



# Analysis of the Meaning of Kalomba Symbol as Uniting Communication in Kajang Luar Bulukumba Regency

Lisa Arifuddin<sup>1</sup>, Jeanny Maria Fatimah<sup>1</sup>, Muhammad Farid<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Department of Communication Studies, Faculty of Social and Political Science, Hasanuddin University, Indonesia

[lisa.arifuddin45@gmail.com](mailto:lisa.arifuddin45@gmail.com)

**Abstract.** This study aims to (1) analyze the process of the Kalomba Tradition of the Kajang Luar tribe and (2) analyze the meaning of the symbols and messages of the Kalomba Tradition of the Kajang Luar tribe, Bulukumba Regency. This study uses qualitative research methods, using a descriptive qualitative approach and a phenomenological approach, as an approach that focuses on the facts of an event or event. Focus on the meaning of the symbols contained in the Kalomba tradition and using the symbolic interaction theory. There are two data sources, namely primary data sources in the form of interview results, and secondary data sources in the form of book and journal references. This study uses key instruments from the researchers themselves. Data collection was carried out by observing, interviewing, documenting, and exploring reading references. Data analysis and interpretation techniques were carried out in three ways, namely data reduction, data presentation, data validity testing and conclusion drawing. The results of the study show that the Kalomba tradition is one of the traditions that is able to strengthen the unity of the Kajang Luar community, and every procession that is carried out always has an implied meaning. The Kalomba tradition is also a tradition that is still highly believed as a form of repelling bad luck, preventing children from all kinds of illnesses, and contains the meaning of maintaining friendship.

**Keywords:** Kalomba, Symbol, Unifer.

## 1 Introduction

Humans always need something called communication. Moreover, the status of humans as individual and social creatures who need other people, regardless of their need to convey messages, or exchange information with other individuals. Humans also need communication to emphasize their existence in a group or environment. This foundation of needs and desires is what drives humans to communicate with one another. The definition above also provides an illustration that communication is a very crucial thing in human life.

It has even become a secondary need that should not be missed. In the process there is also an exchange of symbols which can become a glue for relationships between human beings, or even these symbols can actually become a barrier to effective communication. As is the case in Bulukumba Regency, an area that has very diverse culture, for example the annyorong lopi tradition after going through a long process of making a boat. Or visit the Ammatoa custom in Kajang. But this is only a small part of the culture maintained in Bulukumba Regency. If explored further, there are many more cultures or traditions that still survive and are characteristic of each region in Bulukumba Regency.

Kalomba culture or traditions, for example, have been introduced since ancient times and have not been abandoned by the people of Kajang Luar. The term Kajang Luar community is for the people of Kajang sub-district, Kab. Bulukumba who inhabit part of the Kajang Ammatoa Adat. But it is much more modern compared to those who live in Kajang Dalam, which is still very well maintained, even far from the erosion of technological developments, information flows and globalization. This is a very unique thing for the people of Kajang Luar who are used to a modern lifestyle, but still maintain one of their customs, namely the Kalomba custom. Likewise, there are no changes in terms of the procession and nothing changes in the implementation of the Kalomba custom. The community is also expected to be able to interpret every symbol and message in the Kalomba tradition. The presence of the researcher It is hoped that this tian will be able to straighten out the understanding of the local community and the outside community regarding the Kalomba tradition, and the entire procession carried out in it. Therefore, the author wants to raise a research related to "Analysis of the Meaning and Symbols of the Kalomba Tradition, as Unifying Communication for the Kajang Luar Community, in Bulukumba Regency".

This research uses the Symbolic Interactionism Theory. In symbolic interactionism, a person provides information resulting from the meaning of symbols from his perspective to other people. And the people who receive the information will have another perspective in interpreting the information conveyed by the first actor. In other words, actors will be involved in the process of mutual influence on social action. To be able to see social interaction, that is by seeing individuals communicating with their communities and producing new customary languages or symbols which are the object of research by cultural researchers. This interaction can be seen from how the community is, because in a community there is a renewal of attitudes which becomes a trend that will be maintained, eliminated, or renewed, the meaning of which continues to be attached to a community, symbolic interaction can also be an interpretive tool for interpreting a problem or incident.

Apart from that, this research also uses the Theory of Symbols. According to Geertz, symbols are all forms of material objects, events, actions, speech and human movements that mark or represent something else or anything that has been given a certain meaning. Therefore, there are three elements that are characteristic of a symbol, including, the symbol stands alone, has only one or more references, and how the symbol is related to these references. Symbols are one of the main points in every element of social life. Many people

think that symbols are actually the same as signs. However, the two are not the same. Signs are directly related to an object, while symbols, simply require a more specific meaning, after approaching the object. The last theory is the theory of meaning. Meaning is an inseparable part of semantics and is always inherent in what we say. The meaning of the meaning itself is very diverse. Mansoer Pateda (2001) stated that the term meaning is confusing words and terms. This meaning is always integrated into the utterance of words and sentences. According to Ullman (Mansoer Pateda, 2001) suggests that meaning is the relationship between meaning and understanding. In this case, Ferdinand de Saussure (Abdul Chaer, 1994: 286) expressed the definition of meaning as an understanding or concept that is owned or contained in a linguistic sign.

## **2 Research Methods**

This research used a qualitative approach. According to Moeloeng, qualitative research is research that has the aim of understanding the symptoms that occur and are experienced by the research object, for example related to behavior, views, motivation, actions and so on. Either holistically or by describing words, language, in a specific context experienced using various methods. This research was conducted in Sapanang Village, Sapaya Hamlet, Kajang District, Bulukumba Regency. Part of Kajang Luar which still holds tightly to the Kalomba tradition and presents large events for its implementation. Data collection techniques in this research are in the form of observation techniques, interviews, or documentation studies. Even though the interview technique was carried out directly, the researcher was not emotionally involved with the object under study. In this sense, the researcher is passive regarding the results of the observation process carried out.

## **3 Results**

### **3.1 Stages or Procession of the Kalomba Tradition**

The Kajang tribe is famous for its kelong guard tradition or typical singing which has been carried out since ancient times. Initially, kelong vigil was not a deliberate tradition. However, it is said that this was only a request from the bride who felt that her wedding event was not lively because buffalo meat as their main dish had not been served. The woman then asked the traditional leaders and traditional leaders to sing spontaneously. They then asked the bride again what song they should sing. Then the woman asked to sing any poetry, as long as it wasn't dirty words and didn't damage their honor. The traditional leaders then hummed wise poetry that they had memorized. They then put the poems together, and a poem was created which is called kelongjaga, and is still played today, at events such as Kalomba, weddings and other traditional events. This kelong guard tradition is accompanied by a musical instrument in the form of a leather drum. The Kelong Jaga singers are also served with a feast of food and drink called tua' or arak. Kelong Jaga

contains lyrics that convey life principles, entertainment, and in the form of advice that is only given by men, in the form of old poetry and using the Konjo language, the regional language of the Kajang tribe.

Kelong jaga is a ritual that can only be carried out by descendants of kings or karaeng, while ata or descendants of slaves in the Kajang tribe's beliefs are strictly prohibited from carrying out this ritual. They were prohibited from carrying out all party rituals because they did not receive traditional approval, especially since this ritual invited traditional figures. This ritual is guided by someone who is considered to have broad insight, is wise in making decisions, and can provide advice to others. The kelong guard can be carried out if all the conditions have been met, so the kelong guard can begin with instructions from the guide or tuppaulu kelong who will first invite all the guests to sing the lyrics together. After carrying out the kelong guard tradition, it's time for the sanro or shaman to carry out the ritual of bathing the child who will be in Kalomba, called anrioi anak. Sanro first prepares a basin or tray filled with water on which special prayers have been recited. The purpose of this child anrioi ritual is to make the child pure before the next Kalomba series is carried out. After that, the child will be dressed in clothes that his parents have just bought. A black sarong is also worn as a typical sarong for the Kajang tribe. Both parents then sat their child on their lap. As a sign that both parents are ready to carry out their obligations. Likewise, the child who will be in Kalomba is ready to be considered more mature after this ritual has been carried out.

Next, Sanro will perform the attunu incense ritual or burn incense. Then the smoke will be fanned towards the child and his parents. The aim is so that the smoke from the burned incense can reach their ancestors who have died earlier. After that, Sanro will also flick the yellow bamboo that has been dipped in water, so that the water splashes on the child's skin. The goal is that children in Kalomba will avoid disease. The next ritual is the annyihoi or feeding ritual. Sanro will ask both parents to feed the child with songkolo and chicken opor. These two foods are a sign that the child's parents have released their responsibility for carrying out Kalomba. Next, Sanro will place two large kampalo lombo on the child's shoulders as a symbol so that the child will be strong in facing reality and responsible for all the things he chooses. The next ritual is a'buang-buang ritual concludes the entire Kalomba series of events. A'buang-buang means invitation money, or in other words, a'buang-buang also means donations given by extended families and local residents. The amount is not specified. But usually the amount will be larger, if the person donating is a relative or relative of the host.

### **3.2 Process and Meaning of Kalomba Tradition Symbols in the Kajang Luar Tribe**

This tradition is very attached to the local community and should not be missed, because the community's need to gather and socialize is still very much maintained, where they want to meet, get together, prepare everything together. So indirectly, this tradition aims to foster a sense of brotherhood between the people of the Kajang tribe and those outside the Kajang

tribe. The Kalomba tradition is used as a form of fulfilling parents' responsibilities towards their children who have not yet returned. Kajang tribe parents believe that if this responsibility is not resolved immediately, their family will be hit by bad luck. It could cause illness in children, or from a social perspective, they will be ostracized. Therefore, it requires a large amount of money to organize a Kalomba event. Parents will collect their money for years or their children are over the age of toddlers, then they will carry out this tradition.

Blumer stated that human interactions are always connected by symbols, by reasoning, and also based on the actions of other people. Therefore, the Kalomba tradition is also a tradition used to strengthen their identity and clear lineage. The presence of symbols which are then interpreted makes the Kajang tribe believe that, in essence, only those with the Puang lineage, or karaeng, or in Indonesian it means descendants of the King, can carry out this tradition. Apart from that, the time for carrying out the Kalomba tradition cannot be done at any time, but must consider the right "good day and good month" to hold the event. This is the same when preparing a good day to hold a wedding in the Kajang tribe tradition. Therefore, usually the Kalomba tradition is included in weddings or the tradition of *antama' ri bola'* or entering the house. *Antama' ri bola'* for the Kajang tribe is a traditional event for someone who has just built a house, or in other words, means giving thanks for a new house, as is done by Indonesian people. Even though this wedding and *antama ri bola'* event has absolutely nothing to do with the Kalomba tradition, the aim is only to save costs and time for implementation. After determining the right time, the host will invite many people to attend the event being held. The Kalomba tradition is carried out through mutual cooperation and inviting relatives and extended family to gather and prepare all kinds of food or tools that will be used in the Kalomba ritual. All types of food prepared such as *dumpi eja*, *kampalo besar*, *ruhu-ruhu'*, *songkolo*, and various types of fruit such as young coconuts, bananas, pineapples, apples and other fruits, have their own meaning and are considered a form of worship to the spirits or ancestors of those who have died.

### 1) Rice and Glutinous Rice

Starting from rice, which is interpreted as a source of life, considering that rice or rice is the staple food of Indonesians, especially the Kajang tribe. Although some of them still consume corn rice as their main daily food.

The Kajang Luar community also uses sticky rice to make *dumpi eja*, *ruhu-ruhu*, *kampalo lombo* and *songkolo* cakes. Glutinous rice is considered a delicious food. Meanwhile, the characteristic of cakes made with a sweet taste is also hoped to be a prayer so that the lives of children who carry out the Kalomba tradition will go well. Then the sticky texture of sticky rice is interpreted as a form of closeness between family relationships, so that when they get together, it always produces something pleasant.

### 2) Fruits

Fruits prepared in the Kalomba tradition, such as young coconuts, are interpreted as a source of life, having great benefits for the people of Kajang Luar. Apart from being consumed, coconut also has great benefits from the roots to the fruit and leaves, which are also used as a source of livelihood for local communities.

Other fruits that are also served are bananas and pineapples, because these two types of fruit are often found around the Kajang Luar community. Not only that, the host also usually serves various other types of fruit, depending on each person's abilities. Fruit in the Kalomba tradition is interpreted as a dish for children who will carry out the Kalomba tradition, as a symbol of their accompanying food besides the staple food of rice. It is also hoped that fruit can be a prayer or effort to increase children's nutrition so that they are strong and can grow healthily.

#### b. The Meaning of Kalomba Tradition Rituals

The first ritual carried out is playing the *kelongjaga* or means party songs. Even though it is not mandatory, *kelong jaga* is interpreted as a form of entertainment for the guests present. This ritual is so sacred that it can only be carried out by traditional leaders, also Kajang tribal people who are believed to have the blood of Karaeng or kings, and cannot be carried out by just anyone, for example those who are not included in the customary court or slaves, or what in local language is called *ata* .

This is then continued with the ritual of bathing the child, which is meant as a form of purification so that the child who will undergo the Kalomba ritual is considered ready and clean. The people of the Kajang tribe believe that this ritual is considered a form of cleansing children from all kinds of bad things that would harm their children. Then Sanro wore clothes that had just been bought by the child's parents, as a symbol of being ready to follow the Kalomba tradition. It is also interpreted as readiness to face the next age. Then, Sanro will sprinkle water near the child's ear with a *tala* leaf that has been dipped in a container. *Tala* leaves are interpreted as a medium to pray for children to be filial to their parents and always listen to their words.

The smoke produced is interpreted as a form of expelling evil spirits that follow children who will undergo the Kalomba ritual. It is also intended that the smoke can reach the spirits of their ancestors. Incense or incense is always present in every ritual of the Kajang Luar community, as is the activity of burning incense or incense, then spreading the smoke throughout the room. Then, Sanro will place two large *kampalo* on the child's shoulders, which is interpreted as a prayer so that the child can take responsibility for all his actions in the future. Finally, the child will be fed food that has been prepared previously, in the form of chicken *opor* and *Kampalo lombo* or *songkolo*, as a sign that the child has finished carrying out the kalomba ritual, and is considered ready to become a more mature person.

Finally, the *a'buang-buang* ritual will be carried out as a form of donation to the host or family who carry out the kalomba tradition. The money given is intended as a donation and also a form of investment or social gathering for them. Therefore, The researcher believes

that the Kajang tribe people interpret each symbol in their own way but with the same intention, namely as a form of preventing children from bad luck and disease, as well as a form of establishing friendship. They also firmly believe that families who do not follow the Kalomba tradition will be unlucky and worse, they will go crazy.

## 4 Conclusion

Based on the research that has been carried out, two conclusions are drawn, as an outline and an answer to the problem formulation that the researcher wrote in the proposal section. The results of the two studies are as follows:

- a. The Kalomba tradition is still being passed down from generation to generation, amidst the current of globalization and modernization which has also greatly influenced the lives of the people of the Kajang Luar tribe.
- b. All parts and rituals in the Kalomba tradition become a forum for friendship or uniting the local community. Especially the ritual of wasting or donating. This ritual is a form of unification because it is carried out together with both family and friends and the surrounding community.

## References

1. Abdurrahman, M.: Understanding the Symbolic Meanings of the Traditional Sea Alms Ceremony in Tanjungan Village, Kragan District, Rembang Regency. *The Messenger Journal*, 7 (1), 27-34 (2016).
2. Agustianto, A.: The Meaning of Symbols in Human Culture. *Journal of Cultural Sciences*, 8 (1), 1-5 (2011).
3. Arianto.: Intercultural Communication Model in Ethnic Mixing: Case Study of the Transmigration Area of South Sulawesi Province. Unhas Press, Makassar (2021).
4. Ariyanto, E.: Introduction to Communication Science: History, Essence, Process. DIVA Press, Yogyakarta (2020).
5. Cangara, H.: Revised Edition of Communication Planning & Strategy. PT Raja Grafindo Persada, Jakarta (2014).
6. Cassier, E.: Humans and Culture. Jakarta: PT. Scholastic. Chaer, Abdul and Leonie Agustina. 2003. Sociolinguistics: An Introduction. Rineka Cipta, Jakarta (1997).
7. Damayanti, I.: Kalomba Ceremony from an Islamic Education Perspective: Case Study of the Tana Towa Community, Kajang District, Bulukumba Regency. *El-Fata Journal*, 1 (1), 48-62 (2022).
8. Dervish, M.: The symbolic meaning of the Riringgo dance in East Luwu Regency. Thesis is not published. Makassar: FISIP-UNHAS (2017).
9. Djajasudarma, T.: Semantics 1 Lexical and Grammatical Meaning. Refika Aditama, Bandung (2012).
10. Dillistone. *The Power of Symbols*. Kanisi US, Yogyakarta (2002).
11. Fatimah, M.: Inter-Ethnic Communication of Chinese and Indigenous in it's Connected with Nation Integration Post New Order in Makassar. *Journal of Communication Sciences*, 6(2), 85-90 (2008).

12. Fiske, J.: *Introduction to Communication Science*, Third Edition. PT. Raja Grafindo Persada, Jakarta (2014).
13. Hafid, A.: Belief System in the Kajang Traditional Community, Tana Toa Village, Kajang District, Bulukumba Regency. *Journal of Historical and Cultural Research*, 5 (1), 1-19 (2013).
14. Hernawan, W., & Hanindyalaila, P.: *Intercultural Communication: Social Attitudes in Interethnic Communication*. Media Heritage, Bandar Lampung (2021).
15. Kim, Y., & Willian, B.: *Cross Cultural Adaptation*. SAGE Publications, London: (1988).
16. Lestari, D.: The Meaning of Communication Symbols in the Keboan Traditional Ceremony in Aliyan Village, Banyuwangi Regency. *Medium E-Journal*, 1 (1), 6-9 (2017).
17. Liliweri A.: *Intercultural Communication Gatras*. Student Library, Jakarta (2001).
18. Megawati, and Andriani, I.: Dynamics of Modernization of the Kalomba Tradition in Kajang District, Bulukumba Regency. *Journal of Communication Sciences*, 1(1), 61-73 (2018).
19. Miles, M., & Huberman, M.: *Qualitative Data Analysis*. University of Indonesia Publishers, Jakarta (1992).
20. Moleong, L.: *Qualitative Research Methodology*. Rosdakarya Youth, Bandung (2002).
21. Mulyana, D., & Jalaluddin, R.: *Intercultural Communication: A Guide to Communicating with People of Different Cultures*. Rosdakarya Youth, Bandung (2002).
22. Mulyana, Dedy.: *Introductory Communication Studies*. PT Teen Rosdakarya, Bandung (2005).
23. Muslimin, A.: Kalomba Traditional Traditions: Study of Cultural Meanings and Values in the Bonto Biraeng Village Community, Bulukumba Regency. Makassar public university. *Journal of Humanities*, 5 (2), 221-231 (2021).
24. Pateda, M.: *Lexical Semantics*. Rineka Cipta, Jakarta (2001).
25. Pearson J., & Paul, E.: *An Introduction to Human Communication: understanding and sharing*. McGraw Hill (1996).
26. Rahmawati, R.: Symbolic Meaning of the Rebo Kasan Tradition. *Journal of Communication Research*, 20 (1), 63-73 (2017).
27. Rakhmat, P., & Jeanny, M.: The meaning of the No Verbal Symbolic Message of the Mappadendang Tradition in Pinrang Regency. *KAREBA Communication Journal*, 5 (2), 331-347 (2016).
28. Roudhonah.: *Communication Science*. Rajawali Press, Depok (2019).
29. Ruliana, P., & Puji, L. *Communication Theory*. Rajawali Press, Depok (2019).
30. Sarwono, S.: *Cross-Cultural Psychology*. Rajawali Press, Jakarta (2016).
31. Setiadi, E.: *Basic Social and Cultural Sciences*. Kencana Prenada Media Group, Jakarta (2006).
32. Shashari, A., & Syamsu, A.: The existence of Kalomba amidst the globalization of the Kajang Luar community. *Socioreligious Journal*, 7 (2), 5-10 (2022).
33. Sihabudin, A.: *Intercultural Communication*. PT. Literary Earth, Jakarta (2011).



**Open Access** This chapter is licensed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/>), which permits any noncommercial use, sharing, adaptation, distribution and reproduction in any medium or format, as long as you give appropriate credit to the original author(s) and the source, provide a link to the Creative Commons license and indicate if changes were made.

The images or other third party material in this chapter are included in the chapter's Creative Commons license, unless indicated otherwise in a credit line to the material. If material is not included in the chapter's Creative Commons license and your intended use is not permitted by statutory regulation or exceeds the permitted use, you will need to obtain permission directly from the copyright holder.

