

Message Analysis in The Film “Jodoh 3 Bujang”

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ABSTRACT

Keywords
Analysis; Message; Film

This study aims to analyze the moral, social, and cultural messages in the film *Jodoh 3 Bujang* (Three Bachelors' Destiny), which features Bugis-Makassar traditions such as *uang panai* (bride price), twin marriages, *siri'* (dignity/honor), and arranged marriage. Using a qualitative descriptive research method, the analysis is carried out through observation of scenes, dialogues, and visual symbols, as well as applying Roland Barthes' semiotic theory to examine how the film shapes meaning and audience perception. The results show that the film contains important messages about customs, the importance of family communication, sibling solidarity, and efforts to maintain dignity amid modernity. The comedic elements make the delivery of these messages lighter and easier to understand, so the film not only entertains but also increases understanding of cultural values and encourages audiences to reflect on the relevance of traditions today.

1. Introduction

In the context of Bugis-Makassar society, the institution of marriage does not merely serve as a union of individuals but also as an expression of complex cultural values, including double marriage practices as an economic mechanism to address high adat costs, such as the payment of *uang panai* representing family honor (*siri'*) (Fitriyani, 2022). This double marriage practice, where multiple couples conduct wedding ceremonies simultaneously to reduce expenses for the celebration, has seen an increase in prevalence in Makassar as a response to economic pressure (Huda dan Razif, 2021), as illustrated in the film *Jodoh 3 Bujang* (2025) adapted from an authentic narrative about three siblings.

Panai money, which serves as a mandatory dowry from the male side, often experiences price escalation due to social status, education level, and family reputation, with the nominal amount reaching Rp70 million in Makassar in 2024, increasing by 40% since 2019 as a consequence of an inflation rate of 18.09% (Almaida, 2023). The arranged marriage practice, regulated by the family, remains dominant to maintain honor (*siri'*), where parents prioritize economic compatibility and dignity over individual preferences, thus sparking conflicts between traditional values and modernity (Sudirman P, 2019).

This situation gives rise to tangible social consequences, including an increase in marriage postponement cases and the emergence of materialistic and forced arranged marriage practices. This contemporary phenomenon is explored and narratively represented in the film *Jodoh 3 Bujang*, making it a relevant object of study for critical semiotic analysis.

The main issue behind the emergence of "Analyzing Messages in the Film *Jodoh 3 Bujang*" is the conflict between Bugis-Makassar cultural traditions (such as *uang panai* and double weddings) and modern economic realities as well as contemporary family dynamics. The film went viral because it reflects current Makassar issues in 2025, globalization eroding customs through local comedy,

breaking regional content stereotypes. Message analysis arises as a cultural response to discuss the balance of traditional identity in the modern era (Pambudi, 2023).

Film *Jodoh 3 Bujang* (2025) presents a comedy-drama narrative centered on the dynamics of traditional Bugis-Makassar marriage. The storyline focuses on Mustapa, a family head, attempting to arrange a simultaneous marriage for his three children Fadly, Kifly, and Ahmad through the practice of twin weddings. This strategy is pursued as a rationalization of costs, particularly to reduce the expenditure on *Uang Panai* and the collective reception, with a strict budget allocation of Rp300 million.

Therefore, this research offers innovation by examining Film *Jodoh 3 Bujang*, which has the potential to reveal deep ideologies about family honor (*siri'*) negotiated amidst the pressures of globalization and issues of materialism. The primary objective of this research is to conduct a cultural message analysis of Film *Jodoh 3 Bujang* using Roland Barthes' semiotic approach, specifically directed at identifying and interpreting the denotative, connotative, and mythological representations related to Bugis-Makassar marriage traditions.

The research problem in this study is how Roland Barthes' semiotic framework (through denotation, connotation, and myth) can uncover and interpret the messages contained in the film *Jodoh 3 Bujang* regarding the representation of marriage phenomena, including twin marriage, the negotiation of *Uang Panai*, family matchmaking practices, and efforts to preserve family honor.

2. Method

This research method employs a qualitative approach. According to Sugiyono, qualitative research is a method used to investigate under natural conditions, (as its counterpart is experimental) where the researcher serves as the key instrument, data collection techniques are conducted through triangulation (combination), data analysis is inductive, and qualitative research results emphasize meaning more than generalization (Roland Barthes, 2020).

This research applies a qualitative approach, placing data collection in natural settings. The primary data source used is visual documentation, in the form of scene fragments (images) from the film *Jodoh 3 Bujang*. The selection of qualitative research type is based on the need to obtain an in-depth understanding of each narrative presented in the film scenes.

In this research, data analysis will focus on the cultural messages contained in the film documentation, such as the conflict of *siri'* (family honor), the issue of *Uang Panai*, on twin marriage practice. The analytical technique used is Roland Barthes's Semiotic Model, which analyzes signs into three levels of meaning.

1) **Denotative Meaning:** Refers to the most literal and explicit meaning of a sign, representing a descriptive level. According to Alex Sobur in his communication study, denotative meaning is the most literal meaning of a sign, meaning the meaning that aligns with what is seen or the dictionary definition (Ayesma, kurniawati, 2020).

2) **Connotative Meaning:** Represents the second level of significance, where the denotative meaning is associated with broader cultural aspects. According to Burhan Bungin, connotative meaning is the meaning that develops within society, which not only points to the actual meaning but also contains certain values, attitudes, or ideas (Citra Maharani, 2025).

3) **Myth:** Operates on the second level of meaning and relates to content. (content). Myth is defined as a cultural mechanism used to explain or understand aspects of reality or social phenomena, essentially representing the ideology embedded in the connotative order. In John Fiske's view, myth is the way ideology operates in culture, namely by making certain social values appear normal and unquestionable (Farisya Inayatullah, 2023).

3. Result and Discussion

3.1 Result

The According to the analysis conducted in the film "Jodoh 3 Bujang," the pressure to marry often becomes the greatest obstacle in the process of finding a life partner. This film critically criticizes society, which is too focused on superficial criteria, emphasizing that true love is not found through a perfect checklist, but through the willingness to accept the imperfections of others and oneself.

1. Double Marriages

Dialogue	Visual
Dialog 1: <i>"...Father is no longer productive in earning money, while the cost of marriage is getting higher..."</i> Dialog 2: <i>"...In our tradition, parents are obligated to marry their children... if until the father cannot marry his child according to his ability and financial situation, the father feels like a failure...."</i>	 Scene at 08:18-10:16
Denotation	Connotation
Refers literally to the decline in the patriarch's (father) financial capacity amid rising wedding costs and the 'bride price'. There are social and customary obligations that bind parents to bear the wedding costs, where failure to fulfill results in a perception of personal failure.	This dialogue implicitly reveals ideological pressure in society that directly associates family honor (siri') and family prestige with the grandeur of the wedding ceremony and the fulfillment of traditional demands. The financial failure of the father figure is substituted with the failure of identity as the family head responsible.
Myth (Values, Ideology, Beliefs, Main Message)	
The traditional financial obligations of marriage are constructed as destiny that parents must fulfill. Failure to meet these obligations materially is essentially considered equivalent to losing self-respect and declining social status within the community.	

2. High Educational Status

Dialogue	Visual
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Dialogue 1: <i>"...Don't let yourself regret being left behind by others..."</i> Dialogue 2: <i>"Still thinking about that direction, sir, it seems she also wants a Master's degree...."</i> Dialogue 3: <i>"the higher it is, the more expensive it is"</i>	 Scene at 04:18-04:30
Denotation	Connotation
Implies the existence of interpersonal competition to secure a partner, the affirmation of women's prioritization of advanced education (S2), and a direct linear correlation between academic qualifications women with increased wedding costs (Uang Panai').	This dialogue implicitly conceptualizes women as commodities (objects of contention) in the 'market' of marriage. Women's higher education is interpreted not as an asset not as primary intellect, but as a financial risk factor that incurs wedding costs for the male candidate.
Myth (Values, Ideology, Beliefs, Main Message)	
marriage ideology is constructed where women's values are commodified, and men are positioned as the 'buyer' subject vulnerable to cultural competition and inflation.	

3. Social Class and Employment

Dialogue	Visual
Dialog 1: <i>"There's a man who wants to propose to Andi Nisa, but his only offering is 50 million Rupiah... his job isn't clear, not a civil servant, not a police officer... he just has the money..."</i> Dialog 2: <i>"In my opinion, it's too little money. He should ask for a raise, then I'd agree... If the neighbors find out, they'll probably wonder where he's putting it..."</i>	 Scene at 18:11-20:07

Denotation	Connotation
Literally, it shows a proposal negotiation process that is entirely tied to the financial capacity and formal employment status of male suitor. The approval of the immediate family is influenced by the amount of money deemed capable of maintaining a social image in front of the community and neighbors.	This dialogue's context emphasizes the ideology that a man's social status and a woman's intrinsic value are equivalent to the proposed 'Uang Panai' amount. Formal job stability (PNS/Police) becomes a prerequisite for success, and marriage is positioned as a arena where family honor (siri') is at stake through the public display of wedding gifts.
Myth (Values, Ideology, Beliefs, Main Message)	
The transactional materialist ideology in marriage, where a couple's worth is measured by formal profession and financial capital, and collective family honor is controlled and validated by external perspectives (neighbors).	

4. Elope (*Silariang*)

Dialogue	Visual
Dialog 1: <i>"I miss you too, Bawa, let's go to Fadli (elope)... I want to fight for this relationship, I won't give up to the circumstances..."</i> Dialog 2: <i>"No, many families will fight if we do that..."</i>	 Scene at 62:56-64:18
Denotation	Connotation
Describing the conflict between personal desire (longing, the desire to fight) to unite with resistance triggered by the potential for horizontal conflict and disharmony among large families if the practice of elopement (<i>silariang</i>) is executed.	The connotation of this dialogue places individual desire and love in a subordinate position before the collective power of the family. Elopement is an act of desperation that is culturally categorized as taboo and has the potential to be destructive to family harmony, asserting the superiority of collective interests over subjective desires.
Myth (Values, Ideology, Beliefs, Main Message)	

The supremacy of collective interests and the social structure that prohibits individual happiness through non-traditional paths (rebellion or elopement).

5. Use of Dating Apps to Find a Partner

Dialogue	Visual
Dialog 1: <i>"Nice, so you've been dating Fad, right Maybe I should help you find someone..."</i>	 Scene at 34:11-34:43
Denotation	Connotation
Literally illustrates Fadli's initiation in using online dating apps, which was welcomed by his friend with an offer of intervention assistance.	The connotation of this dialogue marks the adoption of modern (technological) dating search solutions as a response to the emergency of traditional method failures. Although modern technology is adopted, the process remains requires validation and social intervention (help from friends), indicating that the individual is not yet fully independent in matters of marriage
Myth (Values, Ideology, Beliefs, Main Message)	
Searching for a partner through digital platforms (modern) is recognized as a pragmatic and legitimate solution, but validation and intervention from social networks (communities) remain essential for legitimacy.	

6. Family Honor and Dignity

Dialogue	Visual
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Dialog 1: "...I cannot do that, where will Father place his face, ashamed Father in front of Karin's family, Asya's family... ashamed of me as his father if Fadli cannot join in the happiness of this wedding..." Dialog 2: ".... Father's reputation is also at stake if my event and Kifli must be canceled..."	 Scene at 39:59-40:31
Denotation	Connotation
Refers to the emotional and social conflict experienced by the patriarch regarding his sons' weddings. Father feels ashamed if Fadli is not happy and worried that his personal honor would be at stake if the collective wedding is canceled, especially due to external opinions.	The connotation of this dialogue asserts that the patriarch's personal honor and self-worth entirely depend on the public success of his son's wedding and validation from the outside community. The subjective interests of the child (Fadli's happiness) are converted into a measure of prestige for the Father.
Myth (Values, Ideology, Beliefs, Main Message)	
Collective honor ideology that places the individual ego at the center of morality. A child's failure in marriage is interpreted as a personal shame for the parents.	

7. Family Courtship

Dialogue	Visual
Dialogue 1: "...We as representative Nisa's family, receiving an engagement proposal Agus with a fortune of 500 million Rupiah..."	 Scene at 27:58-28:29
Denotation	Connotation

Recording literally that process The agreement between Agus and Nisa has been formalized, with the agreed nominal amount of Uang Panai' being Rp500.000.000.	The connotation of this dialogue highlights that the institution the family is the holder of absolute authority in the determination of marriage. The nominal amount of Uang Panai' (Rp500 Million) is not merely a fund a symbol of social-material success that guarantees honor and high status for the receiving family.
Myth (Values, Ideology, Beliefs, Main Message)	
Ideology of transactional materialism. Acceptance of the proposal is interpreted as a negotiation success in terms of price, where a woman's status is measured by a fantastical exchange value.	

8. Acknowledgment and Courage

Dialogue	Visual
Dialog 1: <i>"...Rifa, I want you to remember... I want to ask for forgiveness again, I'm sorry because so far I have always been a coward, since always I've been afraid of our social status, that's what makes me not dare to be honest with ourselves..."</i>	 Scene at 99:52-100:32
Denotation	Connotation
it is an apology and a marriage proposal that emerged following Fadli's open admission that his lack of courage and personal dishonesty were triggered by a fear of the obstacles arising from the social class disparity between himself and Rifa	The connotation of this dialogue emphasizes that social strata differences act as a tangible barrier, capable of paralyzing an individual's autonomous will. The courage displayed here is not merely the courage to love, but also the bravery to challenge the social systems and hierarchies that implicitly reject such a relationship
Myth (Values, Ideology, Beliefs, Main Message)	

The supremacy of the social hierarchy can only be negotiated and redeemed through the acknowledgment of moral fault and the execution of formal, bold actions (marriage proposal)

3.2 Discussion

Empirical data obtained from the analysis of verbal and nonverbal elements in the narrative and cinematography of the film *Jodoh 3 Bujang* indicate the dominance of moral, ethical, social, and gender representation messages, as well as emphasis on family values and brotherhood. The categorization of these messages is as follows:

1. Twin Marriage Claims and Cultural Efficiency

The twin marriage tradition within the Bugis-Makassar context is represented as a pragmatic collective solution (*gotong royong*). This practice involves the simultaneous marriage of several siblings (usually two to four) in a single ceremony. Its primary goal is financial efficiency through the division of reception costs, marriage contracts, and the allocation of *Uang Panai'*, which often reaches significant amounts. This film highlights that this financial efficiency goal remains aligned with efforts to maintain family honor (*siri'*), where the *Uang Panai'* amount serves as a symbol of the groom's worth and determines the social status of the bride's family.

This phenomenon, inspired by real cases from the 2020s, is dramatized through the scene where Mustapa asks his three sons to marry simultaneously with a budget of Rp300 million. This scene semiotically reflects the cultural flexibility of Bugis-Makassar in adapting traditions in the era of globalization to preserve *siri'* without excessively burdening the family unit. The film functions as both a reflection and a critical call to ensure that traditions do not become excessive economic burdens.

2. Education Status and Correlation with Panai' Currency Value

This film explicitly links the high formal education status of women (S1, S2, or S3) with an increase in the size of the *Uang Panai'*. The education status is assumed to elevate the prestige and dignity of the Bugis family. Educated women are regarded as having *malebbi* (attractive) and *mangalinga* (imposing) attributes. Consequently, the family sets a higher *Uang Panai'* as a form of recognition for academic achievements, in addition to factors such as noble lineage or family economic status.

3. Social Status and Profession

In Bugis-Makassar custom, the occupation and social status of a prospective groom are critical factors in the marriage process (*dipasiala* or *mappanretasi*). This is because profession is considered to reflect a man's financial ability to meet the demands of the woman's family's '*siri*' (price) through the '*Uang Panai*' and ensure future sustenance.

Parents tend to prioritize candidates with stable jobs (Civil Servants, entrepreneurs, health/technical professionals) as indicators of a 'financially responsible man' (associated with the Bugis expression 'able to circle the kitchen seven times'). Conversely, jobs with low social status are often rejected to maintain honor, although subjective criteria such as character and mental readiness are also considered.

4. *Silariang* (Running Away) as a Response to Conflict

This film visualizes the phenomenon of *Silariang* (elopement) in the Bugis-Makassar adat, a marriage practice conducted secretly without parental consent. *Silariang* is often triggered by the couple's inability to meet the soaring demands of the *Uang Panai'* or by their social status incompatibility. In the narrative of *Jodoh 3 Bujang*, this practice is depicted as a "shortcut" to avoid

the high burden of Panai' that almost Fadly attempted when his bride was matched with a party offering a larger Panai'.

5. Dating Apps in the Search for a Partner

The film *Jodoh 3 Bujang* introduces the element of dating apps (represented by the app 'Thunder') as a modern comedic mechanism used by character Fadly to find a replacement bride shortly after the engagement with Nisa. The scene where Fadly uses digital swiping to find a partner contrasts sharply with Bugis-Makassar traditions (such as the sirih pincang or mappanretasi). This contrast reflects generational clashes, showcasing young Makassar generations that are technologically adaptive but culturally panicked.

6. Family Honor and Dignity (Siri')

Family Honor and Status (Siri') become the core of the narrative conflict. Parents encourage twin marriages as an effort to preserve adat honor amid economic pressure. The character's father (a retired school principal) sets a deadline for the simultaneous marriage. Fadly's failure to meet the Panai' money will result in tumasiri (loss of status) for the entire family. This sense of honor is expressed through stern dialogue that asserts marriage is a communal matter, not a personal one, serving as a symbol of social status and a protector of family honor from societal stigma and gossip.

7. Family Planning (Mappasitaro)

Family Planning (mappasitaro or mappanretasi) serves as the primary catalyst for conflict, where the family's effort to efficiently manage the Panai' money through forced sibling marriage encounters the fact that Fadly's partner has been arranged by his own family with a man who is more financially stable.

8. Courage and Cultural Negotiation

The film *Jodoh 3 Bujang* highlights courage as its central theme. Courage is embodied through Fadly's struggle against time and tradition to save his sibling marriages. Character Rifa represents the courage of modern women who dare to express their feelings despite being constrained by social strata and the burden of Panai'. Overall, the film asserts that courage (supported by communication and compromise) is the key to overcoming the clash between adat demands and personal love.

4. Conclusion

The film *Jodoh 3 Bujang* explicitly represents the clash of dilemmas between the Bugis-Makassar traditional system, particularly the issue of 'Uang Panai', twin marriage practices, the concept of 'siri' (family honor), and courtship with contemporary realities faced by the younger generation, where there is economic pressure and demands for modernity. Through a comedy genre approach, the film effectively conveys social and moral messages in a non-didactic manner. These messages include emphasizing the importance of interpersonal communication within the family, the urgency of courage in personal decision-making, and a subtle critique of the burden of adat istiadat that often causes psychological pressure and economic constraints for couples who are about to marry.

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