carried out verbally by singing a song to invite the spirits the people believe in.

Menyimah is a tradition of Talang Mamak community which heavily focuses on creating a harmonious life between human, nature (especially

the supernatural one), and other creatures, both for the benefit of the wider community and for personal interests. This community believes that their life problems are the results of disharmonious relationship between the three, and therefore *Menyimah* ritual is carried out to solve the problem.

Poleh is a ceremony for healing illness. The word *Poleh* comes from the word *oles* or smearing, referring to the activity where patients are rubbed with leaves enchanted by the shaman. Those leaves are picked by the shaman while reciting spells outdoor. They are rubbed on the patients from head to toe three times.

Bokuan ritual carried out by the people of Tanjung Padang, Kepenuhan District, Rokan Hulu Regency, Riau Province has been existing in the community since 1962. The absence of hospitals, health centers, and other treatment centers forced the people to use *Bokuan* as a method and attempt to cure diseases. To this day, this ritual still becomes an alternative option since it is considered an effective treatment, although the people also visit doctors. The next ritual is called *Talam Dua Muka*. It is a custom in Teluk Setimbul Village that still exists to this day. *Cabut Kelo* is a healing treatment applied when the patient's family gives consent. There should be no coercion in this treatment. The last one is *Buang Badi*. This ceremony aims solely at curing illness. It can be carried out either at the patient's house or the shaman's house.



Figure 1. *Bedikie*.



Figure 2. *Menyimah*.



Figure 3. *Poleh*.



Figure 4. *Cabut Kelo*.



Figure 5. *Buang Badi*.

Selected Sacred Places for the Rituals

A chosen sacred place is a site considered holy by the local community. Such places can be found in many regions and are usually the centers of spiritual power, such as a cemetery of a region's founder, a hero, or a spiritual leader.

Kumantan ritual is usually held in custom hall, but during this observation, it was held in *Kumantan's* house due to the inadequate equipment in the hall. Nevertheless, it does not change the sacredness of this ritual.

In contrast, *Bedikie* is usually held at home, such as in living room, common room, or the patient's bedroom. It can be held in a crowded or quiet situation. The ritual can also be opened for public after asking the permission of the ancestral spirits so that unwanted occurrence can be avoided.

The early step of *Menyimah* can be conducted in living room and later in a front yard, depending on the agreement between the headman and the patient's family. This ritual should be carried out in the patient's relative's house.

Meanwhile, *Poleh* treatment can be carried out in the patient's or his/her relative's house. The most sacred building for this treatment is house miniatures made of small branches put outdoor or indoor. These houses are where offerings for spirits are placed.

This medical ritual of *Cabut Kelo* can be done in living room, bedroom, or family room, and is usually held at the shaman's house. *Talam Dua Muka*, however, can only be held in the community's sacred site. Meanwhile, the ritual of *Bokuan* is usually held in *bomau's* house. The place of treatment, however, can be the living room, family room, or bedroom in the patient's, or the shaman's house as long as it is clean.

Sacred Days for the Rituals

Sacred days and times need to be determined for a ritual (Soedarsono, 2010:126). There is no fixed days for *Kumantan* because its time is decided after observing the patient's condition. However, this ceremony is usually held at night for easier communication with spirits.

Bedikie healing ritual is held at night at 07.30 PM and in the evening from 03.00 to 04.00 PM.

This is a fixed time and is one of the rules for conducting the treatment, thus it cannot be carried out outside this time. The process usually takes an hour or more, depending on the disease handled.

Another ritual, *Menyimah*, can be started after the sunset. The ceremony is held at night, starting at 08.00 PM until finish.

Poleh is carried out from morning till evening. In the morning, from 07.00 to 10.00 A.M, the practitioners search for required equipment of the ritual. From the afternoon until evening, from 02.00 to 05.00 PM, they prepare the equipment for the treatment procedure.

Differently, *Cabut Kelo* can be done anytime depending on the patient's condition. This is because patient's condition cannot be predicted and the treatment itself should not be made complicated for the his/her family.

Talam Dua Muka is carried out in the afternoon at 02.00 PM, when the sun is above the head, until finish. It is only conducted once every three months, on the 15th day, as it is in the middle of the month. However, the ritual itself only lasts for 20 minutes.

The time for *Bokuan* is from 10.00 PM and usually finishes at 02.00 A.M.

The last one is *Buang Badi*. Its time should be carefully paid attention because it can only be conducted from around 03.00 PM – 04.00 PM.

Leaders of Rituals

In a medical ritual, certain people are needed for the process, such as the clan's headman or the honored local figure.

The leader of *Kumantan* ceremony is also called *Kumantan*. The chosen person usually fulfills the criteria for being a role model of good spiritual knowledge. Male *bintara*, female *bintara*, and three *bujang bayu* will help *kumantan* during the ritual.

In *Bedikie* ritual, a shaman leads the process while the patient's family are the supporting figures.

In *Menyimah* ritual, the most influencing figure is *Datuk sutan cuan*. There are several people who help and are responsible of carrying out the process, namely the *Kumantan*, shaman, *Kebaru*, and *Orang Pandai*. There are also two female and two male *bintaras* who help with the process. The

two female *bintaras* prepare the offerings, while the two male *bintaras* search for the offering materials in the forest.

The chosen people to support *Poleh* ritual are called *pebayu*. During the ritual process, *pebayu* has the important role to help the shaman picking equipment needed.

As for *Cabut Kelo*, a shaman is the leader and the family of the patients is the one who prepares all of the ceremonial equipment.

In *Talam Dua Muka* ritual, the ones involved are the *atuk* (clan headman) or shaman and other ritual participants.

While in *Bokuan* ritual, the participants are a *bomau*, a patient, and a spokesman.

The chosen participants for *Buang Badi* ritual are the family of the patient because in this ritual, they are the ones who should prepare the equipment.

Specific Purposes of the Rituals

According to Koentjaraningrat (1977:257), prayer is an element commonly found in ceremonies. It is usually accompanied with movements or non-verbal manners that express respect and humbleness towards the ancestors, deities, or God.

The main purpose of *Kumantan* is to heal illnesses, such as possession, fever, energy loss, fitness decrease, and liveliness decrease.

Bedikie healing ritual is held to cure the patient's disease and is often an option when the community of Sakai Tribe does not have enough funds to visit hospitals or other healthcare facilities.

Menyimah treatment aims at asking for safety to the Creator and the ancestors so that the future generations are protected from various diseases and other adversities.

Poleh is conducted when the disease contracted is severe and incurable by other medical treatments, such as hospital treatment or a milder treatment than *Poleh* called *Semah*.

The ritual of *Cabut Kelo* is a medical treatment aiming at healing the patient's illness.

The ritual of *Talam Dua Muka* is chosen because the community believes it can guard the village and heal any illness resulted from black magic and disruption by the spirits.

With the ritual of *Bokuan*, various diseases can be treated by the *bomau*, such as the diseases caused by black magic; possession (where a spirit enters someone's body without permission); wild animal's bite, sting, and toxin; and fever. The ritual can also facilitate land purification before building enactment and forest clearing. The last one is *Buang Badi*. This ritual usually aims at healing long-term disease and solving birth giving problems where previous pregnancies always led to infant's death. The types of diseases targeted are those coming from physical and psychological factors.

The Procedures of Healing Ritual

For every event happening in life, a ritual ceremony is usually held. The ceremony involves time, space, venue, equipment, text (message of ceremony), leaders, and participants of ceremony (Hamidy, 1989:22).

Here are the steps of conducting *Kumantan* ritual:

1. People involved in the ritual had a meal together.
2. The *Kumantan* did a *dhikr* (repeatedly reciting certain Islamic phrases) and then recited the holy verses of the Quran (Al-Fatihah, Al-Ikhlâs, An-Nas, Al-Falaq);
3. The *Kumantan* spoke to *bintara*, *bujang bayu*, and the patient to gain information about the patient's health problem before deciding what steps are to be taken next;
4. The *Kumantan* burnt incense, placed flowers, cut lime, and then put them all into water. The water was then splashed to the patient to neutralize his/her negative aura;
5. The *Kumantan* then recited *dhikr* again, and then the female *bintara* started to whistle to call the spirits. Next, the shaman understood the disease of the patient by breaking a native chicken egg on a plate. Then, the *Kumantan* started reciting *dhikr* again while pouring water on the patient's hand. Lastly, the patient had to eat the yellow rice that had been prepared before the start of the ritual.

Next is *Bedikie* ritual. The steps are as follows:

1. A spell was recited to call the ancestral spirits from whom the ritual's participants would ask for some help.

2. Next, a spiritual power entered the body of the shaman and made the shaman feeling as if he were in another world while losing consciousness. Thus, only the *pebayu* knew what the shaman was saying.
3. The shaman slowly approached the patient while kneeling.
4. The shaman walked back and forth while moving to the four directions: north, east, south, and west.
5. Then, the shaman spun a plate containing coals on the patient's head.
6. Next, the shaman sat close to the patient's feet and rubbed them.
7. The shaman sprinkled *berteh* (paddy) to the patient, and his assistant passed an incense and candle to the shaman.
8. The shaman then informed the assistant about the disease of the patient and told him to shower the patient's body with water. Finally, the shaman and the assistant ended the ritual.

The followings are the steps of *Menyimah* ritual:

1. In the beginning, the shaman and the *bintara* wore headbands (*destar*), then the shaman wore a side band and a long white band on his neck.
2. The *bintara* put the offerings in front of the shaman.
3. The shaman grabbed *mayang* while reciting spells, then put the *mayang* on his head. The *bintara* then fumigated the shaman's body with the incense's smoke three times and with *gendang ketobong* three times. Besides, the *bintara* also fumigated his/her hands and face. The shaman also fumigated the *mayang*.
4. The shaman held the tip of the *mayang* and recited a welcoming spell.
5. He then stood up and started to conduct the healing ceremony using various movements. During the process, the shaman ate betel leaves and then performed some movements. Next, he sat cross-legged in front of the offerings.
6. While sitting, he had a conversation with the *bintara*, and the *bintara* fumigated the shaman's body using incense, starting from his face, hands, to his feet.
7. The shaman read some spells while placing

mayang in front of the patient's face and hit the patient's body with it to expel the evil spirits and remove the disease.

8. Lastly, the shaman took candles and put them on the right and left sides of the patient as a form of healing treatment.

The ritual of *Poleh* also consists of a number of steps. They are elaborated in the following points.

1. The *pebayu* placed the offerings or ritual requirements in front of the shaman.
2. The shaman lit nine candles. Before doing so, the shaman spun them in front of the offerings to symbolize that candle is a light in a healing treatment.
3. The shaman then wore a hood cloth on his head and held a basket on his shoulders. Then, he recited a spell while holding two *gegayang* (offerings) and swung them in front of the patient seven times while telling him/her to spit in it.
4. The shaman and the *pebayu* went out of the house while bringing *gegayang* to deliver it to house miniatures prepared outside the patient's house. People were allowed to follow the shaman if they wanted to watch the process. The shaman put *gegayang* on top of the houses, then recited the spells while circling them 10 times. The shaman hit the shell placed under the houses with his machete in every cycle or whenever he stood in front of the houses. Next, *pebayu* collected some leaves around the houses to be rubbed on the patient. The leaves are usually prepared beforehand around the house. They include jungle fire, *antoi*, *lembam*, *junjung hutan*, and *kekanda* leaves.
5. The shaman entered the house again and rubbed the patient with leaves once. Then, the leaves were put on a plate, given water, and then rubbed on the patient. Lastly, *pebayu* or the patient's family rubbed it on the patient three times from head to toe to heal the illness.

The followings are the steps of *Cabut Kelo*:

1. The shaman played a musical instrument called *kompang* as a means of cheering the patient to pronounce *la'ilahailallah muhammadurasulullah*. Then, the shaman quickly recited the spell and pulled the *kelo* by wrapping a few strands of the

patient's hair on her hands in three parts and then pulled them out. Next, the shaman was ready with all the equipment prepared by the patient, such as 1-2 liters of water, water mixed with seven types of flowers (no type of flowers), betel leaves, betel nut, lime betel and wood with burned tip. The next step is the patient lying down or sitting, and the shaman took a vessel containing water, poured flowers in it, then stirred it clockwise seven times using the wood. The wood was finally lifted surrounding patient's head.

2. Then, a few strands of the patient's hair were rolled in three parts on the shaman's forefinger again. These steps were then repeated again with other strands while reciting spells to pull the *kelo*. One pull was accompanied with one spell, and if the first pull does not produce a sound, the second pull will be accompanied with different spell, and so on. When it produces a sound, the shaman gets the answer of the disease. After pulling the *kelo*, the shaman pulled out the disease using a wood stick which tip was burnt, and then the patient's hair was rolled on it. The wood was then thrown away as far as possible from the shaman's house. Lastly, she recited a prayer on a water for the patient to drink.
3. The shaman read *bismillah* and poured flowers on the water, then used it to wash her face, feet, and head.
4. The shaman recited *Alfatihah* and *Al-Ikhlās* (Islamic short prayers). The betel leaves were sprayed and the patient drank the water.
5. Lastly, she walked around the patient in circle three times while spinning the wood stick around the patient's head.

The steps of *Talam Dua Muka* are elaborated below.

1. The shaman or the clan headman (*atuk*) invited the ancestral spirits by reciting spells and other people who wanted to follow the steps could hold a handful of turmeric rice spelled by the shaman. Then, the shaman or clan headman begged for protection.
2. People came and walked around the offerings. The shaman sat facing a sacred well. The path between the shaman and the well should be

clear and no one was allowed to sit there as it was considered as a path for the ancestral spirits.

3. The shaman then distributed the turmeric rice to the ritual followers to be held with two hands while the shaman kept reciting spells.
4. After the ancestral spirits that they believed in came, the shaman started to pay an honor by raising both hands to pray. In performing this ritual, the shaman or clan headman only sat and all of his followers sat around the offerings in front of them.
5. The shaman asked for forgiveness of the ancestral spirits they believed in by praying several times while raising both hands up.
6. After worshipping, the shaman and his followers threw the turmeric rice on the enchanted offerings.
7. The shaman started reciting a spell that only he knew while burning incense and having a dialogue with the ancestor.
8. While having a dialogue, the shaman occasionally threw turmeric rice and tea at the offerings right in front of him.
9. After about ten minutes, the dialogue finished and the shaman gave burnt incense to their followers so that they could rub its smoke on their faces, hands, and bodies alternately. This activity is called *salam*.
10. The shaman then requested his followers to take bananas, yellow glutinous rice, eggs, *wajik* (diamond-shaped glutinous rice cake), and white porridge to four huts made especially for putting offerings. The shaman brought the incense from earlier and not everyone was allowed to enter the hut. Arriving inside the hut, the shaman and the people bringing put the offerings and then begged for health.
11. Then some of the foods such as bananas, yellow glutinous rice, and eggs were planted in some spots in front of the house they considered sacred. The foods were buried by ritual followers.
12. Finishing this activity, the shaman brought rice, turmeric rice, and the burned incense from earlier to be introduced to the surrounding places such as to the sacred well and their holy house. During this part, the shaman lifted the

incense, spun it in front of the door, and then sprinkled the turmeric rice and paddy in every corner of the house and around the ritual site.

13. After the shaman or *atuk* returned to the stilt house where the ritual was carried out, he/she lifted a large tray containing glutinous rice on which eggs were placed along with yellow, black, and red flags. The tray was then returned in front of the remaining offerings while reciting spells and asking for forgiveness to the ancestors for any mistake or flaw they had. The flags were then removed one by one before carefully being placed down again. The shaman then read a spell for expressing gratitude and begging for protection to the local people's ancestral spirits.

The following are the stages of carrying out the *Bokuan* ritual.

1. Before carrying out the *Bokuan* ritual, the *bomau* performed two rak'ahs of sunnah prayer (optional prayer in Islam) and begged that the ritual would run smoothly. After that, the *bomau* took a long piece of cloth and sat in front of the equipment.
2. Then, he burnt incense and covered his head so that his face was not visible. This part is referred to as *bounong* by the locals. When the incense had produced abundant of smoke and strong smell, the *bomau* collected the smoke into his cloth. This smoke acts as a bridge to the supernatural world so that he could invite the spirits to be present in the treatment process.
3. After the incense smoke was collected, the *bomau* stayed silent in the *bounong* cloth and recited a spell so that the spirits or djinns came.
4. The *bomau* moving his body indicates that the spirits have arrived and entered his body. The spokesperson then spread turmeric rice and *botih* as a welcome greeting for them. Being possessed, all the behaviors of the *bomau* changed according to the behavior of the spirits. Some names of the spirits who often come are *Panglima Perang* (War Commander), *Imau Compo*, *Siti Fatimah*, *Dubalang*, and *Datuk Saih Panjang Jangguik*. There are still many more in addition to from these names.
5. After being sprinkled with turmeric rice and

botih, the *bomau* stood while reciting some poems and looking at the prepared requirements.

6. The ritual process continued with question-and-answer dialogue between the *bomau* who had been possessed by spirits and the spokesperson of *Bokuan*.
7. At that moment, the spirits came out of *bomau's* body and the spokesman sprinkled turmeric rice and *botih* to the *bomau's* body once again. If the spokesperson is late in sprinkling them, the *bomau* will faint for a few minutes. The spirits coming are usually not only one, but more than twenty alternately, thus the ritual can take quite a long time. Some of them come only to eat betel leaves or to smoke, some cannot help with the treatment, and some are a kind of animal that cannot communicate with the spokesperson. When lucky, this ritual will finish in one to two hours with the help of spirits who cast a spell on the ingredients prepared in *Boyong Sembilan*.
8. After a series of *Bokuan* rituals, the *bomau* and the spokesperson usually receive rewards from the patient. The amount and items of which must be given are not specified.

The following are the stages of *Buang Badi* ritual.

1. The patient sat facing the Qibla (the direction of Kaaba to which Muslim turns for prayer). Male patient wears a cap and female patient wears a headscarf. He sat on the right side while she sat on the left side with a distance of approximately two spans.
2. The white cloth that had been spelled by the shaman was then folded in half and placed behind the patient. The man rotated it from left to right three times and then flipped it forward. The same thing was done to the female patient.
3. The patient was bathed with water that has been cast with a spell by the shaman. The bathing was carried out three days in a row. After the first day, soil containing all the belongings worn by the patient were disposed into running water, such as a river or a sea.
4. After completing the treatment for three days, the patient could return to his/her usual activities without any restriction.

Symbolic Interactionism in Ritual Ceremonies

Symbols of *Kumantan* Ritual Ceremony

In the ritual of *Kumantan*, black native rooster is used as an offering because it is a means to remove the patient's illness. This ritual requires a variety of offerings, consisting of black native rooster, lime, yellow rice, native chicken eggs, a bowl of water, flowers, and incense.

Kumantan, the ritual leader, does not wear a special outfit. He only wears daily clothing because he thinks that the most important aspect of this ritual is the sacredness of the process. In the specific ritual observed by the researcher, the *kumantan* only wore a sarong slung on his body, a cap, and long trousers.

This medical ritual predominantly uses feet gestures, one of which is a movement imitating an eagle. This movement means that the shaman is trying to remove the disease suffered by the patient, and it is symbolized by two hands spreading widely like the wings of a flying bird. Another movement is the one that imitates human walking gesture with some thumps, which aims at expelling the disease of the patient.

In this healing treatment, music from whistles is used to invite spirits, and it continues with the following spell:

*“Uuup...dondang didendangkan
Ape maksud kami dipanggil
Ape maksud kami dijomput
Ape maksud kami diundang
Uuup...dindang didendangkan
Mari kite berdoa kepada Allah
Berdoa bersame-sama
Dielah sayang kite lah juge
Kitelah sudah sakit lah juge
Uuup...dendang didendangkan
Ape hendak hati kalian tolong sampaikan
Saye mintak kepada Engkau ya Allah
Sudah mohon kepada Engkau
Obatlah ini dengan jampi
Uuup...dendang didendangkan
Kite cari anak obatlah die
Dalam surga anak airlah saktinya
Obatlah anak dielah sayang...
ffffffuuuuuuuuahhhhh*

Symbols of *Bedikie* Ritual Ceremony

Bedikie healing ritual requires following offerings:

- a. *button* hall as a symbol of Sakai people's houses;
- b. live coals to burn incense;
- c. *bertih* (rice) to be sprinkled on patient's body;
- d. candles to be used as lighting during the ritual;
- e. drums as a means of summoning supernatural powers;
- f. water splashed by female assistant on the patient to treat illness;
- g. various kinds of food to be served as a banquet for the ancestral spirits;
- h. a mat made of pandan leaves for the shaman to sit on during the ritual.

There is no restriction to the outfits worn by ritual participants. Normal clothes are allowed to wear as long as they are polite, and as for the shaman, the only restriction is to not wear shorts. The movements performed during the ritual are spontaneous movements expressed by simple human mind. Most of them use body, hands, and feet, and they are performed unconsciously because the shaman is possessed by ancestral spirits. If the shaman makes a wrong movement, there will be no effect on the *Bedikie* because all of movements are spontaneous.

The musical instrument that accompanies this ritual is called *Gendang Bebano* which cover is made of goat skin. During the process, the shaman also voiced spells for the ancestral spirits. The spell was “*pelandok putih kebial-bial kono jerat sembilan mato kiamat duo sisi kuang sisi bagi sisi kuang sati bagi sati, panteh kaki bejalan sisi tangan mualin panteh mulut bekato memandang gunung dengan luncang*”.

Symbols in *Menyimah* Ritual Ceremony

There are several kinds required offerings to hold *Menyimah* ceremony, namely betel nut (betel nut, calx, betel leaves, tobacco, gambier, coals, and incense for fumigation), *berteh* or rice, flowers of various colors, half-baked chicken, beeswax or candlestick, *anggai*, and banana leaves.

The clothes worn during *Menyimah* ritual are black outfits with yellow piece of cloth used as head cover by the shaman. The ritual started when the shaman ate the betels and he performed some

movements. Next, the shaman sat cross-legged in front of the offerings, and the *bintara* fumigated the shaman's body with incense smoke, starting from his face, hands, and feet. Then, the shaman recited a spell while placing the *mayang* in front of the patient's face and hitting it on the body to expel evil spirits and eliminate the patient's disease. A music instrument called *ketabong* was used to accompany the ritual. The spell of *Menyimah* ritual was recited by the shaman, but its meaning was unknown to everyone other than the shaman and the *bintara*.

Symbols in *Poleh* Ritual Ceremony

There are a number of offerings or equipment required in *Poleh*, namely *kopau* leaf (a type of leaf used to make various arrangement patterns), banana leaf (offering holder to be placed on *gegayang*), incense (to produce smoke and to invite spirits), *berteh* (to be sprinkled during the ritual), beeswax (as illuminator), *dulang* (a tray to put offerings), *pusaf* (enamelware filled with live coals and devil's incense), *cupak* (candle holder), pandan mat for the shaman to sit on, chicken, and chicken egg as offerings for the spirit, and house miniatures, *ancak* (a tray for sprinkling incense), and *pebayu* (shaman's assistant).

The shaman wears hood from a long cloth place on the head. He performed a number of movements, such as spinning the candles, sprinkling *berteh*, swinging *gegayang* (holder of offerings), circling house miniatures, and rocking them while kneeling.

Poleh ceremony is not accompanied by musical instruments. The ritual movements are accompanied by spells that sound like poetry recited by the shaman.

Oy... tuk sengguu, stengkak, nandiam, sikilat, sikumbang namo nyo jin nyo, bukan aku panggil turunlah ekau kebumi Allah. Kok iyo kito besedao asal buasal janganlah ekau kasi masuk. Kok iyo kito besedao asal buasal janganlah ekau kasi masuk Janganlah kasi melomeh, janganlah kasi masuk dalam kampung sebidang, Janganlah ekau tidu dengan roh insan, janganlah ekau kasi mengganggu Jadilah roh insan kayo.

O... kiamat datuk tak tau asal buasal sambutlah

sambah ambo ini gayang limeh Nan iyo engkau kono pado jin, jonih setan manusio salah pado bebuat kampung Jangan engkau kasi masuk, janganlah engkau kasi melomeh, janganlah engkau kasi mengganggu.

Symbols in *Cabut Kelo* Ritual Ceremony

In *Cabut Kelo* there are several sacrifices that must be present, such as flowers and wood stick, salt and tamarind, water, drinking water, pure water for ritual, and betel leaves.

The shaman started by holding a few strands of patient's hair and rolled them in her finger in three parts. The shaman then pulled them out one by one. The third one must produce a sound, otherwise this activity will be repeated from the beginning. While pulling out the *kelo*, a spell was recited by the shaman. During the process, some movements were also performed, such as circling the patient three times while spinning wood stick on the patient's head.

Music is used as accompaniment in the beginning. The instrument played is called *kompang*, which cover is made of goat skin

There is a spell in Malay language that functions as an answer to the illness. The excerpts of the spell is as follows.

tabet datuk nenek anak cucu numpang nanye, ape tekelo kene tego pokok hari.

Tabet datuk nenek anak cucu numpang nanye, ape tekelo kene tego arwah orang mati.

Tabet datuk nenek anak cucu numpang nanye, ape tekelo kene tego setan iblis becakap.

Tabet datuk nenek anak cucu numpang nanye, ape tekelo kene salah cakap.

Symbols in *Talam Muka Dua* Ritual Ceremony

Offerings or requirements that must be prepared to perform *Talam Muka Dua* ritual include egg, yellow glutinous rice, turmeric rice, *berteh*, coffee, gambier, lime betel, banana, incense, cake, rice, meat, *wajik* (diamond-shaped glutinous rice cake), green bean porridge, vegetables, red flag, black flag, and yellow flag. The shaman wears white clothes or *koko* clothes while performing the ceremony.

The ritual started when the shaman and the people holding turmeric rice threw the rice on the

spelled offerings. Then, the flags planted on a tray filled with glutinous rice were pulled out one by one and put down carefully. The music instrument used here is a drum. In the beginning, the shaman recited a spell which meaning was unknown to other people. This spell is used to invite spirits.

- Sprinkling turmeric rice into a sacred well
- Pulling out a flag from a tray

Symbols in *Bokuan* Ritual Ceremony

The offerings that must be prepared for *Bokuan* ritual are live coals, turmeric rice, betel leaves, and *buyong sembilan*.

The movements in *Bokuan* ritual include burning incense and completely covering the shaman's head so that his face is not visible, which is called *bounong* by the locals. Incense smoke was collected in the cloth so that the shaman could connect to the spirit world. Another movement was sprinkling turmeric rice and *botih*, followed by the *bomau* standing up while reciting poems. *Bokuan* ritual ceremony is performed without music instrument.

This ritual also used a spell. An excerpt of it is described below:

JuBir : *Assalamu'alaikum*

Bomau : *Wa'alaikumssalam*

JuBir : *Iko dengan datuk siapa ko?*

Bomau : *(Bomau menjawab dengan atas nama yang datang) Apo maksud kilan momanggi aku datang ko alam kilan ko?*

JuBir : *Maksud kami momangi datuk, kami nak minto tawakan ubek tuk. Ko lai anak cucu yang sakik tuk*

Bomau : *Sobolum aku tawa aku nak minto Santap soaso (makan sirih), sudah itu Curut Jendela (rokok), sudah itu aku nak Rambun Nyolai (tembakau sebagai Suntil).*

JuBir : *(JuBir bergegas mempersiapkan yang diperintah Bomau, dan memasukkan satu persatu pesanan Bomau kedalam mulutnya)*

Bomau : *(Bomau menghabiskan makan sirih dan rokok)...(setelah habis) mano Buyong Sembilan tu baok kosiko bia ku tawa*

JuBir : *Iko tuk (sambil membawa Buyong Sembilan yang telah diisi dengan limau non tujuh ketangan Bomau)*

Bomau : *(Bomau menawar buyong Sembilan) iko ubek ko sudah iko di usokkan kobadan yang sakik tu adok tidua dan jago tidua solamo duo ai tigo malam dan ai ko tigo tu dimandikan ubek ko*

JuBir : *O...yolah tuk, timo kasih tuk*

Bomau : *Aku nak balik ne, lai yang nak kilan tanyo le no?*

JuBir : *Lai tuk, jadi ubek kito ko sampai disiko atau awak toihkan malam isuk?*

Bomau : *Olah telah dulu kalau ino lai bokuang dalam tigo ai ko do bau dibuek balik*

JuBir : *Yolah tuk...*

Symbols in *Buang Badi* Ritual Ceremony

Equipment needed in *Buang Badi* treatment are ten fingernails and ten toenails, one strand of eyelash from both right and left eyes, one strand of eyebrow, hair from front side and back side of head, and one thin body hair, each of which is from a patient, whether man or woman. The ritual also requires 2,5 yard of white cloth, and a round-shaped clay with a hole in the middle. The materials taken from the patient are then placed in the hole and covered with another clay which is then reshaped to make it round again. Other materials are two plates of white glutinous rice, six boiled and peeled chicken eggs; and two pitchers of water.

Clothing for this ritual include caps for men and headscarves for women. The procession started when the shaman folded a spelled white cloth into two and placed it behind the male patient's head. It was moved from left to right three times and then flipped forward three times. The same process was applied to female patient. The ritual was not accompanied with musical instruments. The shaman recited *salawat* (Islamic salutation upon Prophet Muhammad PBUH) and short verses of the Quran. It was after this recitation that the treatment began and in the end of the ritual, similar prayer was performed again. This treatment solely aims at asking for recovery from God.

Conclusion

The results of research regarding "Symbolic Interactionism in Medical Ritual Ceremonies in

Malay Society in Riau Province and the Symbolic Interactions on Their Meaning” indicate that the presently exist medical ritual in Riau province are *Kumantan, Bedikie, Menyemah, Poleh, Cabut kelo, Talam Muka Dua, Bokuan, and Buang Badi*

These rituals are healing ceremonies performed by a group of people in the province and marked by several elements and components, namely time, place, ceremonial equipment, and performers.

This study of symbolic interactionism views interaction as an activity that arises special meaning and interpretation. The word ‘symbolic’ is derived from the word ‘*simbol*’, meaning a sign which emerges from mutual agreement. It refers to how a matter turns into a mutual perspective, and how an action conveys a special meaning known only by the actors.

Mulyana’s symbolic interaction theory is applied to discuss individuals and social individuals, including self-control, from other people’s perspective. There are three premises of interaction’s interpretation and meanings built in symbolic interactionism. Those are: (1) human acts on meanings; (2) the meaning is obtained from interactions with other people, and (3) the meaning develops and increasingly refines as the interaction occurs.

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