

BANALITIES IN KELONG MAKASSAR

Banalitas dalam Kelong Makassar

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Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis fenomena banalitas dalam kelong Makassar, yaitu kecenderungan degradasi makna akibat komersialisasi, penggunaan di luar konteks budaya aslinya, serta pengaruh media digital dalam persebarannya. Metode penelitian yang digunakan adalah pendekatan kualitatif. Penelitian ini dilakukan dalam rentang waktu Mei hingga Desember 2025. Sumber data penelitian ini terdiri dari data primer dan sekunder. Teknik pengumpulan data yang digunakan adalah studi pustaka, dokumentasi, observasi, transkripsi data, dan klasifikasi data. Sementara itu, analisis data dilakukan dengan menggunakan teknik reduksi data, penyajian data, dan penarikan kesimpulan, kemudian tahap akhir adalah keabsahan data. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa banalitas dalam kelong Makassar terjadi dalam beberapa bentuk, seperti simplifikasi makna, adaptasi yang menghilangkan nilai filosofis, serta penyebaran melalui media sosial yang cenderung mengutamakan aspek hiburan dibandingkan substansi budaya. Fenomena ini menunjukkan bahwa kelong tidak lagi hanya menjadi bagian dari tradisi lisan yang sakral, tetapi juga mengalami transformasi menjadi produk budaya populer yang bersifat pragmatis. Penelitian ini memberikan kontribusi teoretis dalam bidang sastra lisan dengan memadukan semiotika dan banalitas. Hasil temuan ini berfungsi sebagai refleksi untuk melestarikan kelong agar tidak kehilangan kedalaman maknanya dalam arus budaya yang lebih modern.

Kata-kata kunci: Kelong Makassar, banalitas, budaya lisan, kearifan lokal, media digital.

Abstract

This study aims to analyze the phenomenon of banality in Makassar kelong, namely the tendency of degradation of meaning due to commercialization, use outside its original cultural context, and the influence of digital media in its distribution. The research method used is a qualitative approach. This research was conducted from May to December 2025. The data sources for this study consist of primary and secondary data. Data collection techniques used are literature study, documentation, observation, data transcription, and data classification. Meanwhile, data analysis is carried out using data reduction techniques, data presentation, and drawing conclusions, then the final stage is data validity. The results of the study show that banality in Makassar kelong occurs in several forms, such as simplification of meaning, adaptation that eliminates philosophical values, and dissemination through social media that tends to prioritize entertainment aspects over cultural substance. This phenomenon shows that kelong is no longer only part of a sacred oral tradition, but has also undergone a transformation into a pragmatic popular cultural product. This study provides a theoretical contribution to the field of oral literature by combining semiotics and banality. These findings serve as a reflection to preserve kelong so that it does not lose its depth of meaning in more modern cultural flows.

Keywords: Makassar kelong, banality, oral culture, local wisdom, digital media.

Informasi Artikel

Naskah Diterima
3 Februari 2026

Naskah Direvisi akhir
9 Mei 2026

Naskah Diterbitkan
17 Juni 2026

Cara Mengutip

Nojeng, Asis., Sakaria, Nur Hasbi. (2026). Banalities in Kelong Makassar. *Aksara*. 38(1). 193—206. doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.29255/aksara.v38i1.4955.193-206>

INTRODUCTION

In today's fast-paced and highly digital world, the presence of oral literature provides an opportunity to slow down and appreciate the deeper meanings embedded in stories. Nevertheless, these modern challenges continue to pose a threat to the sustainability of traditional oral storytelling practices that have existed for generations (Nugraini & Pamungkas, 2023). Oral literature embodies the author's idealization and a high level of cultural sensibility (Dwipayana, 2020). Makassar Kelong, as one of the distinctive forms of oral literature of the Makassar community, has long been an important part of cultural expression in South Sulawesi. Kelong is a form of oral literary work whose performance is delivered through songs structured in poetic form (Yatzmi, 2019). It functions not only as entertainment but also as a medium for conveying moral values, local wisdom, and social criticism.

Earlier generations were able to record life experiences, convey wise advice, and depict social dynamics in everyday life through *kelong*. According to Hakim (2006), Makassar *kelong* is a form of oral art that constitutes an important part of the life of the Makassar community and functions as a medium for conveying traditional values that are expected to guide people toward humanity. Although it belongs to the category of classical literature, *kelong* still holds a special place in the hearts of its admirers in Makassar (Basang, 2006). However, in recent years, there has been a growing tendency toward the banality of Makassar *kelong*.

This study uses semiotics theory according to (Barthes, 2017) about signs, signs are a combination of bookmarks and maps, markers form expressions and maps form content. The researcher identified the language element in the snout and then linked it with the petanda in order to understand the meaning of denotative. Thereafter, analysis is also done on a connotation that indicates the cultural values, symbols, and ideologies in the conch text. Semiotics play a role in unambiguous structural meaning in the text. After an analysis of the sign according to the semiotical theory of Roland barthes, the results of the analysis were further analyzed using the theory of banality in cultural studies according to (Baudrillard, 1994) referring to value degradation, where a work lost depth of meaning and became merely a light consumption of society.

Kelong, as part of Makassar oral literature, experiences a process of banality, which refers to the simplification of meaning and aesthetics to the extent that it loses its philosophical depth. The phenomenon of banality in Makassar *kelong* has become a concern due to a shift in values from forms that were originally rich in advice and local wisdom to expressions that tend to emphasize vulgar humor, excessive social satire, and content that is relatively superficial and lacking deeper philosophical meaning. Meanwhile, Briggs (Farr, 2004) explains that oral traditions possess very high value and demonstrate the rhetorical abilities as well as the cultural productivity of the communities that maintain them, making them an important medium for preserving Makassar culture. Factors influencing this phenomenon include technological developments, changes in public taste, and the influence of social media in the dissemination of local arts.

Banality in Makassar *kelong* can be observed in changes in themes, diction, and modes of presentation that increasingly emphasize entertainment rather than the reflective values embedded within it. In the past, *kelong* functioned as a medium for conveying moral values, philosophies of life, and social criticism. However, in its development, many *kelong* have undergone a simplification of meaning, resulting in the loss of their philosophical depth.

Consequently, *kelong* no longer functions as an intellectual heritage rich in the thoughts and experiences of the community, but rather becomes part of a cultural trend that is easily consumed and quickly replaced by other forms of entertainment. This transformation aligns with the broader phenomena of globalization and digitalization that influence almost all aspects of traditional culture (Hutcheon, 2003). It marks a shift in *kelong* from a literary work rich in values toward a more consumptive and superficial form of expression. This phenomenon is inseparable from the influence of globalization and digitalization, which continue to reshape the ways in which people engage with traditional culture. Nevertheless, *kelong* has historically developed within the cultural life of the community, supported by Makassar regional songs (Yatim, 1983).

In the era of social media and the modern entertainment industry, *kelong* has undergone adaptations in order to align with market preferences, often at the expense of the philosophical aspects and original values embedded within it (Hutcheon, 2003). As a result, many *kelong* have lost their substantive meaning, becoming more oriented toward instant entertainment and undergoing significant structural changes compared to classical *kelong*, which were rich in metaphor and cultural symbolism. Meanwhile, Sikki and Nasruddin (1995) argue that *kelong* needs to be preserved because it contains cultural values that reflect the identity of the Makassar community as a civilized and cultured society.

The distinctiveness of this research lies in its examination of banality in Makassar *kelong*, a form of traditional oral literature that has undergone transformation in the digital era. In this study, *kelong* is not merely viewed as a cultural product that has changed over time; rather, it is analyzed more deeply in terms of the loss of philosophical values, aesthetics, and local wisdom as a consequence of globalization, social media, and the logic of the entertainment industry. The focus on the perspective of banality theory becomes a crucial point, as it enables *kelong* to be analyzed not only as a literary text or oral tradition but also as a representation of postmodern culture trapped in hyperreality. In this context, the widely circulated *kelong* no longer reflects authentic values, but rather represents images that have been reproduced and modified.

The advent of social media and digital platforms has influenced the content of *kelong*, which is now presented in a lighter format with simpler diction and more popular themes to be more easily received by a broader audience. This process often eliminates the symbolic and aesthetic dimensions characteristic of traditional *kelong*. Shifts in social systems, advances in information technology, and political systems are also considered to contribute to these changes (Astika & Yasa, 2014). Over time, the continuous reproduction of *kelong* in this reduced form creates a new reality that differs from its original essence. According to (Nursalam et al., 2020), *kelong* is not only a medium for cultural communication but can also serve as an educational tool for character development in children.

Young generations exposed to *kelong* in its more superficial form may not realize that what they consume is a version that has undergone significant transformation from its original form. They may perceive *kelong* merely as light entertainment, without understanding that in the past it possessed greater depth of meaning. Baudrillard (Fitria, 2016) emphasizes that in postmodern societies, individuals tend to accept hyperreality as reality itself. Thus, the banality of Makassar *kelong* is not merely a simplification of form but also reflects a shift in how society understands and appreciates its own cultural heritage.

It is important to conduct research on this subject because Makassar *kelong* is an oral literary heritage that reflects the identity, collective memory, and moral values of the Makassar community. There is a risk that the phenomenon of banality may diminish *kelong*'s role as a tool for character education, the transmission of cultural values, and a mirror of social life. Without a critical examination of this tendency, *kelong* could lose its position as an intellectual and cultural heritage, being perceived merely as light entertainment devoid of deeper meaning.

Therefore, this study is highly significant as an effort to foster critical awareness of culture, and simultaneously contributes academically by providing new insights into the sustainability of Makassar oral literature amidst modernization and digitalization.

The conch that is the object of this research is the work of ridwan sau, azhari sitaba, and udhin leaders. This is based on the fact that the three writers reflect the current development of the conch king makassar, particularly between 2013 and 2024. During this period, the conch has transformed from mere oral traditions into forms to be found in digital media and modern public space. In addition, through performances and social media, their work shows an extremely high level of production and distribution, thus being able to reach audiences and play a part in the development of cultural appetites of the community. The purses they invented suggest a change in function from just reflective media to a means of entertainment, reflected in the repetition of words, the simplification of moral messages, and the dominance of popular expression. This made the works important for analysis from the standpoint of banality, reflecting the normal process of sense and the drop of symbolic value in makassar's oral literature. The similarities of the three authors also provide sufficient variations of data to identify banality in a comparative way. The selection of this research object notes not only the availability of data but also its relevance in reflecting the transformational dynamics of the makassar kelp in contemporary cultural context.

Several previous studies have examined oral literature and Makassar *kelong* from various perspectives. Hakim (2006), Basang (2006), and Yatzmi (2019) emphasized the function of *kelong* as a medium for expressing moral values, local wisdom, and cultural identity. Sikki and Nasruddin (1995) as well as Nusalam et al. (2019) highlighted the importance of *kelong* as a means of cultural preservation and character education. Meanwhile, Dwipayana (2020) and Oktaviani et al., (2022) positioned oral literature as a space for cultural idealization and the collective consciousness of the community. However, these studies have generally focused on the functions, structure, and normative values of *kelong* and have not specifically examined the shifts in meaning, banality, and hyperreality within the context of postmodern culture and digital media.

Compared to previous studies, this research occupies a complementary and simultaneously critical position. While earlier research emphasized aspects of preservation, educational function, and the traditional values of *kelong*, this study offers a new perspective by examining *kelong* as a cultural product undergoing banality. This research is expected to expand the study of Makassar oral literature by integrating postmodern cultural theory, thereby not only explaining what *kelong* is and its values, but also how and why these values have been reduced in the contemporary context. This research addresses an academic gap that has not been extensively explored and provides a conceptual contribution to the study of oral literature, local culture, and the dynamics of culture in the digital era.

METHODS

This study uses a qualitative approach with a descriptive analytical method to understand the phenomenon of banality in Makassar *kelong* during the period 2013-2024. The qualitative approach was chosen because it allows for in-depth exploration of the meaning, structure, and changes in the Makassar *kelong* that experienced banality (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). The descriptive analytical method was used to describe the phenomena that occurred and analyze the causal factors and their impact on society. According to Creswell (2014), qualitative research aims to explore and understand the meanings that individuals or groups give to a social phenomenon. Therefore, in qualitative research, the researcher is the main instrument, all processes involve the researcher's investigation and interpretation (Hassan et al., 2020). In the context of this study, this approach allows researchers to understand how the Makassar *kelong*

has undergone changes in meaning and form and how the community has responded to these changes.

Roland barthes' semiotics theory in the study was used to interpret linguistic and symbolic signs in the purges. Then, through jean baudrillard's theory of banality, the kelong was analyzed as a text undergoes the means of regenerating meaning, meaning an initially reflective and critical moral and cultural value could change into accepted discourse, even losing its appeal. Banalization in this type of literary work indicates the normalization of certain values that are accepted without reflection, so that kelong becomes a mirror of how society internalizes cultural ideology through seemingly ordinary forms of expression. By combining semiotics and banality theory, the study of Makassar kelong not only explores its meaning structure but also reveals the ideological process that makes this traditional text a medium of banality, namely a work that reflects everyday life while showing the loss of critical tension in culture.

This research was conducted in the period from May to December 2025. The data sources for this study consist of two types: primary and secondary data. The primary data for this study is the Makassar kelong by Ridwan Sau, Azhari Sitaba, and Udhin Leaders. Meanwhile, the secondary data for this study is data from academic articles, literary reviews, and cultural documentation related to contemporary Makassar literature.

The data gathering technique in this study involves a structured series of steps. First, researchers do library studies by searching for written references, such as books, scientific articles, and previous studies relating to the kelong makassar, semiotika, and concept of banality. The purpose of this stage is to build a basis for theory and know the research position in existing studies. Second, documentary techniques are compiled by amassing key data in the kelong makassar text of ridwan sau, azhari sitaba, and udhin leaders, both in written form and in audio and video recording. At this stage, researchers use the documentation guide to record data identities, context and early text banality. Then, field observations are made to understand the context of the kelong in social media. Thereafter, there are transcriptions and translations of oral data into the written text. Finally, data selection and classification are done by grouping data based on subjects, types of marks, and indications of banality contained in the kelong.

As for the method of data analysis in this study, they gradually follow an interactive model of analysis that includes data reduction, data presentation, and deduction drawing. At the stage of data reduction, researchers sort, focus, and simplified relevant data with the focus of research, especially those that relate to the marks, meaning, and indications of inflexible banality. In the data presentation stage, the reduced information was organized into a semiotic analysis table to facilitate the interpretation of patterns and relationships between elements. Next, in the conclusion-drawing stage, the researcher conducted an in-depth interpretation of the data to discover patterns of meaning and processes of banality within the Makassar kelong. The validity of the data in this study has been tested using several methods to ensure that the resulting findings have credibility and consistency. First, resource triangulation is done by comparing data from several sources, including primary data such as the work of ridwan sau, azhari sitaba, and udhin leaders regarding the makassar kelong, and secondary data of previous scientific articles, cultural documentation, and research. Second, systematic triangulation is done by matching results from various data-collection techniques, which are library studies, documentation, and field observations to create data consistency. Third, in order to increase in diligence, deep and repeated observation and analysis of data are made to get a better understanding of the phenomenon of deep-water banality. Fourth, peer discussions involve academics who are experts in makassar literature to get critical feedback about the results of analysis. Fifth, multiple referential sources are achieved by using various theoretical sources and previous research as references to the data interpretation process, so that strong, scientifically proven, academic findings.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Simplification of Diction and Cultural Symbolism

Semiotically, this study found a simplification of linguistic and symbolic signs in Makassar kelong. The diction used tends to be direct, literal, and minimal in cultural metaphors, which were previously characteristic of classical kelong. Cultural symbols that once served as representations of traditional values, social relations, and the Makassar people's worldview have now undergone a reduction in meaning or are used merely as verbal ornaments. As a result, kelong no longer requires deep interpretation from its listeners but is presented as a text that can be immediately understood without reflection. In semiotics, a sign consists of a signifier and a signified. The signifier is the physical form of the sign, such as a word or image, while the signified is the concept or meaning represented by the signifier. In kelong, signs and symbols are often related to culture, nature, and daily life in South Sulawesi.

Table 1. Analysis of the Kelong "Rannu" by Azhari Sitaba

Data	Signifier	Signified		Analysis of Banalities
	Kelong Text	Denotative	Connotative	
Data 1	<i>A'bunga bunga lalang nyawaku</i>	The soul is likened to a garden full of flowers	A soul filled with happiness, love, and peace	The habit of using natural metaphors normalizes the values of happiness and harmony as ideal human conditions. This process causes cultural messages to lose their critical appeal, but instead strengthens their function as a medium for the internalization of cultural ideology that is commonly accepted by society.
Data 2	<i>Teako lanre rinakke</i>	Never tire of me	The hope for loyalty, consistency of feelings, and the continuity of relationships	Banalities are manifested through the habitual use of affective expressions that normalize emotional dependence and the value of relationship continuity. Moral messages that were originally reflective in nature are transformed into discourse that is accepted without reflection, making this kelong a mirror of how cultural ideology is internalized through expressions.
Data 3	<i>Sipotoppuli, sijammengang</i>	Continue to love each other and live and die together	Affirmation of total and unwavering emotional commitment	The banality in the lyrics of the song is manifested through the normalization of teachings of love and total loyalty as universal and unproblematic values.

Based on the analysis of Data 1, from a semiotic perspective, the linguistic sign "*A'bunga bunga lalang nyawaku*" carries a denotative meaning interpreted as a literal depiction of the soul being likened to a garden full of flowers. According to Barthes, denotation represents the first level of meaning that is explicit and directly observable, where the relationship between the signifier and the signified conveys a stable literal meaning within a particular cultural context (Barus et al., 2025). Meanwhile, at the connotative level, the phrase constructs a deeper meaning, referring to a soul filled with happiness, love, and peace, in which "flowers" and *lalang* function as symbols of positive emotions and aesthetic experiences that are internalized within the network of cultural values of the community. Connotation, as a non-literal meaning, involves affective and cultural references that provide additional and ideological significance to the basic sign. Barthes argues that connotation constitutes a form of cultural interpretation that enriches literal meaning by drawing upon structures of signification derived from specific social value systems (Barus et al., 2025).

Based on the analysis of Data 2, from a semiotic perspective, the linguistic sign "*Teako lanre rinakke*" carries a denotative meaning interpreted as a direct appeal meaning "*never tired of me.*" At this level, the linguistic signifier is explicitly related to the signified, represented by an expression of request to maintain interest and continuity within an interpersonal relationship. According to (Maulidiyah, 2021), denotative meaning in linguistic texts presents the initial structure that serves as the foundation for the formation of more complex interpretations, functioning as a starting point for understanding the social messages conveyed by a text within the context of everyday life. At the connotative level, the expression indicates that human relationships are understood not merely as linguistic bonds but also as representations of anxiety over loss, the desire for attachment, and the idealization of loyalty within socio-cultural relational structures. In contrast, connotation involves language that tends to be social and

supports secondary meanings derived from more general artificial or ideological structures (Lustyantie, 2012). Azahra and Wiryany, (2025) emphasize that such connotative interpretation functions as a means of constructing social reality, enabling texts to extend cultural messages while revealing how communities shape and internalize affective values through language.

Table 2. Analysis of the Kelong "Pa'risi Tamaona" by Ridwan Sau

Data	Signifier	Signified		Analysis of Banalities
	Kelong Text	Denotative	Connotative	
Data 1	<i>Pakrisiku tamaona</i>	My many wounds	A heavy and deep emotional burden	The metaphor of "wounds" is a very common symbol in Makassar oral literature to signify experiences of pain, loss, or disappointment. Due to its repeated appearance, the suffering expressed in these lyrics is no longer treated as an extraordinary event that demands critical reflection, but rather as a normal reality of life.
Data 2	<i>Aulek kammami anne empoanna tallasakku</i>	This is what happens in my life	Acceptance of the realities of life, resignation to the conditions experienced	a formula often used to express acceptance of circumstances. Due to its high frequency of appearance in oral literature and everyday communication, the resignation contained within it has become banal. Resignation is no longer positioned as the result of existential contemplation, but rather as the most natural response to life's difficulties.
Data 3	<i>Punna mabbokomo lampangku</i>	If I were to leave	Anticipation of separation and acceptance of the possibility of loss	Expressions about "leaving" are a recurring theme in Makassar oral literature. Because it is used so often, departure is no longer understood as a shocking existential event, but as a natural possibility of life. This process marks banality, where the potential for reflection on the meaning of loss or death is reduced by symbolic habit.
Data 4	<i>Nassikayao manakkutta</i>	So that our longing may be united	The hope for the unification of feelings and whole relationships	Longing, which can be reflexively read as a complex emotional condition involving distance, inner tension, and relational uncertainty in this kelong, is reduced to a normative hope that these feelings will "unite." This process of reduction shows how affective experiences that should invite critical reflection are instead simplified into common and socially acceptable emotional expressions.

Based on the analysis of data 1, semiotically, the lyrics about "wounds" here denotatively describe real physical or inner experiences in the subject's life, but do not directly include the emotional narrative behind them. According to Barus et al. (2025), denotative meaning must be analyzed as the first structure of the sign that allows readers to understand the literal context before moving on to richer symbolic meanings. Thus, denotation becomes an important foundation for interpreting the next layer of meaning while emphasizing how simple signs carry literal information that can be understood in general. At the connotative level, the phrase moves beyond the literal meaning of "wound" because the sign is enriched by an affective context that implies a heavy and profound emotional burden. In Barthes' perspective (Barus et al., 2025), connotation involves cultural and symbolic interpretations that expand the value of denotative signs into meanings influenced by experience, feelings, and cultural values. Meanwhile, according to Anjani et al. (2025), symbols such as wounds often serve to represent affective journeys and inner conflicts in literary works, so that the connotative meaning is not only individual but also describes broader cultural values of perseverance and sensitivity to human experiences.

Based on the analysis of data 2, semiotically, the lyrics "Aule' kammami anne empoanna tallasakku" have a denotative meaning of "this is what happens in my life," which on the surface of the text appears to be a descriptive expression of the subject's life experience without explicit emotional content. Barthes (Barus et al., 2025) explains that denotative meaning is the literal meaning that provides the basis for other deeper meanings, and it functions as the first layer in the theory of signification, which then opens up space for connotative and mythological interpretations. Meanwhile, Rohmaniah (2021) states that Barthes' semiotics views text not only as a series of words but as a construction of signs that make the text speak, even about things beyond itself, so that denotation becomes an important starting point that enables readers to read something more than just a literal description.

At the connotative level, the expression transcends its literal meaning to become a representation of acceptance of the realities of life and resignation to one's circumstances, where these simple words are equated with more complex inner experiences. According to Siregar (2021) in his research, in literary texts and popular culture, connotative meanings often reflect emotional and moral values that are not explicitly stated but are added by readers through their cultural context. Thus, the act of accepting the seemingly ordinary facts of life seen here is a reflection of cultural values that uphold fortitude and acceptance; these values form a connotative understanding that life is a series of circumstances that must be faced without much protest, and this leads to the naturalization of resignation in the social consciousness of the community.

Semiotically, the lyrics "Punna mabbokomo lampangku" have the denotative meaning "if I leave someday," a seemingly simple statement that functions as the first sign providing clear information about the possibility of separation. In the perspective of Barthes Rahmawati et al., (2024), denotation is a meaning that is unambiguous and immediately apparent from the sign, a basic meaning that can be understood by the reader without the need for further symbolic reading. This is in line with the research by Dominggus et al. (2025), which emphasizes the importance of understanding literal meaning as a starting point before entering into connotative meaning in narrative or visual texts.

At the connotative level, the expression transforms into an anticipation of separation and acceptance of the possibility of loss, which carries deeper emotional and cultural meanings. According to Puspitasari and Mardhiah (2023) in their research on contemporary cultural texts, expressions about "leaving" often refer not only to physical situations but also to metaphors of change, emotional loss, and existential reflection in social life. In the context of kelong, the connotative meaning emphasizes that the possibility of departure encapsulates the way people interpret and deal with change, the uncertainty of relationships, and acceptance of fate, making this statement not merely descriptive but also illustrative of cultural values of fortitude and readiness to accept the end of a phase in a relationship.

Based on data 4, the lyrics "Nassikayao manakkutta" have the denotative meaning "so that our longing may be united," which is a request or hope for a situation where longing is mutually understood and combined. In semiotic research on lyrics and cultural texts, denotation functions as the initial stage of signification, providing a literal basis before meaning is enriched by connotative and mythical layers (Barus et al., 2025). Denotation in the context of this expression refers to the explicit intention to unite longing, and textually indicates an aspiration that readers can recognize as a simple expression of the desired emotional state.

At the connotative level, the expression implies a hope for the unification of feelings and a complete relationship, where "longing" is not only a simple emotional state, but also a symbol of deep and harmonious interpersonal relationships. In the semiotic analysis of songs, connotative meaning often emerges when simple lyrics are filled with emotional symbols such as affection, loss, and the desire to unite, representing broader human experiences (Rustandi, et al., 2025). Connotative here describes how longing functions as a representation of cultural values about ideal relationships.

Table 3. Analysis of the Kelong "Na'jisikka" by Udhin Leaders

Data	Signifier	Signified		Analysis of Banalities
	Kelong Text	Denotative	Connotative	
Data 1	<i>Sassa' Lalang</i> <i>Salasaku</i> <i>Ripa'maikku</i>	Regret and disappointment in my heart	These feelings of regret and disappointment symbolize inner suffering due to life choices, failed relationships, or unfulfilled hopes	Regret, which can be interpreted as a space for self-evaluation, moral questioning, or criticism of life choices, is presented in this text as a natural and acceptable emotional expression without the need for further explanation or justification. The repetition of the theme of regret in the kelong makes it no longer problematic, but rather a common affective condition experienced by every individual.

Data 2	Nusorong Boko Taero' Anjalling	You cast away and you discard	Experiences of emotional rejection, betrayal, or painful relationship breakups.	Actions of rejection and abandonment, which should reflectively open up space for criticism of unequal relationships, emotional abuse, or affective injustice, are instead presented in this text as experiences that are narrated straightforwardly and accepted as normal reality. The repetition of the theme of rejection in the kelong renders this suffering no longer problematic, but rather an emotional condition commonly experienced by individuals in romantic relationships.
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Based on data 1, the lyrics "Sassa' Lalang Salasaku Ripa'maikku" have a denotative meaning that literally states "regret and disappointment in my heart," which is an emotional condition that is clearly apparent and immediately understood by the reader as an expression of inner disappointment. In Roland Barthes' theory, denotation is the literal meaning that forms the basis for further interpretation, presenting signs that are clearly visible in the text before being processed symbolically and culturally (Panuluh et al., 2025). This process shows that the experience of regret and disappointment in kelong is not only a metaphor, but also a structural sign that contains information about the speaker's psychological condition that is felt directly by the listener or reader. Meanwhile, connotatively, the lyrics contain a deeper emotional meaning, namely the representation of inner suffering due to life choices, failed relationships, or unfulfilled hopes, which reflect the cultural context of universal yet individual human experiences. Rahmawati, et al., (2024) in their research show that emotional expressions in literary texts often contain layers of meaning that are not immediately apparent but are culturally powerful, for example as symbols of inner conflict or the psychological identity of characters.

Based on data 2, the lyrics of "Nusorong Boko Taero' Anjalling" have a denotative meaning that directly states the action of "you throw away and you discard," which refers to an act of rejection or removal of an object from life. Barthes (Barus, et al., 2025) explains that denotation is the literal meaning of a sign that is socially and linguistically apparent without further interpretation, thus serving as the starting point in the signifying process. According to Anjani et al. (2025) in their research, denotative meaning provides the initial framework for emotional and symbolic narratives in a text, as well as the basis for understanding the dynamics of the relationships depicted. In the context of kelong, denotation not only maps physical actions but also provides an initial marker for more complex emotional experiences that will be interpreted through connotative layers. At the connotative level, these lyrics contain more complex emotional meanings, namely experiences of emotional rejection, betrayal, or painful relationship breakups. In the context of literary works, this kind of connotative meaning is often used to describe relational conflicts that go beyond literal discourse and enter the realm of reflection on the inner experiences of readers or listeners (Rahmawati, et al., 2024).

Normalization of Banality as a Cultural Practice

Banality in Makassar *kelong* is evident not only in the textual form but also in the process of societal reception. Observations and data analysis indicate that *kelong* which has undergone a simplification of meaning is accepted as a "normal" and "contemporary" form of the genre. This phenomenon arose, not by chance, but through the mechanisms of habit that operate on two main levels. The first level is structural, described of the relationship between the marker and petanda according to (Barthes, 2017) theory of semiotics. The second level is cultural, which is studied from a cultural perspective that (Baudrillard, 1994) experiences banality. There is a decline in value in which a work loses deep meaning and becomes only a light consumption to society. At its structural level, banality occurs because of its unvariations in forms, diction, and expression patterns. This results in linguistic signs losing their differentiating properties, resulting in meaning being shallow and not open up space for new interpretations. At the

cultural level, banality results from a loss of critical context that was previously attached to the kelp as a means of social reflection. In practice, the kelp that continues to be used in the context of entertainment and digital distribution is subject to a change in function, from value transmission to just a symbolic consumption tool. According to Rahim et al., (2025), oral literature contains philosophy, life values, and moral teachings that are conveyed in a meaningful way, touching the emotions and leaving a deep impression on its audience. Direct interaction between listeners and oral literature performers creates a more profound experience, enabling a stronger introduction to cultural values.

The fecal habits of the purses in this simplified form then create a naturalization process, in which shallow meanings are perfectly normal and are no longer questioned. This custom not only reshapes but also normalizes the way people understand the text. Banality in a macassar kelp can be seen as a result of interactions between formal repetitions and contexts (the loss of critical dimensions), which simultaneously lead to conditions where meaning is no longer negotiated, but is received passively. Banality is not just an aesthetic symptom, but it is an ideological process that works through the normal marks and sense simulations in everyday cultural practices. This process demonstrates the normalization of banality, where shallow values are accepted without critical reflection. Oral literature remains highly relevant and retains significant value in the contemporary context. It is expressed as a form of literary expression within social life (Raohun et al., 2021).

In Makassar, oral culture functions not only as a source of entertainment but also as a medium that unites the community in a shared understanding of their identity (Oktaviani et al., 2022). In *A'bunga bunga lalang nyawaku*, the natural metaphor of a flower garden symbolizing happiness is directly understood by the community as an expression of inner well-being that is considered "normal" and does not require critical reflection. This normalization demonstrates that emotional experiences, which were previously reflective, have transformed into ordinary expressions within the oral culture serving as a sign that *kelong* has become a medium for the socially accepted internalization of values without skeptical questioning.

A similar pattern is observed in Data *Teako lanre rinakke*, which expresses a request for the listener not to grow weary of the speaker. Such affective expressions have become increasingly habitual in both oral and digital spaces as forms of interpersonal custom. With the widespread acceptance of this phrase, values of emotional dependence and relational continuity are perceived as "normal" within social relationships, transforming moral messages that originally held reflective potential into discourse that is accepted without critical consideration. This phenomenon aligns with the study *Transformation of Cultural Values* by Khoirunisa and Rusli (2023), which shows that social media accelerates the homogenization of cultural values, leading certain emotional expressions to merge into digital cultural patterns and be regarded as commonplace by the wider community.

Furthermore, in *Sipotoppuli, sijammengang*, banality is evident in how values of love and total loyalty which initially had the potential to provoke critical reflection on ideal relationships are normalized as universal, unproblematic values. The habituation of such expressions within the oral tradition leads *kelong* to be perceived as entertainment that is "contemporary," with its philosophical content increasingly simplified for easier public acceptance. This aligns with Rifa'I et al., (2025) regarding the role of digital media, emphasizing that digital culture tends to transform communication content into lighter, quickly consumable forms, causing complex expressions to lose depth and become a form of pragmatic communication.

The normalization of banality in Makassar *kelong* also reflects the significant role of digital media and social media in shaping the dynamics of contemporary culture. Digital platforms that demand content that is brief, light, and easily viral encourage *kelong* producers to adjust the form and content of their works to audience preferences. The demand for instant

content that is readily accepted by viewers leads to a simplification of *kelong*'s structure, where deeply emotional themes are transformed into expressions that appear ordinary. This effect aligns with the findings of Fauzan et al., (2025), showing that digital media accelerates cultural transformation by creating new social interaction spaces that emphasize instant entertainment and a pragmatic, newly formed cultural identity.

Banality in Makassar *kelong* is evident not only in the textual form but more broadly as a cultural practice that has been normalized by society. Expressions that originally conveyed reflective values are now automatically understood by listeners without critical questioning, indicating that *kelong* has become a mirror of how cultural ideology is internalized through expressions that appear simple and purely entertaining. This process illustrates the adaptation of oral literary tradition under the pressures of digital culture and market preferences, positioning *kelong* not only as a cultural artifact but also as a social medium that provides new, pragmatic values.

The normalization of banality in Makassar *kelong* indicates that the symbolic and philosophical meanings of oral literary texts undergo a process of simplification before being widely accepted by society. In the lyric *Pa'risiku tamaona*, the metaphor of a "wound," which originally conveyed complex emotional experiences, now appears as a commonplace expression of life that is considered "normal" without prompting critical reflection, positioning suffering as a routine part of human experience. This phenomenon aligns with the findings of Najamuddin et al., (2025), who note that the development of social media influences patterns of cultural consumption, where people tend to access and interpret content that is simple and easily accepted without deep narrative exploration. Social media has thus revolutionized the way society engages with cultural content, creating opportunities for the democratization of culture while simultaneously posing challenges to the sustainability of traditional cultural practices.

The textual analysis of *kelong* lyrics *Sassa' Lalang Salasaku Ripa'maikku* and *Nusorong Boko Taero' Anjalling* indicates that banality has been normalized as an established cultural practice. In the first data, feelings of regret and disappointment which could be read reflectively as a space for moral evaluation and critique of life choices are instead represented as affective states that are considered ordinary and unproblematic. The repetition of the theme of regret in *kelong* detaches these emotions from their critical dimension, rendering them accepted as common human experiences. In the context of *kelong*, regret is no longer understood as an existential event demanding reflection, but rather as a routine emotional fact of life.

Banality in Makassar *kelong* extends beyond the textual level to the process of societal reception. Observations show that *kelong* which has undergone a simplification of meaning is more easily accepted as a form that is considered "normal" and "contemporary." This process illustrates how shallow and emotional values are embraced without critical reflection. In this context, *kelong* serves as a medium that reflects how society internalizes a new cultural ideology that is more pragmatic and immediate.

Overall, the normalization of banality in Makassar *kelong* demonstrates how contemporary cultural practices internalize values that were originally reflective into discourses considered "normal" and ordinary. This process occurs not only at the textual level but also in societal reception within digital spaces that prioritize content that is light, easily consumable, and highly shareable. This situation illustrates that *kelong*, as an oral cultural artifact, has undergone adaptations in thematic and linguistic structures to align with the logic of a pragmatic, immediate, and entertainment-oriented digital culture, ultimately perpetuating shallow values without critical reflection.

CONCLUSIONS

The study revealed that the kelong makassar isan oral literature with a rich and culturally significant sign system. By using the semiotic approach of Roland barthes, it was found that the kelly conveys not only denotative meaning but also a connotation reflecting the life view of the makassar people. However, it also indicates a tendency toward banality, reflective values becoming common and accepted without critical thought. Purses began shifting from reflection and social criticism to recurring, consumptive forms of expression. The combination of semiothes barthes and baudrillard's concept of banality suggests two aspects of the niche, that is, as a local scripture saving and as an abbreviated text. This phenomenon suggests the need for complete understanding to go beyond the aesthetics, to achieve critical readings of defined meanings, especially in digital cultural context. The study has limitations in limited data, emphasizes more on textual analysis, and digital media studies that are not yet available quantitative analysis. Therefore, it is recommended that future research may expand data, integrate quantitative methods such as digital content analysis, and develop interdisciplinary approaches. The study contributed in theoretical literature by combining semiotics and banalities. The results of these findings served as a reflection to preserve the conch to prevent loss of depth of meaning in the more modern cultural currents.

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