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Tanggap Pasemon As A Representation Of folklore In The Gambus Misri Jombang Performing Art: An Ethnosemantic Study

Daeng Meilani Ananda Putri Malik
Yogyakarta State University, Indonesia
Sri Harti W
Yogyakarta State University, Indonesia

Corresponding Author: daengmeilani.2024@student.uny.ac.id

Abstract

This study aims to analyze and describe: (1) verbal and nonverbal *pasemon* (cultural satire/metaphor) responses as representations of oral folklore in the *Gambus Misri Bintang Sembilan Jombang* performance art, and (2) verbal and nonverbal *pasemon* responses as representations of ethnosemantic philosophy in the same performance art. A qualitative descriptive method was employed, focusing on three *gambus misri* plays: *(1) Brandhal Lokajaya, (2) Sahabat Bilal, and (3) Kebo Kicak & Surontanu*. Primary data sources consisted of performance video transcripts, while secondary data came from interviews with informants. Data collection involved transcription, interviews, and observation. The researcher served as the primary research instrument, assisted by an interview guide. Data analysis was conducted through data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing, based on Jan Harold Brunvand's folklore theory and ethnosemantic studies. The study concludes that *pasemon* responses in *gambus misri* appear in two forms. The first is verbal *pasemon* response, manifesting as oral folklore elements such as folk speech, traditional expressions, traditional questions, folk rhymes and poetry, folk prose and tales, and folk songs. The second is nonverbal *pasemon* response, demonstrated through paralinguistic elements: body movements and facial expressions, body parts and physical attractiveness, proxemics, chronemics, haptics, and vocalics. The underlying ethnosemantic philosophy encompasses conceptual representations such as plants, animals, objects, body parts, family, *wayang* (puppets), livelihoods, food, activities, performances, age, gender, and religion while visual representations constitute the meanings symbolizing the *pasemon*, including groups of people or livelihoods, facial features and vocal characteristics, costumes, and props.

Keywords: etnosemantik; folklore; gambus misri; tanggap pasemon.

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INTRODUCTION

Language is the primary means by which humans communicate, convey ideas, express thoughts and feelings, and build social relationships. From a linguistic perspective, language is understood not merely as a system of sound symbols for conveying information, but also as a representation of the values, norms, and culture that exist within a society. Keraf (2010) states that language is a communication tool that enables social interaction among humans. Therefore, the use of language requires not only effectiveness in conveying messages but also consideration of social and cultural contexts to ensure communication goals are achieved appropriately. Communication success is heavily influenced by the ability of the speaker and the interlocutor to understand the meaning of utterances in light of the underlying communication situation (Mailani, et al., 2022). Thus, language and communication are inseparable elements, as language serves as the medium for conveying messages, while communication is a social process realized through the use of language.

In practice, language use is inseparable from the aspect of linguistic politeness. Politeness is a communicative principle aimed at maintaining social harmony; consequently, speakers are required to select speech forms appropriate to the conditions, situation, and characteristics of their interlocutors. In Javanese society, linguistic politeness is manifested through the *unggah-ungguh basa* system-specifically, the use of *ngoko*, *madya*, and *krama* speech registers based on the social relationship between the speaker and the interlocutor (Suhono dalam Setiyanto, 2007). For the Javanese people, harmony *(guyub rukun)* is a cultural value that must be upheld; consequently, messages with the potential to cause offense tend to be conveyed indirectly. This value is reflected in expressions such as *tuna sathak bathi sanak* and *ajining diri saka lathi*, which emphasize that maintaining good relationships and speaking courteously take precedence over personal or material interests.

One communication strategy rooted in Javanese culture is *pasemon* the indirect conveyance of messages through expressions containing symbolic meaning, metaphors, or subtle allusions. Through *pasemon*, advice, criticism, reprimands, or even commands can be communicated without disrupting the harmony of social relationships. Poerwadarminta (1939) explains that *pasemon* can take the form of facial expressions, gestures, behavior, or speech used as a sign or symbol of a particular intent. Meanwhile, Endraswara (2010) states that the term *pasemon* derives from the word *semu*, meaning vague or obscure, implying that the meaning of an utterance is grasped through cultural symbols. Consequently, *pasemon* is viewed not merely

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as a figure of speech but also as a representation of the Javanese mindset regarding the maintenance of communication ethics.

As a cultural product, *pasemon* manifests in various forms of folklore such as traditional expressions, *saloka*, *geguritan*, *syair* (poetry), and folktales that are passed down through generations (Endraswara, 2010). In this context, *pasemon* serves as a medium for transmitting values, norms, and local wisdom by conveying messages symbolically. Setiawan & Nurmansyah (2014) emphasize that *pasemon* possesses an educational function, acting as a tool for character education that internalizes noble Javanese cultural values through various traditions and art forms. Thus, *pasemon* functions not only as a communication strategy but also as a medium for cultural preservation.

The study of *pasemon* in this research is grounded in Jan Harold Brunvand's folklore theory, which categorizes folklore into three groups: verbal folklore, partly verbal folklore, and nonverbal folklore (Danandjaja, 1982). This classification provides a framework for identifying the forms of *pasemon* that emerge whether through speech or nonverbal elements during a performance. This approach is considered relevant because *pasemon* is manifested not only through language but also through expressions, gestures, and cultural symbols accompanying the communication process.

One form of folklore that persists to this day is folk performance art. Beyond serving as a source of entertainment, these performances act as a vehicle for transmitting cultural values, providing education, and offering social commentary. One traditional art form that has flourished in Jombang Regency is *Gambus Misri,* a performance art that integrates music, dance, drama, comedy, and Islamic preaching into a single show (Devi, 2023). Unlike *Ludruk*, which prioritizes entertainment and social criticism, *Gambus Misri* places greater emphasis on conveying Islamic values through dialogue, songs, and dramatic scenes. These characteristics make *Gambus Misri* a medium rich in the use of *pasemon* (allegorical or metaphorical expression) to convey moral messages to the audience.

This study utilizes *Gambus Misri* performances produced by the Bintang Sembilan Group as its data source. The group was selected because it upholds the traditional conventions of *Gambus Misri*, involves authentic performers, and actively engages in the revitalization and generational renewal of the art form by involving young people. The analysis focuses on three plays: *Sahabat Bilal, Brandhal Lokajaya, and Kebo Kicak lan Surontanu*. These three plays were chosen because they represent the characteristics of *Gambus Misri* while demonstrating the use

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of *pasemon* (allegorical or metaphorical expression) to convey religious and moral values as well as social criticism.

To uncover the cultural meaning embedded in *pasemon*, this study employs an ethnosemantic approach. Ghufar (2022) It is explained that ethnosemantics is an approach within anthropological linguistics that examines the relationship between language, meaning, and the cultural knowledge system of a society. This approach enables researchers to interpret the meaning of *pasemon* not only based on linguistic elements but also within the cultural context of the community that sustains the tradition. Consequently, ethnosemantics is considered suitable for explaining the representation of folklore in the *Gambus Misri* performing art.

Several previous studies have examined *pasemon* from various perspectives. Wijayanti (2016) analyzed the meaning of character associations in *saloka*, meanwhile Setiawan & Nurmansyah (2014) examined *pasemon* in the *kentrung* art form as a medium for character education. However, these studies have primarily focused on linguistic, literary, and character education aspects. To date, no research has examined *tanggap pasemon* as a representation of verbal and nonverbal folklore within the *Gambus Misri* performance art using an ethnosemantic approach.

Given this context, the study offers novelty in three aspects: (1) focusing on *Gambus Misri* as a subject of folklore research that has received limited scholarly attention; (2) identifying and classifying *pasemon* expressions into verbal and non-verbal folklore forms based on Jan Harold Brunvand's theory; and (3) uncovering the cultural meaning of *pasemon* through an ethnosemantic approach. This research is expected to enrich the fields of folklore and linguistic anthropology while supporting the preservation of *Gambus Misri* as a form of local cultural heritage. Consequently, the study aims to describe the forms of *pasemon* expression within the *Gambus Misri Bintang Sembilan Jombang* performance art, analyze the folklore representations embedded therein, and reveal the cultural significance of *pasemon* through an ethnosemantic analysis.

RESEARCH METHODE

This study employs a descriptive qualitative approach utilizing Palmer's ethnosemantic perspective. A qualitative approach was selected because the study seeks to understand cultural phenomena through data such as texts and images and the process of interpreting the meanings embedded within them (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Descriptive qualitative research is used to

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describe and interpret phenomena based on the cultural context under study (Miles & Hubner, 1994). The subjects of this research are three performance plays by the *Gambus Misri Bintang Sembilan Jombang* troupe namely *Brandhal Loka Jaya*, *Sahabat Bilal*, and *Kebo Kicak & Surontanu* selected because they contain folklore elements and various forms of *tanggap pasemon* (subtle, metaphorical, or allusive expression) related to language use and cultural symbols. The object of the study is *tanggap pasemon* within *Gambus Misri Bintang Sembilan Jombang* performances, viewed as a representation of folklore and analyzed through an ethnosemantic lens. Data sources comprise both primary and secondary data. Primary data were obtained directly through the transcription of the three *Gambus Misri* plays, interviews with performers and cultural figures, observations, and research documentation. Meanwhile, secondary data were gathered from books, scholarly journals, articles, and documents related to *Gambus Misri* performances, folklore, and ethnosemantics (Barlian, 2018; Sujarweni, 2014). Data collection was carried out using the listen and record technique, interviews, observation, and documentation. The listen and record technique was employed to gather data on the spoken utterances within the performance, while interviews were conducted to explore information regarding the history, evolution, and cultural significance of Gambus Misri. Observation served to provide an understanding of the performance context and cultural activities associated with the research subject, whereas documentation provided supporting data in the form of photographs, videos, and research documents (Abdussamad, 2021). The primary instrument in this qualitative research was the researcher, who played a central role in defining the research focus, collecting data, conducting analysis, and drawing conclusions, supported by supplementary instruments such as interview guides, observation sheets, field notes, and documentation tools (Barlian, 2018). Data analysis was conducted through the stages of transcription, data reduction, data classification, interpretation, and drawing conclusions, based on the qualitative data analysis approach (Bogdan & Biklen in Moleong, 2009). Data validation was conducted through semantic validity and stability reliability to ensure the correspondence between the analyzed linguistic data and the meanings contained within them (Kripendorff, 2004), and reinforced through source and technique triangulation by comparing data from interviews, observations, documentation, and performance transcriptions (Wahidmurni, 2017).

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THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Ethnosemantics is a field of study within anthropological linguistics that focuses on the relationship between language, meaning, and a society's cultural knowledge systems. This field views language not merely as a tool for communication, but also as a representation of how a society organizes experience, classifies reality, and assigns meaning to its surrounding cultural environment. Sucipto (2017) explains that ethnosemantics examines the relationship between language and culture through the systems of meaning employed by a community in daily life. Consequently, the meaning of an utterance cannot be separated from the social and cultural context of the speech community. Palmer (1996) states that ethnosemantics concerns how humans construct experience through language, in both verbal and nonverbal forms. Language is understood as a system of symbols representing specific cultural knowledge. Through an ethnosemantic approach, researchers can uncover how a society categorizes the various experiences, objects, activities, and values deemed significant in their lives. This approach is relevant for analyzing *pasemon*, as *pasemon* encompasses not only literal linguistic meaning but also cultural symbols understood through the collective experience of the Javanese people. In this study, Palmer's ethnosemantic theory is employed to reveal the cultural meaning embedded in the *tanggap pasemon* (performance of pasemon) within the *Gambus Misri* performing art. The approach is used to understand how the verbal and non-verbal elements of the performance represent the knowledge systems, values, and worldviews of the community that sustains the art form.

Folklore is a component of collective culture passed down through generations via traditional processes within a community. Danandjaja (1982) defines folklore as a portion of a collective's culture that is disseminated and transmitted across generations in oral, partly oral, or non-oral forms. Folklore serves not merely as entertainment but also as a repository for collective memory, social values, norms, and the community's cultural identity. A widely used classification of folklore in cultural studies was proposed by Jan Harold Brunvand, who categorized it into three groups: oral folklore, partly oral folklore, and nonoral folklore (Danandjaja, 1982). This study employs the concept of folklore to identify forms of *pasemon* (allusive expression) appearing in the *Gambus Misri* performing art specifically the verbal and nonverbal forms that represent Javanese culture. Oral folklore is the primary focus because *pasemon* is frequently manifested through speech, traditional expressions, stories, songs, and other forms of symbolic language. However, within the context of performance, folklore manifests not only through language but

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also through bodily expressions, movement, costumes, props, and other performance elements. Consequently, the study of folklore in this research is broadly understood as a system of cultural representation conveyed through various forms of communication within the *Gambus Misri* performance.

Pasemon is a form of symbolic communication in Javanese culture used to convey intent indirectly through figurative expressions, allusions, or specific metaphors. Endraswara (2010) explains that *pasemon* derives from the concept of *semu* (semblance or appearance), indicating an implicit meaning lying beneath a statement or action. In Javanese society, the use of *pasemon* is closely linked to values of politeness, social harmony, and the preservation of interpersonal relationships. *Pasemon* functions not merely as an aesthetic element of language but also as a vehicle for transmitting cultural values. Setiawan & Nurmansyah (2014) state that *pasemon* in Javanese culture embodies various life values, such as religiosity, social relations, respect for elders, devotion, and character building. Consequently, *pasemon* can be understood as a form of local wisdom that encapsulates the moral messages and life philosophies of the Javanese people. In traditional performing arts, *pasemon* manifests in two forms: verbal and non-verbal. The verbal form appears through dialogue, songs, expressions, or stories delivered by performers, whereas the non-verbal form is conveyed through facial expressions, gestures, intonation, costumes, and other visual symbols. The distinction between the apparent meaning and the intended meaning is a defining characteristic of *pasemon*, necessitating an interpretive approach to grasp the cultural significance embedded within it (Vansina, 1985).

Gambus Misri is a traditional performing art of the Jombang community that blends elements of drama, music, dance, comedy, and Islamic values. Maisaroh (2019) explains that Gambus Misri emerged from the *santri* (Islamic boarding school student) community in Jombang and possesses characteristics distinct from other forms of folk performance. Gambus Misri performances serve not only as entertainment but also as a medium for conveying moral, religious, and social messages to the public. As a folk performing art, Gambus Misri provides a platform for various forms of folklore to emerge, including the use of *pasemon* (allusive expression) to convey cultural messages. Character dialogue, songs, expressions, and stage actions all contain cultural symbols that can be examined through the perspectives of folklore and ethnosemantics. Therefore, this study employs Brunvand's (1968) concept of folklore and Palmer's (1996) ethnosemantics to analyze how *pasemon* is represented in the performances of the Bintang Sembilan Gambus Misri troupe in Jombang.

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RESULT AND DISCUSSION

RESULT

An analysis of three *Gambus Misri* performances by the Bintang Sembilan group from Jombang namely *Brandhal Lokajaya*, *Sahabat Bilal*, and *Kebo Kicak & Surontanu* reveals that *tanggap pasemon* (allusive communication) is represented through both verbal and nonverbal forms as an element of folklore, while also embodying ethnosemantic representations that reflect the Javanese community's system of cultural knowledge. These findings were derived through the identification, classification, and interpretation of data based on Jan Harold Brunvand's folklore theory and Palmer's ethnosemantic approach.

Verbal and Nonverbal *Pasemon* Forms as Representations of Folklore and Ethnosemantics in Three *Gambus Misri* Performance Plays by the Bintang Sembilan Group, Jombang

An analysis of three *Gambus Misri* performances by the Bintang Sembilan group from Jombang namely *Brandhal Lokajaya*, *Sahabat Bilal,* and *Kebo Kicak & Surontanu* reveals that *pasemon* (allusive expression) is represented in two primary forms: verbal and nonverbal. These forms serve not only as a medium of communication between characters within the performance but also represent the folklore and cultural knowledge systems of the Javanese people, analyzed here through an ethnosemantic approach.

The identification results reveal variations in the quantity and form of *pasemon* (symbolic expression) across the three plays. The play *Brandhal Lokajaya* yielded the highest number of instances, comprising 38 data points for verbal *pasemon*, 55 for nonverbal *pasemon*, and 18 for verbal ethnosemantic representations. In the play *Sahabat Bilal*, 25 instances of verbal *pasemon,* 43 of nonverbal *pasemon*, and 4 of verbal ethnosemantic representations were identified. Meanwhile, the play *Kebo Kicak & Surontanu* contained 22 instances of verbal *pasemon*, 24 of nonverbal *pasemon*, and 6 of verbal ethnosemantic representations. Beyond these verbal representations, all three plays also exhibited nonverbal ethnosemantic representations through character expressions, costumes, props, and various visual elements of the performance. These differences in the number of identified instances indicate that the use of *pasemon* in each play possesses distinct characteristics, differing in both the mode of delivery and the frequency of occurrence in constructing cultural meaning throughout the performance.

Overall, non-verbal expressive elements predominate over verbal ones. These findings indicate that the conveyance of meaning in *Gambus Misri* is constructed not only through speech

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but also through facial expressions, gestures, intonation, the use of space, and visual symbols that reinforce the performance's cultural message. Thus, the expressive elements in *Gambus Misri* constitute a multimodal communication system, combining verbal and nonverbal components to represent folklore while simultaneously conveying the cultural significance of Javanese society.

Based on these findings, the research results are presented in two parts. The first part discusses the *pasemon* response as a folklore representation manifested in verbal and nonverbal forms, while the second part outlines the ethnosemantic representations inherent in the use of *pasemon* across the three performance plays of the Gambus Misri Group Bintang Sembilan Jombang.

Tanggap Pasemon as a Folklore Representation in the Gambus Misri Performance Art of the Bintang Sembilan Group, Jombang

The analysis reveals that the *tanggap pasemon* (subtle, metaphorical expression) in three plays by the Bintang Sembilan Jombang Gambus Misri Group represents two forms of folklore: verbal and nonverbal. These two forms complement each other in conveying moral, social, religious, and cultural messages to the audience, thereby establishing a cohesive communication system within the performance.

Verbal folklore is classified into six forms: folk speech, traditional expressions, traditional questions, folk verse and poetry, folk prose or narratives, and folk songs. The folk speech category encompasses various linguistic variations, such as accents or dialects, slang, cant, argot, shop talk, circumlocution, nicknames used as forms of address, physiognomy based terms, nicknames derived from traditional titles or positions, onomatopoeia, onomastics, specific diction, and profanity. The category of traditional expressions includes *paribasan, bebasan, saloka, sanepa,* and *tembung sindiran* (satirical phrases). Meanwhile, the category of traditional questions is manifested through *cangkriman* (riddles). Within the folk verse and poetry category, one finds forms such as *syi'ir*, *parikan*, and mantras or prayers. The folk prose or narrative category comprises legends and myths, whereas folk songs consist of wedding accompaniment songs, songs expressing emotions, religious songs, didactic songs, cumulative songs, regional songs related to livelihoods, and songs that serve to identify a specific region.

In addition to verbal forms, this study identifies nonverbal *pasemon* (subtle, indirect expressions) represented through six categories of nonverbal communication: body movements

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and facial expressions, physical characteristics, proxemics, chronemics, haptics, and vocalics. The category of body movements and facial expressions encompasses emblems, illustrators, affect displays, regulators, and adaptors. Physical characteristics include body types (ectomorph, mesomorph, and endomorph) as well as facial features. Proxemics is represented through the maintenance of intimate, personal, social, and public distances between characters. Chronemics is demonstrated through the use of time in either a monochronic or polychronic manner, while haptics is manifested through physical contact between characters. Finally, the vocalics category covers pitch, speech rate, intonation (inflection), volume, voice quality, timbre, pronunciation, articulation, and *mendel* (pauses).

Based on this classification, it is evident that the representation of folklore in Gambus Misri is constructed not only through speech but also through various non-verbal signs that reinforce the *pasemon* (allusive meaning). The combination of these two forms demonstrates that the transmission of cultural messages in Gambus Misri occurs multimodally; consequently, the values passed down to the community are understood not merely through language, but also through the expressions, movements, sounds, and visual symbols accompanying the performance.

Tanggap Pasemon as an Ethnosemantic Representation in the *Gambus Misri* Performance Art of the Bintang Sembilan Group, Jombang

Research findings indicate that *pasemon* as an ethnosemantic representation within three plays performed by the Bintang Sembilan Jombang *Gambus Misri* group is manifested through both verbal and nonverbal forms. Verbal ethnosemantic representations were identified across thirteen cultural categories: flora, fauna, tools/implements, body parts, family, *wayang* (traditional puppetry), livelihood, food, activities, performances, age, gender, and religion. Among these, the categories of age, flora, family, and livelihood appeared most prominently in the dialogue between characters, whereas the categories of tools/implements, *wayang*, performances, and gender appeared less frequently.

In addition to verbal representations, this study identifies non-verbal ethnosemantic representations manifested through the visual elements of the performance specifically the character types *(pawongan* or *pangupajiwa),* facial expressions and vocal qualities *(pasuryan lan swanten)*, costumes, and the props or equipment *(pirantos)* used by the performers. These elements serve as markers of cultural identity that reinforce the meaning of *pasemon* (subtle,

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metaphorical expression) and complement the messages conveyed through spoken dialogue. The non-verbal representations were identified through an analysis of the expressions, costumes, attributes, and props documented across the three plays.

Overall, the research findings indicate that the ethnosemantic representation in the Gambus Misri performing art is constructed through a blend of verbal and non-verbal elements. Lexical choices, visual symbols, expressions, costumes, and performance props complement one another in representing the knowledge, experiences, and cultural values of the Javanese community; consequently, the meaning of *pasemon* is understood not merely through language, but also through the entire system of signs present in the performance.

DISCUSSION

This discussion interprets research findings regarding *pasemon* (allusive expression) in the *Gambus Misri* performances of the Bintang Sembilan Jombang group, drawing on folklore and ethnosemantic perspectives. The analysis focuses on three aspects: the forms of verbal and nonverbal *pasemon*, the representation of *pasemon* as folklore, and the ethnosemantic representation reflecting the Javanese community's system of cultural knowledge. Thus, this discussion demonstrates the interconnections among language, cultural symbols, and values transmitted through *Gambus Misri* performances.

Verbal and Nonverbal Pasemon Forms as Representations of Folklore and Ethnosemantics in Three Gambus Misri Performance Plays by the Bintang Sembilan Group, Jombang

Research findings indicate that the *pasemon* (allusive expression) in three *Gambus Misri* plays *Brandhal Lokajaya, Sahabat Bilal, and Kebo Kicak & Surontanu* manifests in two primary forms: verbal and non-verbal. Verbal *pasemon* emerges through dialogue, traditional expressions, songs, and various forms of symbolic speech, whereas nonverbal *pasemon* is represented through facial expressions, gestures, intonation, spatial distance between performers, costumes, and stage props. These two forms complement each other, ensuring that the meaning of the *pasemon* is constructed not only through language but also through the various visual signs and behaviors accompanying the performance.

The findings reveal that Gambus Misri employs a multimodal communication system. The meaning conveyed to the audience relies not only on the choice of words but is also reinforced by nonverbal elements that support the narrative. This demonstrates that the successful delivery

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of the message in Gambus Misri depends heavily on the integration of verbal and nonverbal elements.

These findings align with the folklore classification proposed by Brunvand (Danandjaja, 1982), which posits that folklore exists not only in oral form but also manifests through various non-verbal forms passed down through generations. In the context of Gambus Misri, both forms coexist as a unified performance, thereby preserving cultural values while simultaneously captivating the audience. Furthermore, the research results reinforce the view held by Setiawan & Nurmansyah (2014) that *pasemon* serves as a medium for conveying advice, criticism, and character education through symbolic language. These findings also concur with Santosa, et al., (2021) demonstrating that folklore as oral literature can be transformed into performance art, allowing cultural messages to be conveyed not merely through speech but also through performance elements that create a holistic cultural experience. Finally, Pradoko, et al., (2025) explain that folk performance art represents a community's social and cultural values, functioning as a cultural text.

However, this study demonstrates that the delivery of such messages is not achieved solely through speech but is reinforced by expressions, gestures, character traits, and the artistic elements of the performance. Thus, *pasemon* in Gambus Misri functions not merely as a linguistic phenomenon but as a system of cultural communication that integrates various verbal and nonverbal signs.

Tanggap Pasemon as a Folklore Representation in the Gambus Misri Performance Art of the Bintang Sembilan Group, Jombang

The research findings indicate that the *pasemon* (allusive expression) in Gambus Misri represents various forms of folklore transmitted across generations through performance art. Verbal *pasemon* manifests through folk language, traditional idioms, *cangkriman* (riddles), verses, folktales, and folk songs. Meanwhile, nonverbal *pasemon* is expressed through the performers' facial expressions, gestures, touch, spatial arrangement, use of time, and vocal qualities. Collectively, these forms demonstrate that folklore in Gambus Misri exists not merely as an oral tradition but as a living cultural practice embedded in every element of the performance.

These findings reveal that Gambus Misri fulfills the functions of folklore as a medium for cultural transmission, moral education, entertainment, social criticism, and religious outreach

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(dakwah). Values such as religiosity, leadership, responsibility, respect for elders, and communal living are conveyed through *pasemon*, making them more palatable to the audience without appearing preachy.

This study supports Danandjaja's (1982) view that folklore is part of a collective culture transmitted through tradition. Similarly, Endraswara (2010) explains that folklore serves to preserve a community's cultural identity. In Gambus Misri, this function is evident in the preservation of the Javanese language, the use of local cultural symbols, and the conveyance of life values that remain relevant to contemporary society.

These findings align with research by Santosa, et al., (2021) which demonstrates that oral folklore transformed into performance art retains its function as a medium for transmitting cultural values while simultaneously serving as a source of entertainment for the community. Furthermore, Pradoko, et al., (2025) explain that folk performance art represents cultural identity—embodying social and moral values as well as local wisdom thereby playing a role in sustaining traditions amidst societal change. These findings also relate to the study by Setiawan & Nurmansyah (2014) on *pasemon* (allegorical expression) in *kentrung* art, which highlights its function as a medium for character education. However, the present study expands upon those findings by demonstrating that in *Gambus Misri*, *pasemon* serves not only as a medium for character education but also as a vehicle for Islamic da'wah (preaching), social criticism, entertainment, and cultural preservation all within a single performance format. Thus, *Gambus Misri* illustrates how folklore evolves dynamically to meet societal needs without losing the traditional values that define its identity.

Tanggap Pasemon as an Ethnosemantic Representation in the Gambus Misri Performance Art of the Bintang Sembilan Group, Jombang

Research findings indicate that *tanggap pasemon* (expressive nuance) in *Gambus Misri* represents the Javanese community's system of cultural knowledge through various ethnosemantic categories, manifested in both verbal and non-verbal forms. Verbal representation is conveyed through a lexicon encompassing plants, animals, family, occupations, food, religion, age, and even *wayang* (shadow puppet) characters. Meanwhile, nonverbal representation is expressed through facial expressions, vocal characteristics, costumes, attributes, and props utilized by the performers during the show. Collectively, these elements

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constitute cultural meanings that cannot be grasped solely through the lexical definitions of the language.

These findings indicate that *pasemon* is a cultural symbol born from the collective experience of the Javanese people. The choice of specific vocabulary and the use of visual symbols in performances reflect how the community categorizes its environment, social relationships, moral values, and beliefs as they evolve in daily life. Thus, the meaning of *pasemon* is constructed based on a cultural consensus shared by the community that upholds it.

The results of this study support Palmer's (1996) theory yang menyatakan bahwa bahasa merupakan representasi pengalaman budaya (language as cultural imagery). that language represents cultural experience (language as cultural imagery). Language functions not only as a means of communication but also as a means of organizing knowledge and a society's perspective on reality. This opinion is further reinforced by Peeters (2015), who explains that ethnolinguistic studies play a role in uncovering cultural values embedded in language use, so that the meaning of a speech cannot be fully understood without considering its cultural context. In the context of Gambus Misri, the meaning of pasemon arises from the integration of language, visual symbols, and the underlying cultural context.

Unlike previous studies that focused primarily on the linguistic analysis of *pasemon*, this research demonstrates that ethnosemantic meaning is constructed through the interplay of verbal and nonverbal elements within a performance. Consequently, *pasemon* in *Gambus Misri* serves not only as a form of symbolic communication but also as a representation of the Javanese cultural knowledge system transmitted through traditional performing arts. These findings extend the application of ethnosemantic studies from lexical analysis to the analysis of performance as a medium for holistic cultural representation. The study reveals that the ethnosemantic approach is applicable not only to the analysis of lexicons or cultural vocabulary as seen in much prior research but is also capable of explaining meaning construction through the combination of dialogue, expression, gestures, costumes, and props in performance art. Thus, this research broadens the scope of ethnosemantic inquiry from linguistic analysis to the analysis of cultural representation within traditional performances.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that *pasemon* (allusive expression) in the *Gambus Misri* performances of the Bintang Sembilan Jombang group is represented in two primary forms:

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verbal and nonverbal. Verbal *pasemon* is manifested through various forms of oral folklore, such as folk speech, traditional expressions, traditional riddles, folk poetry and verse, folk prose or tales, and folk songs. Meanwhile, nonverbal *pasemon* is represented through facial expressions, gestures, physical characteristics, the arrangement of space and time, touch, and vocal elements accompanying the performance. The combination of these two forms creates a system of cultural communication that conveys the moral, social, religious, and cultural values of Javanese society.

From a folklore perspective, *tanggap pasemon* serves as a medium for cultural transmission that not only preserves oral traditions but also integrates various performance elements to function as a vehicle for education, religious outreach, entertainment, and social criticism. Meanwhile, from an ethnosemantic perspective, *tanggap pasemon* represents the Javanese community's system of cultural knowledge through various cultural categories embodied in both verbal and non-verbal symbols. The meaning of *pasemon* is constructed not only by linguistic elements but also by cultural context, collective experience, and the visual signs accompanying the performance.

This study contributes to the development of folklore and ethnosemantic scholarship by demonstrating that the *pasemon* response within the *Gambus Misri* performing art constitutes a multimodal form of cultural communication. These findings expand the study of *pasemon* previously focused largely on linguistic aspects into an analysis that integrates verbal and nonverbal elements to represent the values, knowledge, and cultural identity of the Javanese people. Furthermore, this research is expected to serve as a reference for efforts to preserve *Gambus Misri* as local cultural heritage, while also opening avenues for further research into *pasemon* across other forms of traditional performing arts.

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