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Phallocentrism of Pemmali in the Daily Conversation of People in Manorang Salo, Marioriawa Soppeng

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Abstract

This study explores the phallocentric dimensions of pemmali—a traditional system of prohibitions and taboos—in the everyday conversations of the Bugis community in Manorang Salo, Marioriawa Subdistrict, Soppeng Regency. Utilizing a qualitative approach and deconstructive analysis grounded in Luce Irigaray's concept of the symbolic order, the research examines how pemmali functions not only as a cultural moral code but also as a discursive mechanism that reinforces patriarchal norms. Data were collected through in-depth interviews and participant observation, and analyzed using a phallocentric deconstructive framework. The findings reveal that pemmali expressions frequently carry implicit gendered meanings, regulating behavior—especially of women and younger generations—under the guise of communal discipline and moral responsibility. These expressions are deeply embedded in everyday language and serve to uphold a symbolic order centered on male authority and social control. The study concludes that pemmali language constitutes a cultural product designed to maintain the Bugis cultural order, including the concept of siri, which forms a core part of the Bugis worldview.

Keywords: Pemmali; Phallocentrism; Bugis Culture; Symbolic Order; Luce Irigaray; Gendered Language; Siri

المخلص

تقليدي من المحظورات والقيود — في المحادثات اليومية لمجتمع البوجيس في منطقة مانورانج سالو، مقاطعة ماروراو، محافظة سوبانغ. باستخدام نهج نوعي وتحليل تفكيكي استنادًا إلى مفهوم النظام الرمزي وفقًا لـ *Luce Irigaray*، تبحث



هذه الدراسة كيف يعمل *pemmali* ليس فقط كرمز أخلاقي ثقافي، ولكن أيضًا كآلية بلاغية تعزز المعايير الأبوية. تم جمع البيانات من خلال المقابلات المعمقة والملاحظة الميدانية، وتم تحليلها باستخدام إطار تفكيكي من منظور فالويسنيري. أظهرت نتائج البحث أن تعبيرات بيمالي غالبًا ما تحتوي على معانٍ جندرية ضمنية، والتي تتحكم في السلوك — خاصةً لدى النساء والشباب — باسم الانضباط الجماعي والمسؤولية الأخلاقية. هذه التعبيرات متأصلة في اللغة اليومية وتعمل على دعم النظام الرمزي الذي يركز على سلطة الذكور والرقابة الاجتماعية. تخلصت الدراسة إلى أن لغة بيمالي هي أحد المنتجات الثقافية التي تهدف إلى الحفاظ على النظام الثقافي البوجيسي، بما في ذلك مفهوم السيري الذي يعد جزءًا أساسيًا من نظرة المجتمع البوجيسي للعالم.

الكلمات المفتاحية: بيمالي، الفالوسية، ثقافة بوجيس، النظام الرمزي، لوس إيريجاراي، اللغة الجندرية، الخطاب الثقافي

Abstrak

Penelitian ini mengeksplorasi dimensi falosentris (phallocentric) dari pemmali—sistem larangan dan pantangan tradisional—dalam percakapan sehari-hari masyarakat Bugis di Manorang Salo, Kecamatan Marioriaawa, Kabupaten Soppeng. Dengan pendekatan kualitatif dan analisis dekonstruktif yang merujuk pada konsep symbolic order dari Luce Irigaray, penelitian ini menelaah bagaimana pemmali berfungsi tidak hanya sebagai kode moral budaya, tetapi juga sebagai mekanisme wacana yang memperkuat norma-norma patriarkal. Data dikumpulkan melalui wawancara mendalam, observasi yang dianalisis dengan pendekatan dekonstruktif falusentris. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa ungkapan-ungkapan pemmali sering memuat makna gender yang tersirat, yang mengatur perilaku—terutama perempuan dan generasi muda—atas nama kedisiplinan komunal dan tanggung jawab moral. Ungkapan tersebut tertanam kuat dalam bahasa sehari-hari dan berfungsi untuk mempertahankan tatanan simbolik yang berpusat pada otoritas laki-laki dan kontrol sosial. Studi ini menunjukkan bahwa bahasa pemmali menjadi salah satu bagian dari produk budaya yang bertujuan untuk menjaga tatanan budaya termasuk siri yang menjadi pandangan dunia orang-orang Bugis.

Keywords: Pemmali; Falosentrisme; Budaya Bugis; Tatanan Simbolik; Luce Irigaray; Bahasa Gender; Wacana Budaya

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A. Introduction

Women possess significant psychological resilience and cognitive strength, although they are often perceived as physically less robust. Historically, feminist theory has challenged prevailing societal norms that position women as subordinate or secondary within political, cultural, and social hierarchies. The development and expansion of feminist scholarship have progressively revealed the complex and often marginalized status of women within familial, societal, and national structures. These revelations have contributed to the identification and critique of patriarchy as a dominant cultural framework. This structural critique has, in turn, led to the emergence of poststructuralist feminist perspectives, including those that interrogate the role of language in the construction and perpetuation of gendered power dynamics.

The emergence of feminist ideology has prompted extensive scholarly inquiry into the historically subjugated status of women, thereby challenging established power structures. Within this discourse, the feminist poststructuralist perspective highlights how language functions as a tool for constructing and perpetuating patriarchal norms, as demonstrated in studies by Thobejano¹, Ohaeto and Okemelu², and Tami³. Building on these insights, the present study examines the Bugis textual tradition known as *pemmali* to assess its role in either reinforcing or resisting patriarchal values within Bugis society, with a specific focus on the Regency of Soppeng.⁴

Pemmali is almost close to the meaning of taboo. Taboo itself is defined as a prohibition or avoidance in any society of behavior believed to be harmful to its members in that it would cause them anxiety, embarrassment, or shame. It is also understood as a prohibition or avoidance of certain behaviors believed to be potentially harmful and capable of causing anxiety, embarrassment, or shame among its members.⁵ The term 'taboo' signifies something forbidden, set apart, dangerous, or unclean, often associated with supernatural consequences for those who violate it. In many cultures, taboos serve as regulatory mechanisms, influencing social interactions, maintaining order, and delineating acceptable conduct. Taboos, deeply rooted in

¹ Tsoaledi Thobejane, 'Probing Language and Patriarchy in South Africa', *Journal of Social Sciences*, 53.1 (2017), 57–60 <<https://doi.org/10.1080/09718923.2017.1383667>>.

² Ngozi Ezensa-Ohaeto and Agatha Uchenna Ikemelu, 'Women's Sexist Language As Atool of Patriarchy: A Re-Reading of Nwapa's *Efuru*', *AJELLS: Awka Journal of English Language and Literary Studies*, 7.2 (2021), 28–37.

³ Rosmah Tami, 'The Representation of the Islamic Veil in Indonesian Contemporary Art: A Feminist Poststructuralist Approach', *Elite: English and Literature Journal*, 1 (2013), 1–20.

⁴ Amir Hassanpour, 'The (Re)Production of Patriarchy in the Kurdish Language 1', *Women of a Non-State Nation*, 1987 <http://daplatfo.ipower.com/images/reproduction_patriarchy_in_kurdish.pdf>.

⁵ N.M. Abdelaal and A.A Sarhani, 'Subtitling Strategies of Swear Words and Taboo Expression in the Movie "Training Day"', *Heliyon*, 7.7 (2021).

cultural and social structures, dictate what is permissible or forbidden, shaping individual behavior and societal norms.⁶

In Bugis society, *Pemmali* is not a single term to signify cultural prohibition because in every area has its language with similar order. It is a practice with many names such *pammali* (Sundanese and Javanese), *pomali* (Buton), *pemmali* (Bugis), *kasipalli* (Makassar) dan *kapalli* (Selayar).⁷ This paper use the word *pemmali* to refer to Bugis language.

Furthermore, there is no information when the word of *pemmali* appears in Bugis language. Yet, Bugis people everywhere is familiar with the word *pemmali* in their daily conversation. This word frequently appears during a serious dialogue as a cautionary. It carries a message or intent and directly associated to threats or consequences if an individual violated the *pemmali*. Therefore, some people believe that the *pemmali* text is merely to instill fear or serve as a warning, yet the utterance of *pemmali* wrapped in a symbolic meaning⁸ that has a sense of control.

This research is conducted in a remote area in Kabupaten Soppeng Sulawesi Selatan called Manorang Salo where all people speaks Bahasa Bugis as their daily conversation. Adult men and women are very familiar with *pemmali*, yet they do not understand if the textual tradition has constructed their thought, tradition and culture. This research assumes that the language of *pemmali* may contribute to deviation of gender in the objected area.

This research intends to explore the aspect of language usage in the Bugis in creating reality through *pemmali* practices. Through the lens of language, it can be unveil the complex ways in which women negotiate and express their pursuit of equality within the framework of *pemmali* practices.⁹

The study of language within post-structural feminism unveils the subtle yet pervasive ways in which patriarchal structures are reinforced and challenged through linguistic practices. In essence, this exploration aims to amplify the voices of women and underscore their agency in shaping a more equitable and just society.¹⁰ In

⁶ John Ebimobowei Yeseibo, 'Female Self-Definition and Determination in Tsitsi Dangarembga's *She No Longer Weeps*', *Review of Arts and Humanities*, 7.2 (2018), 76–81 <<https://doi.org/10.15640/rah.v7n2a2>>.

⁷ Zaenal Abidin, Sabri Samin, and Moh. Sabri AR, 'Pemmali: Metode Dakwah Leluhur Bugis Makassar', *Jurnal Dakwah Tabligh*, 20.1 (2019), 88 <<https://doi.org/10.24252/jdt.v20i1.9603>>.

⁸ Siti Aisyah, "Makna Dan Fungsi Pemmali Masyarakat Sukupaser Kecamatan Long Ikis Kabupaten Paser (the Meaning and Function of Practical Community Interest Paser District Long Acts Paser)," *Jurnal Bahasa, Sastra Dan Pembelajarannya* 10, no. 2 (2020), h.139.

⁹ A Arwan, 'Budaya Patriarki Bahasa Dan Gender Terhadap Perempuan Bima', *JISP (Jurnal Ilmu Sosial Dan Pendidikan)*, 4.4 (2020).

¹⁰ Magnalena Formanowicz and CARolina Hansen, 'Subtle Linguistic Cues Affecting Gender In(Equality)', *Journal of Language and Social Psychology*, 41.2 (2021).

patriarchal societies, gendered proverbs often perpetuate the subordination of women, reflecting deep-seated cultural biases. Analysis of language reveals how power dynamics, gender roles, and cultural contexts intersect to shape the experiences of women, highlighting their resilience and resistance in the face of adversity.

Pemmali, as a form of textual practice, can be analyzed using Luce Irigaray's theory of language and gender, especially her critique of Phallogentric discourse, one that privileges male authority and marginalizes alternative modes of expression, particularly those rooted in embodied, affective, and communal experiences often associated with women. Luce Irigaray analyzes language as a structured system built upon the exclusion and silencing of women. *Pemmali*, which consists of unwritten prohibitions and taboos in oral tradition, operates within a symbolic system that reinforces social norms, often reflecting patriarchal structures. Irigaray argues that language is shaped by a male-centered logic, marginalizing women's experiences and alternative ways of meaning-making. Luce irrigaray suggests that language is inherently phallogentric, reflecting male perspectives and marginalizing female experiences.¹¹ By deconstructing the language of *pemmali*, this research intends to uncover how *pemmali* reinforces gender hierarchies and limits women's agency. Language and gender studies have demonstrated how language not only reflects but also actively constructs gendered identities and power relations.¹² It also reveals how *pemmali* construct and maintain a gendered social order, especially in relation to how women's voices, desires, and subjectivities are regulated through these prohibitions.

C. Research Method

This study used a qualitative method as a means to have a deeper understanding of the phallogentrism of *pemmali* used by Bugis people living in Soppeng, particularly in Manorang Salo district. Qualitative research is grounded in the understanding that meaning is constructed through social interactions, cultural contexts, and the subjective experiences of individuals within specific communities.¹³ In this context, the present study aims to examine *pemmali* not merely as a set of behavioral prescriptions, but as a symbolic structure embedded within Bugis tradition and local wisdom. Manorang Salo is a small village located in Marioriyawa district, Soppeng Regency. People of Manorang Salo was part of *addatuang* (a small kingdom). Supporting by its strong cultural bounding, people tend to hold their tradition tightly. Phenomenological qualitative research were applied in order to access their experience practicing *pemmali*, and 8 people consisted of men and women were

¹¹ Zhang Pinggong, 'Reclaiming Luce Irigaray: Language and Space of the "Other"', *Linguistics and Literature Studies*, 6.5 (2018), 250–58 <<https://doi.org/10.13189/lis.2018.060508>>.

¹² Nurul Ilmi Idrus, "'To Take Each Other': Bugis Practices of Gender, Sexuality and Marriage.", *Australia National University*, 2023, p. <https://openresearch-repository.anu.edu.au/handle/>.

¹³ Sharan B Merriam, *Qualitative Research in Practice* (San Fransisco: A Wiley Imprint, 2002).

interviewed from April to June 2024. By engaging with local narratives, practices, and oral histories, the study seeks to investigate how *pemmali* contributes to the formation of moral boundaries, the reinforcement of communal identity, and the preservation of cultural continuity amidst a rapidly evolving socio-religious landscape.

The data was analyzed using a deconstructive approach. The deconstructive approach is a critical perspective rooted in poststructuralist philosophy, primarily associated with the thought of Jacques Derrida. It is way of thinking and re-reading texts with the aim of uncovering underlying assumptions, binary oppositions, and hidden structures embedded within the text including the myth embodied in daily conversation. This way of reading may open space of critique of dominant ideologies, reveal power imbalances within the texts.¹⁴ This way of thinking influenced feminist poststructuralist such as Luce Irigaray. Irigaray's theory, Phallocentrism language refers to a system of discourse that is centered around male experiences, perspectives, and authority, marginalizing or excluding female subjectivity. This theory is well suited to analyse *pemmali* because it highlights the gendered nature of cultural narratives and prohibitions.

Traditional approaches may view on *pemmali* as moral or social regulatory mechanisms, but Irigaray's framework allows us to see them as part of a larger linguistic economy that privileges male-centered logics. Irigaray's emphasis on the symbolic order and the potential for alternative discourses is particularly important. The symbolic order, a term derived from Jacques Lacan, refers to the system of language and cultural norms that structure human identity and social relations. Lacan pointed that when people become part of a society, they merely enter into an established structure or symbolic order. This structure are language, law and social norm. Luce Irigaray views this symbolic order is constructed by patriarchal culture.¹⁵ Using this theory, it can be considered that whether language *pemmali* merely reinforce existing hierarchies or whether they can be reinterpreted as spaces where women's knowledge and resistance are subtly realized.¹⁶

D. Results and Discussion

There is no data provided when the practices of *pemmali* begins. However, several texts shows that the practices has been a tradition long time ago. The book Lontarak Soppeng, a traditional text, often describes events when a *Datu*, a king, passed down a *pemmali* to his successor by explaining the text and showing the meaning of a certain condition. Another lontarak contained myth mentions the story

¹⁴ Christopher Norris, *Deconstruction: Theory and Practice, Poetics Today*, 3rd Editio (London and New York: Routledge Taylor&Francis Group, 2002), iv <<https://doi.org/10.2307/1772306>>.

¹⁵ Luce Irigaray, *Speculum of the Other Woman* (Ithaca: Cornell Univers, 1985), p. 121 <<https://doi.org/10.2307/4611565>>.

¹⁶ Irigaray, p. 126.

of Sang Hyang Sri, the goddess of rice and shows the procedures for the ceremony and several pemmali that must be obeyed in order to have successful harvest. Related to this, a farmer name La Tang described regarding textual pemmali by saying as below:

“Mabiasa ko tudang sifulungni faggalung e naiyya ibahas manengni wettu makanja’e, yarega femmali-femmalinna. Ye mabiasae kan dena weddingki mappangewang ku galung e, apa nalisuiki matu ja na. makkoromi.”

(Normally, when we are holding discussions with farmers, we discuss all the necessary things, for example good times, as well as taboos. Usually, we shouldn't fight in rice fields, because it will have bad consequences).¹⁷

All these facts emphasize that the pemmali that has been implemented has existed for a long time. It is a textual living that regulate farmers in processing their rice in the field rice preparing their best atmosphere obeying while nurturing the padi plants.

Pemmali is actively sustained through everyday family conversations and functions as a normative tool in the socialization process. It has traditionally been employed by parents to guide children's behavior by prescribing or prohibiting certain actions, often through narratives of cause and effect. Undesirable outcomes are frequently attributed to violations of pemmali, reinforcing moral instruction through culturally embedded reasoning. While children are typically expected to comply with these norms—sometimes without fully understanding or questioning their rationale—pemmali operates as a mechanism of behavioral regulation within the household. Given that familial and societal structures are inherently shaped by gender dynamics, this study critically examines how pemmali, as a textual and discursive tradition, contributes to the construction and maintenance of gender relations within Bugis society.

1. Phallocentrism of the Pemmali

Fieldwork was conducted in the village of Manorang Salo to observe how the pemmali tradition operates across different gender roles. Findings indicate that gender-specific pemmali prescriptions exist, with both men and women expected to adhere to distinct normative restrictions. When asked to provide examples of pemmali associated with each gender, community members in Manorang Salo offered the following responses:

Pemmali kalloloe manreiwi pasampoe, nasaba mancaji passampo siri'I matu. (Pemmali for bachelor to eat using a cover lid because this act may potentially lead the bachelor to marry other men's mess.

¹⁷ Interview with La Tang on 30 May 2024.

Pemmali maggolo rilalengna bolae

(You are not allowed to play football in the house)

Pemmali buranewe maggere olokolo narekko mattampue bene na

(It is not allowed for a man to slaughter an animal if his wife is pregnant)

Pemmali buranewe lao mammeng narekko mattampu benena, nasaba comping I matu ana'na

(It is forbidden for a man to go fishing if his wife is pregnant because it potentially give his future child's a cleft lip for harming the fish mouth)

These *pemmali* are directed specifically at men. From a phallocentric perspective, they reveal how masculinity is constructed and regulated within a patriarchal framework, particularly in relation to male honor (*siri'*), domestic authority, and reproductive roles. The first *pemmali* reflects an underlying concern with maintaining male honor, especially in the context of marriage and sexual exclusivity. This norm reinforces the expectation that men should distance themselves from any association with another man's prior romantic or sexual engagements, thereby upholding a heteronormative, possessive conception of women as markers of male status and social standing. The prohibition functions as a way to maintain rigid gender boundaries and prevent the perceived contamination of male honor by external influences.

The second *pemmali*, which forbids playing football inside the house, further illustrates how masculinity is expected to be expressed in the public sphere rather than within the domestic space. Football, a sport often associated with masculinity, competition, and physicality, is deemed inappropriate for the household setting, reinforcing the division between male-coded activities (which belong outside the home) and female-coded activities (which dominate the domestic sphere). This distinction highlights the phallocentric framework in which men are expected to engage in external, public affairs, while the household remains a space primarily associated with women's roles. The separation of these spheres serves to uphold traditional gender hierarchies, positioning men as active participants in society and women as caretakers of the home.

The final two *pemmali*, which regulate a husband's behavior when his wife is pregnant, suggest a patriarchal concern with male actions affecting reproduction. The prohibition against slaughtering animals or fishing during pregnancy implies a mystical connection between male activities and fetal development, reinforcing the idea that men must exercise caution to protect the unborn child. While these *pemmali* appear to impose restrictions on men, they ultimately center male authority over reproduction by framing pregnancy as a condition that men must manage and protect. This aligns with a phallocentric perspective where male agency remains dominant, even in matters of childbirth, reinforcing the notion that a man's actions—rather than

a woman's bodily autonomy—determine the fate of the offspring. Thus, these *pemmali* serve to regulate masculinity in a way that upholds patriarchal control over marriage, domestic roles, and reproduction.

In addition, women also have several *pemmali* to follow as below:

Pemmali ana darae massering kuwenniwi, nasaba teddeng matu dalle na.

(It is forbidden for girls to sweep at night, because then their fortune will disappear.)

Pemmali anadarae tudang riolona babang e, nasaba mabelai matu lakkainna.

(It is customary for girls to sit in front of the door, because their soul mate will be far away).

Pemmali anadarae makkelong narekko mannasu ri Dapureng e, nasaba tomatoa matu lakkainna.

(It is not permissible for girls to sing while cooking in the kitchen, because then their parents will marry them).

Pemmali makkunraie dena accept ambassador buranewe ekka tellu.

(Pemmali for girls to reject a man's proposal up to 3 times).

Pemmali anadarae massering dena mapaccing, nasaba maccambang matu lakkainna. (It is not permissible for girls to sweep uncleanly, because then they will get bad matches).

Pemmali tomatotampue tudang ri addengeng e, nasaba masussa matu makkiana

(It is not permissible for pregnant people to sit on the stairs because it can make giving birth difficult).

Pemmali tomatotampue minung wai ese nasaba maloppo matu ana'na

(It is not permissible for pregnant women to drink ice water because it will make the baby bigger).

Pemmali tomatotampu'e manre anu makkalitae nasaba masussa messu ana'na.

(It is not permissible for pregnant people to eat gummy food because it will be difficult for the child to come out.)

Pemmali tomatotampu'e lao massiara kibburu yarega lao mateng e.

(It is not permissible for pregnant people to go to grave pilgrimages or mourn).

Pemmali tomatotampue maddette gemme nasaba sala-salang matu ana'na

(It is not permissible for pregnant women to cut their hair, because then their child will be disabled).

Although both men and women are subject to pemmali regulations, those directed at women appear to be more frequently cited and socially emphasized. In the community of Manorang Salo, greater attention is given to regulating women's behavior compared to that of men. As evidenced during the collection of pemmali texts, participants more readily recalled and recited pemmali pertaining to women than those concerning men. These norms also tend to be more readily enforced upon women, suggesting an asymmetry in the application of moral and behavioral expectations. This disparity points to underlying gender dynamics within the community, highlighting how pemmali serves as a mechanism through which gender relations are maintained and reinforced.

From a phallocentrism perspective, these pemmali represents how patriarchal culture controls women's bodies and behavior through prohibitions rooted in myths and traditional beliefs. Women are regulated in the domestic sphere with rules that emphasize compliance with social norms that benefit men. For example, the prohibition for women to sweep at night or sing in the kitchen reflects how women are placed in a domestic role that must be performed in an orderly and unassuming manner. In this context, the kitchen is not only a place for cooking but also a symbol of women's attachment to household duties that are passive and subject to masculine social rules.

In addition, some of the *pemmali* assert control over women's married life. The prohibition for women to sit in front of the door on the grounds that their mate will move away shows how women are considered to have the primary responsibility for maintaining the marriage relationship, while men are not subject to similar restrictions. In fact, the rule against rejecting proposals more than three times indicates that women do not have full freedom in choosing a partner, so that marriage decisions favor the will of the man and the family rather than the individual wishes of the woman herself. This reflects how phallocentrism positions men as the primary subjects in social dynamics, while women are merely objects who must conform.

In the context of pregnancy, pemmali that regulate the behavior of pregnant women reflect cultural mechanisms through which the female body is controlled for reproductive purposes. Prohibitions—such as avoiding sitting on stairs, drinking cold water, or cutting hair—are grounded in the belief that adherence to these rules ensures a safe and healthy childbirth. These prescriptions suggest that women are expected to manage their bodies in accordance with traditional norms, often prioritizing the health of the unborn child over the autonomy and comfort of the mother. Such regulations frame pregnant women primarily as vessels for sustaining lineage—typically male—thus reinforcing a phallocentric worldview that positions women in subordinate reproductive roles. Moreover, several of these prohibitions extend beyond pregnancy itself, with violations believed to carry implications for the woman's future husband, further emphasizing the way in which women's bodies are culturally regulated in relation to male interests.

2. Pemmali as Symbolic Order

Pemmali is considered an important textual practices and tradition. The people of Manorang Salo view *pemmali* to be part of their protected heritage. Even several interviewees thought that this was not something that deserved criticism/comment. A traditional leader, Dg. Patangnga explains that:

*“Makku mettomi tu ku tau makkiade’, farelluki yaseng e terikat oleh aturan supaya de tokedo sala.”*¹⁸

*(That's how people civilized people are, they need rules to bind them so they do not get lost)*¹⁹

The utterance *“Makku mettomi tu ku tau makkiade’, farelluki yaseng e terikat oleh aturan supaya de tokedo sala”* (That's how civilized people are, they need rules to bind them so they do not get lost) encapsulates a cultural logic deeply rooted in moral regulation and communal identity. At first glance, it asserts a normative claim: that civilization is dependent on structure and order—here, symbolized by rules (*farelluki yaseng e*). Through the lens of Luce Irigaray's symbolic order, this utterance can be seen as a confirmation of a phallogentric system—a symbolic structure that privileges hierarchy, law, and containment, often coded in masculine logic. The phrase *“terikat oleh aturan”* (bound by rules) unveils a symbolic economy that shows its control over fluidity, rationality over embodiment, and fixed moral codes over relational understanding.

Furthermore, Irigaray argues that Western symbolic systems (and many traditional ones, like in Bugis culture) operate through binary oppositions (civilized/uncivilized, right/wrong, order/chaos) and rely on exclusion—often of the feminine, the bodily, and the affective—as a necessary condition for cultural coherence. The *farelluki yaseng e*, in this sense, can be read as part of the “law of the father”—a term Irigaray borrows from Lacanian psychoanalysis to describe how cultural meaning is regulated through a male-centered symbolic order.

Moreover, the use of the phrase *“supaya de tokedo sala”* (so they do not get lost) suggests a fear of ambiguity, fluidity, and freedom. Irigaray associates these qualities with the feminine that the symbolic order tries to repress or manage. Thus, *pemmali* (and the broader moral rules it belongs to) can be seen not just as protective, but also as regulatory mechanisms that maintain a symbolic hierarchy by excluding other modes of knowing, particularly those associated with bodily intuition, desire, and relational ethics.

From this standpoint, the utterance is not merely descriptive of cultural norms; it performs a symbolic gesture that re-inscribes a worldview where order is achieved

¹⁸ Interview with Dg. H. Patangnga, in Manorang Salo (19 April 2024)

through the suppression of alternative voices—especially those that might question or resist the existing symbolic framework. This was also confirmed by a housewife as shown below:

“Yemituje nayibbu yaseng e pemmali supaya dena sembarang mufigau kalaki. Ma femmali tomatoe nasaba anu fura kajajiang. Jadi supaya dena terulang yaro agaga majae, mappemmalini tomatoe. Tomatoa riolo de nibbu pemmalie yaku degage passabarennna. Jadi idi ananae maro yangkalinga bawangmi aga nafau tomatoe, tama tettama akkaleng ipigau maneng mua, makkomiro. Riolo fa nariolo to natuli mappemmalini tomatoe jaji tuli engka mofa pemmali lettum makkukkue”²⁰

It means:

Pemmali is made so that children don't do whatever they want. Parents used to make excuses on the grounds that bad things had happened because of bad actions they had committed. So that bad things don't happen again, parents impose *pemmali*. Parents don't just make excuses if there's no reason. So as a child I could only listen to what my parents said, no matter how unreasonable I still did it. Just like that. Since ancient times, the *pemmali* has existed and been passed down so that it can still exist today.

This quote highlights the function of *pemmali* as a traditional mechanism for social control, particularly in guiding children's behavior. This shows that *pemmali* are not just superstitions, but cultural tools used by parents to instill discipline and prevent undesirable actions. The phrase “so that bad things don't happen again, parents enforce *pemmali*” indicates that these prohibitions often arise from past experiences, where certain actions are believed to have led to negative consequences. Regardless of whether those consequences are real or perceived, the function of *pemmali* remains the same—to regulate behavior by associating certain actions with potential harm. This reinforces the idea that social norms are often justified through historical precedent and collective memory, rather than through logical reasoning.

Furthermore, the quote emphasizes how *pemmali* persist from generation to generation due to unquestioning obedience to authority. The speaker describes how, as a child, they followed these rules without question, illustrating how cultural traditions are maintained through passive acceptance rather than active reasoning. The statement “since ancient times, *pemmali* has been around and passed down so it still exists today” suggests that *pemmali* operates as a form of cultural inheritance, where obedience is expected not because of its rational basis, but because of its entrenched existence in society. This highlights how traditional belief systems sustain themselves over time—not through empirical validation, but through the power of social reinforcement and fear of deviation. In this way, *pemmali* serves as both a protective

²⁰ Interview with Nurhayati in Manorang Salo on 19 April 2024.

and limiting force, shaping individual behavior while preserving the larger cultural framework.

3. The decline of *Pemmali*

Apart from that, there are also *pemmali* which are experiencing changes and are slowly no longer valid among society, especially among the younger generation. Based on the results of the interview with Ibu Nurrahmi, she stated that:

“Ada juga pemmali yang nda terlalu diikutimi dizaman sekarang. Karena kan generasinya juga kita kritismi kalo menurutta nda masuk akal bisa saja ditinggalkan itu pemmali, tapi kadang juga mengalami perubahan itu pemmali e misalnya pemmali menyanyi saat memasak di dapur itu kan kalo sekarang anak-anak nda terlalu dia ikuti itu pemmali karena memang zamannya sekarang generasinya mereka kalo lakukan apapa itu biasa sambil menyanyi ki. Kemudian itu pemmali yang melarang untuk duduk di atas bantal perlahan ditinggalkanmi sekarang karena ndaada relevansinya dengan yang dijadikan ancaman. Begitupun dengan pemmali menyapu dimalam hari, kadangmi nda naikuti anana zaman sekarang karena memang nda masuk akal.”²¹

(There are also pemmali that are not really followed nowadays. The young people are now very critical: if they think it doesn't make sense, they can just abandon the pemmali, but sometimes it also changes, for example the pemmali of singing while cooking in the kitchen, nowadays the children don't really follow the pemmali because nowadays their generation usually sings when they do anything. Then the pemmali that forbids sitting on a pillow is slowly being abandoned now because there is no relevance to what is being threatened. Likewise, with the pemmali of sweeping at night, sometimes it is not followed today because it does not make sense).

This section highlights the evolving nature of *pemmali* within communities, emphasizing that cultural beliefs and prohibitions are not static, but can be reinterpreted and rejected over time. Statements that younger generations “criticize” and “abandon” certain *pemmali* if they don't make sense indicate a shift in how traditions are viewed—moving from unquestioning adherence to a more critical and rational approach. Examples such as the *pemmali* of not singing while cooking or sweeping at night illustrate how modern lifestyles and changing social norms have contributed to the decline of certain prohibitions. As societal values shift, especially with increased exposure to different ways of thinking, younger generations prioritize practicality over adherence to traditional prohibitions. This reflects a broader pattern in cultural evolution, where old beliefs adapt to contemporary realities or disappear altogether.

²¹ Ibu Rahmi, Interview, (20 April 2024)

Moreover, the verse implies that the relevance of *pemmali* is directly related to whether people still feel real consequences for breaking it. The example of sitting on an abandoned cushion shows that when a prohibition has no clear or credible reason, it is more likely to be abandoned. This shows that *pemmali* works on a psychological and social level—its power is maintained as long as people believe in its consequences. However, as society progresses and critical thinking becomes more prominent, this belief is increasingly questioned. This shift shows a tendency to evaluate traditions based on logic and empirical reasoning, not just because they have been passed down.

Similar situation also expressed by Pak Reski:

*“This Pemmali applies to all people, whether women or men, all of them are bound by norms. Even women have more taboos because women have to be protected and looked after, but men are actually the same, they are protected too, that's why now this is a universal practice. everyone is equally bound by those rules.”*²²

This statement presents *pemmali* as a universal set of norms that applies to both men and women, emphasizing that societal rules are meant to regulate everyone's behavior. However, the acknowledgment that “*women have more taboos*” suggests an unequal burden, where women face stricter regulations due to the perception that they need to be “*protected and looked after*.” This reflects a patriarchal structure in which the idea of protection often translates into control, limiting women's autonomy under the guise of safeguarding them. While the claim that “*men are actually the same*” attempts to create a sense of equality, the very distinction that women have *more* taboos indicates an imbalance in how *pemmali* is applied.

Furthermore, the notion that *pemmali* is now a “*universal practice*” suggests an evolution in societal attitudes, aiming for a more balanced application of norms. This could be interpreted as an attempt to modernize *pemmali* by reframing it as a system that binds everyone equally, rather than disproportionately restricting certain groups. However, the persistence of gendered prohibitions implies that, despite this rhetorical shift, traditional values still influence how rules are enforced. While men may also be bound by norms, their restrictions often differ in nature—typically emphasizing responsibilities and honor—whereas women's *pemmali* tend to focus on modesty, purity, and domestic roles. This discrepancy highlights how even universal rules can manifest in gendered ways.

Ultimately, this statement reveals the tension between tradition and modernity in how *pemmali* is understood and practiced. While there may be an effort to frame these norms as equally binding for all, historical and cultural patterns suggest otherwise. The fact that women continue to have more prohibitions reflects deep-rooted societal structures that reinforce gender roles. If *pemmali* is to be truly

²² Reski, Interview in Manorang Salo (19 April 2024)

universal, it would require a fundamental reexamination of the reasoning behind these rules, ensuring that they do not disproportionately restrict certain groups while claiming to protect them.

This statement was also supported by a religious figure, in this case Pak. Riyad, who stated that:

*"It's like this, it's easy for women to fall into this trap. In religion alone, the rules for covering the private parts for women are stricter than for men. Women who stay at home are also better than those who often go out, because women are so guarded, that's why there are more rules for them. So don't be surprised if culture also treats women this way. In fact, it's the same, men and women are still bound by the rules"*²³

This statement highlights how religious and cultural norms intersect to create stricter rules for women compared to men, reinforcing the idea that women require more protection and regulation. The comparison to religious modesty rules suggests that gender-based restrictions are not arbitrary but deeply embedded in both spiritual and societal frameworks. The emphasis on women staying at home as a preferable option reflects a long-standing belief that the domestic sphere is the safest and most appropriate space for women. This reinforces traditional gender roles, where women are expected to embody modesty and restraint, while men are afforded more freedom in public life. By linking these cultural expectations to religious doctrine, the statement justifies why *pemmali* and other societal norms impose more restrictions on women.

Furthermore, the statement acknowledges that men, too, are bound by rules, but the framing suggests a significant difference in how these rules are applied. While both genders are subject to societal expectations, the nature of the restrictions is unequal—women face more prohibitions under the pretext of being *guarded* or *protected*, while men experience fewer limitations on their behavior. This reflects a patriarchal structure where control over women's actions is justified as a form of care, rather than as a means of restriction. The phrase *"so don't be surprised if culture also treats women this way"* implies that these gendered norms are seen as a natural extension of broader religious and social structures, rather than as constructs that can or should be challenged.

Ultimately, this statement presents a paradox—on the surface, it claims that both men and women are equally bound by rules, yet it also acknowledges that women bear a heavier burden of restrictions. This contradiction reflects a common justification in patriarchal societies: the idea that inequality is not oppression but rather a necessary form of protection. While the claim of universality attempts to soften the gender disparity, the very argument that women require more rules

²³ Riyad, Interview 19 April 2024

undermines the idea of equal treatment. This highlights the need to critically examine whether such protective restrictions genuinely serve women's well-being or merely reinforce existing power dynamics.

E. Conclusion

The study of *pemmali* in Manorang Salo reveals its continuing function as a traditional and textual system of social regulation, deeply rooted in both oral and written forms. These taboos govern not only agricultural practices but also everyday behaviors, familial dynamics, and community rituals. As seen through both historical texts and contemporary oral traditions, *pemmali* continues to serve as a symbolic order that binds individuals to collective norms, especially in the upbringing of children and the conduct of domestic life.

However, while the tradition is upheld as a marker of civility and cultural continuity, through a deconstruction reading using Luce Irigaray's phallogocentric method, it can be seen that the *pemmali* simultaneously reveals a patriarchal structure, particularly through gendered prohibitions that disproportionately target women. These rules not only restrict behavior but also reflect larger ideologies about honor, purity, and social hierarchy. This related to the Bugis social belief that is the symbol of *siri*. Thus, almost all cultural means including language regulates women to protect their *siri*.

Despite its persistence, *pemmali* is not immune to change. The rise of critical thinking among younger generations has led to a reevaluation of some taboos, especially those considered illogical or irrelevant to modern life.. Nonetheless, the framing of *pemmali* as a "universal" practice, as asserted by community leaders, often masks the underlying gender inequalities that continue to shape its application.

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Example in footnotes:

¹Mircea Eliade (ed.), *The Encyclopedia of Religion*, vol. 8 (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1995), h. 18.

²Norman Daniel, *Islam and the West* (Oxford: One World Publications, 1991), h. 190.

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4. Translation Books

¹Toshihiko Izutsu, *Relasi Tuhan dan Manusia: Pendekatan Semantik terhadap al-Qur'an*, terj. Agus Fahri Husein dkk (Yogyakarta: Tiara Wacana, 2003), h. 14.

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