Ménréq Bola: Analyzing Artifacts in the Bugis Permission Request Tradition

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Abstract. Ménréq bola is a tradition of entering a new house. Each step of the ceremony involves objects that function as symbols of the hopes and perspectives of the Bugis community in addressing the phenomena of life, environment and beliefs. This type of research is qualitative with a qualitative descriptive approach. Applying interview and documentation techniques in data collection and analyzed based on Barthes' theory of Signification. The results showed that artifacts used by Bugis people as non-verbal communication intermediaries consisted of 4 categories, namely fruit, food, tools and potions. The artifacts described in the research are not necessarily equipment found centuries ago. Rather, the result of community creation in the form of recipes, components and shapes obtained from the advice of the ancestors of the Bugis community. The fruit category indicates the most dominant basic ingredients used by the Bugis people in culinary processing, along with beliefs derived from the phenomenal Bugis literature La Galigo. The food category includes the meaning of basic ingredients, processing techniques and culinary forms, which have a relationship between name and meaning. The utensils category includes the universal functions and symbols that Bugis people assign to objects and ingredients as a sign of having asked permission from other God's creatures.

Keywords: Ménréq Bola, Artifacts, Permission Requests, Bugis Community

1 Introduction

Communication in reality does not always have to involve language to be understood. Burgoon & Saine, 1978 mentioned that there is communication by presenting human actions that are intentionally sent and interpreted as intended, having the potential for feedback from those who receive it. Communication is also explained as a bridge to connect humans with the outside world, through communication humans can also interact, express, identify themselves, and convey their goals. Judy C Person and Paul E. Nelson [2] emphasize that communication is not only for one's own survival which includes physical safety, increasing personal awareness, presenting oneself, but also functions to improve social relations and develop the existence of a society [3].

Artifacts become one of the forms of nonverbal communication that is expressed to reflect status, which is seen through the way of dressing, jewelry, tools and items used...
Every culture in Indonesia has its own peculiarities in this form of non-verbal communication [5]. Including the Bugis people who in their daily lives are still very much bound by systems, norms, and customary rules that are considered noble and sacred [6].

There are many traditional art forms and ceremonies that belong to Bugis culture and serve as non-verbal cues, including food and kitchen utensils [7]. Non-verbal communication is integrated with the Bugis social system, which prioritizes manners or customs in politeness and becomes a frame of reference for the community to socialize with fellow human beings [8]. In addition, in some cases this is associated with belief, so that communication occurs not only with humans but also with other creatures as illustrated in the beliefs of the Bugis community.

The most common form of artifact utilization by the Bugis community is found in traditional culinary processing accompanied by traditional ceremonies [9]. Culinary beliefs are inherited along with ancestral beliefs [10]. The Bugis believe that the spirits of the ancestors still exist and maintain and provide protection to humans [11]. The protection provided by the ancestors can at any time turn into wrath if humans do not care about them, for example by not making offerings. If they do not obey the advice of the ancestors, things that happen will have a long tail such as causing disasters, diseases or disturbing the peace of the community. Therefore, Bugis people must always prepare traditional ceremonies as a form of requesting permission to occupy space, hold traditions or other knowledge related to the utilization of nature or property [12].

The Bugis community recognizes a tradition that is believed to be a form of requesting permission to occupy space, the tradition is Ménréq bola. In some studies, it is stated that the ménréq bola tradition is related to the Bugis community's hope that the ancestors can provide blessings to their grandchildren and descendants [13]. Ménréq bola is also understood as a form of achievement and gratitude for one's ability to maqbola. [14]. In analyzing the construction of Bugis house forms, the ménréq bola tradition is referred to as a manifestation of humans and the environment, while the house is explained as a place where humans are born, raised, married and die [15].

The ménréq bola tradition does not seem to be a taboo for the Bugis community, as various activities are neatly organized in the implementation of this tradition. Starting from preparing the equipment used in carrying out the tradition, to the culinary described must be prepared. In addition to believing in the spirits of their ancestors, Bugis people also believe in symbols [16]. This understanding of symbols fills the culinary meaning, representing the prayers and hopes of the Bugis community, both at the time of the tradition and for the future of the tradition owner.

Analyzing the meaning of food is very interesting considering that many studies have stated that the ménréq bola tradition is a form of thanksgiving [17], [13], [18]. However, based on research observations, the ménréq bola tradition is actually a form of asking permission from the guardian of a space, which can be understood through the culinary served by the community. In exploring this meaning, the culinary ménréq bola in this study is analyzed through Barthes' theory of Signification and its relevance to Bugis people's beliefs which are present in the form of myths.
2 Literature Review

2.1 Definition of Ménréq bola

*Ménréq bola* comes from the Bugis language, ménréq meaning up and bola meaning home [19]. *Ménréq bola* is a tradition of entering a house, which can also be interpreted as a celebration of a new house. This tradition is general and is held in any tradition, the difference is the form of community activities and artifacts used by the community.

2.2 Signification of Barthes

Barthes is a semiologist who adheres to the understanding of the previous expert, Ferdinand de Saussure as written in *French Structuralism and after: De Saussure, Lévi-Strauss, Barthes, Lacan, Foucault* (2021). Barthes adds to his semiological toolkit with the Signification of Sign [21]. Barthes is concerned with how signs take values from the dominant value system or ideology of a particular society and make these values seem natural or scientific. In his book, John Storey dissects the levels of sign elements that became a methodological tool for Roland Barthes. Barthes divides the levels of Signification of meaning into two levels. The first level is 'Primary Signification' which consists of two layers: signifier, signified, and sign (denotation sign). The second level is 'Secondary Signification', consisting of 'Signifier', Signified', and 'Sign' (connotation sign). The following is a scheme of Barthes' layers of signification.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1. Signifier (Penanda)</th>
<th>2. Signified (Petanda)</th>
<th>3. Denotatif Sign (Tanda Denotatif)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

![Fig. 1. Barthes' Scheme of Signification](image)

3 Method

This research is classified as qualitative research with a qualitative descriptive approach. The research location is the *Ménréq bola* tradition in Corawali, Tanete Rilau District, Barru Regency. Data was obtained through interviews and documentation methods and analyzed using Barthes' Signification Theory.

4 Results and Discussion

4.1 Stage of Ménréq bola

*Ménréq bola* is a tradition of entering a new house carried out by every Bugis community as a form of requesting permission to inhabit the space. The following is a series of stages carried out in the traditional ceremony.
### Table 1. Stage of Ménréq Bola

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Steps</th>
<th>Tradition Component Name</th>
<th>Activities performed</th>
<th>Artifacts</th>
<th>Components</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| I     | Determination of good days | a. Request for permission to nature  
b. Attribution of impact |          |            |
| II    | Serving preparation | Punna bola is required to prepare the following Artifacts:  
   a. Fruit  
   (a) Kalaku mattrunrug (coconut bunches), (b) Utu mattrunrug (banana in bunches), (c) Tepbu (sugar cane), (d) Panasa (jackfruit), (e) Pandang (pineapple), (f) Bereq mappunrung (rice in a clay pot)  
   b. Food  
   Bëppa pitunrump  
   Nanré makkuring (rice in a pot)  
   Manuq makkuring (chicken preparations in a pot)  
   Waé makkaca (water in a glass)  
   c. Artifacts (Equipment)  
   Passili  
   d. Herb  
   Tamputtawaraq  
   (a) Rice, (b) Turmeric, (c) Paniniq (bangle), (d) Nutmeg, (e) Cinnamon, (f) Toasted coconut, (g) Brown sugar |          |            |
| III   | Mengelingi rumah | Punna bola sprinkles Passili  
   Panrita bola applies tamputtawaraq  
   a. Punna bola carrying chicken | (a) Rooster (Carried by the owner of the house (male)), (b) Hen (Carried by the owner of the house (female)) |            |
| IV    | Ménreq Bola | Punna bola releases chicken from the top of the stairs of the house |          |            |
| V     | Tudang Riolo Posi Bola | Punna bola together with panrita bola entered the house by saying greetings and went | The posiq bola is the first pillar of the house, and in Ménreq tradition it is the place where fruits and |            |
straight to the main pillar of the house.  food are hung as artifacts of tradition.

|  VI | Maccéra bola | The slaughter of the animal, which can be a goat or a cow. | Meat dishes to share |

Basically, Bugis people who live in different environments, such as different topographic forms, will sometimes show different steps, traditional artifacts and beliefs. Except that the tradition of hanging fruit on the posiq bola and reciting salawat is conventional.

After going around Panrita Bola and Punna Bola will return to the front point, which is the point facing the first staircase. Bugis people with the majority of adherents of Islam read prayers during this stage. The following is a prayer in the form of salawat Nabi recited by Panrita Bola.

Meaning:

Ya Allah, grant prosperity to Prophet Muhammad and his family, as you granted prosperity to Ibrahim and his family, bless Muhammad and his family as you granted prosperity to Ibrahim and his family is the whole of nature, indeed You are the Most Praised, the Most Sublime, and the greetings as you have been taught. (This Hadith is included in Sahih Ibn Hibban and Sunan at-Tirmidhi).

A few notes on the stages of the ménréq bola tradition, all the steps of ménréq bola that have been described only apply to Bugis traditional houses made of wood. Bugis houses made of sand and cement usually only involve the barzanji tradition. In addition, the ménréq bola activity of the Bugis community is carried out three times.

### 4.2 Analysis of Meanings in Ménréq bola Culinary in Barthes’ perspective

Barthes’ Signification in the first layer relates to all aspects captured by the human senses. Based on observations, these are culinary names and forms. The following are the results of the analysis of the meaning of the culinary processed in the ménréq bola tradition through Barthes’ theory of Signification.

In the implementation of the traditional ménréq bola ceremony, the Bugis community represents the point of view of being a human life in culinary and introduces it in...
the form of symbols. The agreement is in the form of symbols of welfare and happiness, symbols of generosity, symbols of social acceptance, solidarity, worship of nature and symbols of increasing social status. The following are the culinary delights served in the ménréq bola tradition along with the meanings traced using Barthes' signification.

**Béddaq.** Béddaq is a traditional Bugis pastry made from rice flour, brown sugar and coconut. After all the ingredients are mashed, the dough is kneaded vigorously until it forms lumps and grips. Béddaq is usually served during the Ménréq bola (entering a new house) tradition. The first language of the culinary is that it is an activity that involves hard work of the palms. When viewed from a paradigmatic relationship, an analysis will be obtained, namely béddaq culinary is processed not because of its delicious taste, but to obtain a sense of maqbéddaq (thickening) on the tongue. The myth in béddaq is that the Bugis community in béddaq culinary is the sustenance of the owner of the new house getting smoother and thicker.

**Giling-kiling.** Giling-kiling is a Bugis sweet dish made from glutinous rice, brown sugar and oil. In terms of naming, giling-kiling is a reduplication of the root word giling with markers in the words turn, back and forth [19]. As with giling-kiling, it must be flipped until the oil is absorbed into the dough. This Bugis specialty cake is also an offering for marriage proposals and weddings. Based on this data, the first language of giling-kiling is that although it is inseparable from the method of cooking that is flipped, the activities involved seem to have a connection with the purpose of the ceremony that has become a tradition with the signification of the Bugis community as something that was originally not wanted, turned into wanting. As found in Bugis mantras, to bind the heart of a person or a group, one is expected to have good sense.

**Dokoq-dokoq Cangkuling.** Dokoq-dokoq cangkuling is a Bugis culinary that falls into the category of traditional cakes. It is made from rice flour, black glutinous rice, coconut and brown sugar and is often served at weddings. The first language in this culinary is applying the technique of repeating to wrap the culinary which shows the second language that every activity runs smoothly.

The Bugis community has a belief that what they intend to do is what they will reap later. Based on the results of the interview with Hj. Musdalifah, a resource person in this study, the myth is obtained that the Bugis community provides dokoq-dokoq cangkuling as a dish in the pre-marriage ceremony prepared by the female party at the mappettu ada event, aiming for each stage in the marriage tradition to be carried out without meaningless obstacles. The male party will return to complete stage after stage in the marriage tradition.

Apart from being interpreted as a repetitive provision, dokoq-dokoq cangkuling also has another meaning that has a vulgar impression. The pyramid-shaped shape of dokoq-dokoq cangkuling is considered to resemble a woman's breast, this thought is reinforced by the name of the yellow bundle wrapped around the dokoq-dokoq cangkuling dough, which is a brassiere or underwear that covers the woman's chest. The meaning given to dokoq-dokoq cangkuling when served at aqiqah means that the mother is expected to
have a lot of milk so that the child can awaken the soul of sumangeq and pessé in his heart.

**Béppa otoq.** Béppa otoq is a traditional Bugis cake made from rice flour, brown sugar and coconut milk wrapped in banana leaves. It is classified as a wet cake because it has a soft texture. Béppa otoq is also classified as a sweet culinary that is usually served in aqiqah rituals and new house celebrations in the Bugis community. Béppa otoq is processed by the Bugis community in the tradition of masukkék lowong. The community hopes that the baby at the masukkék lowong event can rise and live a better life like the symbol represented in béppa otoq. In addition, there is also a culinary that is quite the opposite of béppa otoq, namely, ondé-ondé.

**Ondé-ondé.** Bugis people recognize two forms of ondé-ondé, namely ondé-ondé jawa and ondé-ondé maqdeccaq. The culinary, also known for its ball-like shape, is made from glutinous rice [24]. The difference between the two is in the filling, cooking technique and dressing. Javanese ondé-ondé is a dish filled with a mixture of mung beans and brown sugar and covered on the outside with sesame seeds, while maqdeccaq ondé-ondé is filled with brown sugar and covered on the outside with grated coconut.

Although the cooking techniques are very different, the message is relatively the same: rise to the surface. Whether fried or boiled, the ondé-ondé dough will float. The next signifier is the basis of the meaning of language II, which is that sustenance is always smooth, and the position is never at the bottom. Bugis people hope that the life of the house owner is always on top, just like ondé-ondé which never sinks. The myth contained in the ondé-ondé culinary in the perspective of the Bugis community is rising to the surface which is interpreted as the concept of success. In the perspective of the Bugis community, through ondé-ondé the community hopes that the life of the bride and groom can be prosperous, always on top, or a point of success.

Based on the analysis, it seems that ondé-ondé maqdeccaq not only represents prosperity, but also harmony. The signifier is obtained when the culinary is eaten, the person enjoying it will feel that something has erupted in the mouth, and produces a clacking sound which indicates that the brown sugar content will cover the taste and blandness. The second language of the culinary is comprehensive. Bugis people believe that ondé-ondé maqdeccaq symbolizes love and harmonious relationships within the family.

Bugis people have a habit of consuming sweet foods obtained from golla cella. An interview with an interviewee Suriani stated, "golla cella mabbatu paqbura laqlaiseng". Brown sugar can be a medicine to overcome nausea when you are too hungry, but have no appetite and one of the preparations that can overcome this feeling is ondé-ondé maqdeccaq.

**Lapisiq.** Lapisiq is a culinary dish made from rice flour [25]. Lapisiq dough is cooked in stages so as to obtain a multi-layered shape. Lapisiq has a pure white color, with a characteristic sweet taste that fits with the savory combination of coconut milk. The multi-layered shape becomes the first language of lapisiq culinary with a sign that does not only come from one source. If there is only one source, the source is intense in
creating something. This interpretation then shows the second language, namely the multi-layered form of *lapisiq* culinary which connotes sustenance. Bugis people have a belief that something that is layered is often associated with activities that continue without stopping.

![Béddaq](image1)
![Giling Kiling](image2)

![Dokoq-dokoq cangkuling](image3)
![Béppa Otoq](image4)

![Ondé-ondé jawa](image5)
![Ondé-ondé Maqdeccaq](image6)

**Fig. 3. Culinary Specialties of the Bugis Tribe**

Food is not the only artifact in traditional ceremonies, there are also non-food objects that have a special function in the *ménréq bola* ceremony, as in the following description.

### 4.3 Meaning of Artifacts instead of offerings

**Passili.** *Passili* is a sign of water that is purified in a special way by a *Panrita Bola*, with the aim of replacing divine water in the understanding of the Bugis community, *passili* water is also called Heavenly water. [26]. In the past this passili water had various components, namely *siri, atakka, talla, araso, pamading, wodi, ajuara, baringang, cendrana, ipiq, sugimanai* and *tawa*. But gradually some of these passili components have been difficult to find, so currently only some of the components are used. The following are the forms of passili leaves currently used by the Bugis community.
The first demonstrated language of *passili* is a deified artifact that, when used to sprinkle water, means it has been purified. Thus, the sign of *passili* is that it is used to neutralize the supernatural. Bugis beliefs are not only confined to fruits and culinary delights, but also to non-food items that function as tools in the performance of traditional ceremonies. The splashing water of *passili* is called holy in the perspective of the Bugis community, because a mantra has been recited, which represents hope in accordance with the meaning of the sign-carrying object.

*Daung atakka* is a plant that has small leaves, this plant is also called katangka plant. The results of the analysis of the sign on this plant cannot be described, because since the past the ancestors have passed down the requirements of the equipment used in the *ménréq bola* ritual, but did not pass on the reasons and purposes of using *daung atakka*. The clue to this plant is that it is a species that was widely found in ancient times, so it became the name of one of the culinary places in the community, namely katangka.

The next plant is cendrana leaves, this wood has a special and strong aroma, the sign contained in this plant is that the Bugis people hope that the house they build is as sturdy as cendrana, as well as the distinctive aroma of cendrana wood, the Bugis people hope that the atmosphere in the house will be fragrant with goodness, cleanliness and tranquility.

The general idea of turmeric is that it is a yellow dye, which is very strong and natural. The sign of turmeric in the *ménréq bola* tradition is not analyzed from the shape of turmeric, but the color produced, which is yellow. Yellow in Bugis society is synonymous with wind. The sign in this color is self-willed as the wind will blow as far as it wants to go. The Bugis community hopes that after the *ménréq bola* activity has taken place, the house owner will be able to care for and organize his or her own house. Not only the equipment in the house but also the family members who live in their houses.

Turmeric leaves in Bugis medicine are symbolized as human veins with a very clear structure of turmeric leaf ribs. The marker on this artifact is that Bugis people are expected to be able to work hard for the welfare of family members, or residents of the house. Steel is the main material for making Bugis weapons and is considered much stronger than iron. In this knowledge, we can see the purpose of Bugis people using steel as a component of *passili*, which is to hope that the homeowner's house is strong and able to protect itself from all obstacles or bad weather that the homeowner's residence might go through.

![Fig. 4. Passili](image)
Tamputtawaraq. Tamputtawaraq is a potion in the form of powder that is processed by Panrita Bola when going around the house. Tamputtawaraq consists of rice, turmeric, bangle, nutmeg, cinnamon, brown sugar and roasted coconut. All these components are mixed together and then applied to the point of the house designated by Panrita Bola in the ménréq bola tradition.

![Fig. 5. Tamputtawaraq Bugis](image)

The first language in tamputtawaraq is rice colored with turmeric and given a mantra. The yellow color of turmeric and rice signifies matakkaq (light) and rice as a form of human survival. The second language in the signification is that the components of the potion have a sacred meaning. Bugis people believe that every space has a guardian, so a sign is needed that a house has gone through the ménréq bola process.

Rice in the Bugis perspective is interpreted as a symbol of blessing and sustenance as rice is the staple food of the Bugis community. Meanwhile, turmeric as a coloring agent for tamputtawaraq is understood by the Bugis community as an affirming action, which when associated with the meaning of turmeric in the previous description means that the Bugis community wants to emphasize that the residents of the house must be able to be independent and manage their entire house. Another plant that is also an ingredient in tampuq tawaraq is bangle, a tuberous plant that is usually used as a base for herbal medicine. Bugis people are more familiar with this plant by the name paniniq.

Further analyzing tamputtawaraq, there is also nutmeg as a building block. Nutmeg in Bugis society is considered a sacred fruit. This is evident from the fact that every cultural dish involves nutmeg as an aroma enhancer. The belief in nutmeg is clearly written in La Galigo [27], with the imagery of an object from the celestial realm that after being thrown into the world turns into a vast expanse of mountains and rice fields.

Tamputtawaraq is also synonymous with aju cenning or cinnamon. In the Bugis perspective, aju cenning acts as paqbauq-bauq (fragrance). One interviewee suggested that the presence of aju cenning in tamputtawaraq is so that the preparations that produce a fragrant aroma do not only come from the preparations that are eaten, but also traditional utensils to add to the atmosphere of masumangeq. There are also flavor enhancers from different components, such as kaluku tunu or roasted coconut, which produces a mawangi aroma. A comparison of observations and interviews yields the perspective that the use of roasted coconut is intended to make the dishes processed by the community produce a fragrant aroma. Similarly, the Bugis also add brown sugar to the tamputtawaraq with the aim of making the relationship within the house sweeter, more peaceful and harmonious.
5 Conclusion

Based on the results of the analysis, the number of artifacts in this study consists of 4 categories, namely fruit, culinary, equipment and herb. 6 data in the fruit category, 4 data in the food category, 1 in the equipment, and 1 data in the herb category. The artifacts described in the research are not necessarily equipment found centuries ago. Rather, the result of community creation in the form of recipes, components and shapes obtained from the advice of the ancestors of the Bugis community.

The fruit category indicates the most dominant basic ingredients used by the Bugis people in culinary processing, accompanied by beliefs derived from the phenomenal Bugis literature La Galigo. The food category covers the meaning of basic ingredients, processing techniques and culinary forms, along with the relationship between name and meaning. The utensils category includes the universal functions and symbols that Bugis people assign to objects and ingredients as a sign of having asked permission from other God's creatures. Overall, each artifact functions in its respective position, but with the main purpose of opening sustenance and peace of life for the residents of the house later. The representation of meaning in culinary expects sustenance that is layered and always comes, so that to obtain this it is accompanied by the harmony of the whole house and the spirit to help each other to achieve a better life.

References

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