

Nyi Roro Kidul's Representation in Mobile Legends: (Bang Bang) A Semiotic Study

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Mobile Legends: Bang Bang;
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Abstract

This research examines the representation of Nyi Roro Kidul in the character Kadita from the game Mobile Legends: Bang Bang using Roland Barthes' semiotic approach and Stuart Hall's theory of representation. Nyi Roro Kidul, a mythological figure revered by the Javanese people as the ruler of the South Sea, is reimagined as a digital game character. The objects of analysis include verbal signs, all of the character's spoken lines, and visual signs, such as costume, color, attributes, and the visual effects of Kadita's abilities. This research uses a qualitative descriptive method with documentation and direct observation techniques. The analysis applied Barthes' three levels of meaning denotation, connotation, and myth supported by Hall's encoding-decoding theory of representation. The findings show that Kadita's representation of Nyi Roro Kidul is constructed through a synergy of verbal and visual signs that preserve key markers of cultural identity, such as the dominant use of green, the crown, and associations with the sea, while simultaneously undergoing an aesthetic transformation into an anime-style fantasy character defined by active combat. Verbal signs, particularly imperative speech patterns, construct Kadita as a ruler with absolute authority over the ocean, while the myth that emerges reproduces Javanese cosmological beliefs regarding the South Sea as a sacred domain. The study concludes that Kadita represents an adaptive mytha reconstruction of the Nyi Roro Kidul figure shaped to meet the demands of the global digital gaming industry.

INTRODUCTION

As part of the development of digital technology, digital games have transformed into more than just a means of entertainment. The development of information technology allows *games* to present increasingly complex experiences through a combination of visual, audio, narrative, and interactivity elements. This condition makes *games* not only function as a recreational medium, but also as a communication medium that is able to convey various cultural values, history, ideology, and social identity to its players. According to Aarseth (2001), *video games* are a form of communication that combines narrative, interactivity, and visual aesthetics so as to form a new cultural experience for players.

As a cultural medium, *games* are composed of various sign systems that are used to build and convey meaning. Characters, dialogue, costumes, colors, attributes, weapons, visual effects, story setting, and game mechanics are all elements that function as signs. These elements are not present neutrally, but are designed to represent certain identities, values, or

ideas. The study of signs and meanings in *games* can be done through a semiotic approach. Saussure (1916) defined semiology as the science that studies the life of signs in society.

According to the concept of Saussure signs, Barthes (1964) developed a theory of semiotics to explain how cultural and ideological meanings are formed through signs. According to Barthes, signs are formed through the relationship between signifiers and signifieds. To explain the process of meaning, Barthes developed the concept of *two orders of signification* consisting of denotation and connotation. Denotation is a meaning that appears directly, while connotation relates to cultural values, beliefs, and ideologies that develop. Connotative meanings that are constantly reproduced form myths, which are systems of meaning that make a cultural construction seem natural.

Mobile Legends: Bang Bang, a Multiplayer Online Battle Arena (MOBA) game developed by Moonton and released on July 14, 2016, has had a huge influence in the Asian region. As of October 2020, *Mobile Legends* globally has surpassed 1 billion downloads. Based on the Sensor Tower report as of October 31, 2020, around 75% of the total downloads came from the Asian region. Indonesia is one of the largest contributors with around 36% or around 100 million downloads. The high number of Indonesian players is reflected in Moonton's efforts to bring elements of Indonesian culture to the game, one of which is through the creation of the Kadita character inspired by the legendary figure of Nyi Roro Kidul.

Nyi Roro Kidul is one of the figures who has an important position in the mythology of the Javanese people, especially the people of the southern coast of the island of Java. In various folklore, Nyi Roro Kidul is known as the ruler of the South Sea who has supernatural powers and great authority. This figure is often associated with symbols of power, beauty, splendor, spirituality, and the relationship between the human world and the supernatural world. Along with the times, the figure of Nyi Roro Kidul has undergone a process of reproduction and reinterpretation in various popular media, including *digital games*.

One form of reinterpretation is found in *Mobile Legends: Bang Bang* through the character Kadita. Based on the *video Development of New Hero Kadita – Ocean Goddess "Inside Mobile Legends"* uploaded by Moonton, the development of Kadita's character was carried out as an effort to present a representation of Indonesian culture into the game. The figure of Nyi Roro Kidul was chosen based on the results of the vote for *Mobile Legends* Indonesian players. However, Kadita is not a direct reproduction of the figure of Nyi Roro Kidul. The character is the result of adaptations and reconstructions carried out by *game* developers in accordance with the needs of the creative industry and popular culture, so semiotic analysis is needed to uncover the meaning built through the character.

Previous research on Kadita characters has generally focused on visual representations and adaptations of local culture. Alfian and Kusumandyoko (2020) show that the character of Kadita represents the figure of Nyi Roro Kidul through visual signs that produce denotative, connotative, and mythical meanings. Zaharani et al. (2020) found that the character of Kadita is the result of a visual transformation of a legendary figure adapted to the needs of *modern game media*. Research that specifically examines the relationship between verbal signs and visual signs in shaping the representation of the figure of Nyi Roro Kidul is still relatively limited. This gap constitutes an important basis for conducting this research.

Based on the background described, this study formulates two main problems: first, how do Kadita's visual and verbal signs represent the figure of Nyi Roro Kidul at the level of denotation; and second, how is the representation of Nyi Roro Kidul constructed at the level of connotation. Accordingly, this study aims to describe the visual and verbal signs of Kadita that represent Nyi Roro Kidul at the denotative level, and to interpret the representation of Nyi Roro Kidul at the connotative level. This research is expected to provide both theoretical and practical benefits. Theoretically, it enriches the study of semiotics and representation in digital media, particularly regarding the adaptation of local cultural figures into global popular culture.

Practically, it offers insights for game developers in representing cultural elements authentically, for academics as a reference for further research on cultural representation in digital media, and for the public in understanding how local myths are reconstructed in the global digital industry.

Frame of Mind

This research departs from the assumption that language and visuals in *digital games* are a system of signs that form certain meanings. The main approach used is Roland Barthes' semiotics who developed Saussure's semiological theory by replacing the terms *signifier* into expression (*E*) and *signified* into content (*C*). The relationship between expression and content forms the relationship that produces the mark. Barthes developed the concept of *two orders of signification*: denotation as *first-order signification* and connotation as *second-order signification* (cultural and ideological meaning). At the connotative level, the sign develops into a new marker that produces myths.

In addition to Barthes' semiotics, this study utilizes Stuart Hall's concept of representation. Hall views representation as a process of forming meaning through language and sign systems, rather than as a neutral reflection of reality. The process of *encoding* by media producers and *decoding* by audiences determines how meaning is constructed and negotiated. By combining Barthes' semiotics and Hall's concept of representation, this study explains how the meaning of characters is formed through verbal and visual signs and how the representation of the figure of Nyi Roro Kidul is constructed in the context of popular culture and *the digital game industry*.

METHOD

Object of Research

The object of this research was the character Kadita in the online game *Mobile Legends: Bang Bang* developed by Moonton. The character was chosen because it was adapted from the figure of Nyi Roro Kidul who is known in the traditions and legends of the Javanese people as the ruler of the South Sea. This research focuses on the verbal and visual signs that form the representation of the figure of Nyi Roro Kidul in the character of Kadita. Verbal signs are in the form of speech spoken by the character during the game, while visual signs are in the form of character design elements that include costumes, colors, attributes, accessories, visual effects, abilities, expressions, and other aesthetic elements. This research does not focus on the mechanical aspects of the game (*gameplay*), but on how verbal and visual cues are used to build a representation of the figure of Nyi Roro Kidul.

Research Method

This study used a qualitative descriptive method to describe, interpret, and explain the meaning contained in the data without using statistical calculations. The foundation of analysis uses Roland Barthes' theory of semiotics as the grand *theory* and Stuart Hall's theory of representation as the supporting theory.

1. Data Collection Techniques

Data collection techniques are carried out through documentation and observation. Primary data in the form of speech and visual elements of the Kadita character were obtained from the *Mobile Legends: Bang Bang* game. Verbal data includes all speech spoken by characters, obtained from the official source of *the Mobile Legends* fandom (<https://mobile-legends.fandom.com/wiki/Kadita/Audio>). Visual data includes costumes, colors, attributes, ornaments, visual effects, and character expressions documented through screenshots. Visual data collection was carried out by documenting Kadita's character development information through Moonton's official video on Youtube and observation through live games in *Classic mode*.

In addition to primary data, this study also uses secondary data in the form of books, scientific articles, cultural sources, and various literature that discusses the figure of Nyi Roro Kidul in the tradition of Javanese society. Secondary data is not used as the main object of analysis, but is used as a referential source to help the process of interpreting meaning.

2. Data Classification Techniques

The data that has been obtained is classified according to the type of signs: verbal signs (character speech) and visual signs (costumes, colors, attributes, ornaments, visual effects, and expressions). Each data is identified based on *the elements of expression* (E) and *content* (C). *Expression* refers to the physical form of the sign that can be observed directly, while *content* refers to the concept or meaning contained in the sign. This identification is carried out as an initial stage before the data is analyzed at the level of denotation, connotation, and myth.

3. Data Analysis and Presentation Techniques

The data was analyzed through four stages: (1) identification of verbal and visual cues; (2) denotative analysis to describe the literal meaning of the sign; (3) connotative analysis to uncover symbolic meaning in a cultural context; and (4) myth analysis to see how connotations are naturalized in people's belief systems. The results of the analysis are interpreted using Stuart Hall's representation theory to explain the process of *encoding* and *decoding* meaning. The presentation of results is carried out in a descriptive-narrative manner in analysis tables that contain *expression*, *content*, denotative, connotative, and mythical meanings.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Visual Signs of Kadita Character as a Representation of Nyi Roro Kidul

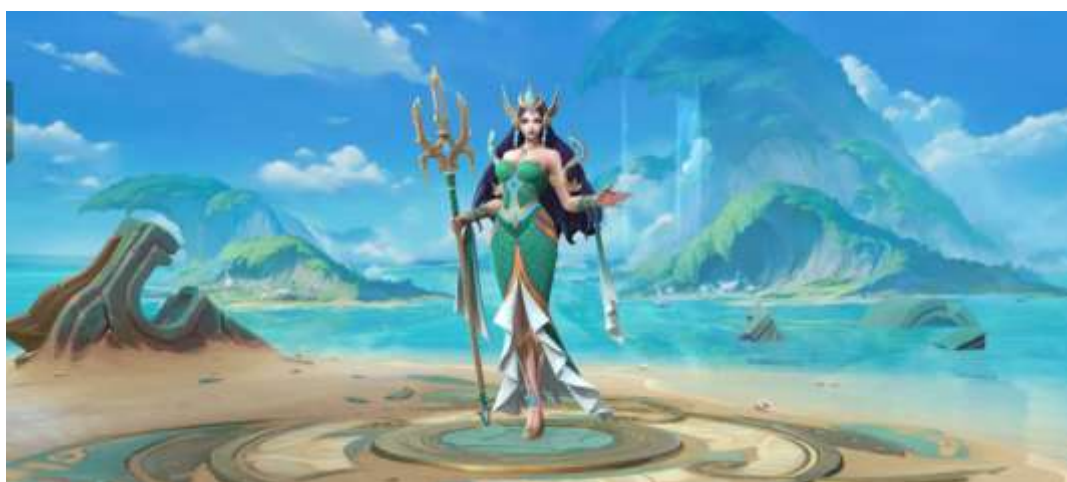


Figure 1: The figure of Kadita during the character selection says: Samudera mematuhi kehedendaku!'

Source: Screenshot from Mobile Legends: Bang Bang game (2026)



Figure 2: Kadita's appearance on the official Moonton poster
Source: Official Moonton poster (2026)



Fiigure 3: Painting of Nyi Roro Kidul by Basoeki Abdullah
Source: Basoeki Abdullah (1970s)

Figure 1 and Figure 2 show the character of Kadita in 3D visual form as a slender woman with long dark purple hair. Kadita wears a costume dominated by green, gold, and white colors with a pattern resembling fish scales. Visually, the appearance is reminiscent of the representation of Nyi Roro Kidul in Basuki Abdullah's painting which is widely known by the public (Figure 3). Table 1 summarizes the comparison of visual elements between Kadita and Nyi Roro Kidul.

Table 1. Comparison of Visual Elements of the Characters of Kadita and Nyi Roro Kidul (Painting by Basuki Abdullah)

	Signs	Denotation	Connotation
1	Figure	Slim Woman	Beautiful and graceful woman

	Signs	Denotation	Connotation
2	Hair	Long, dark purple in color, partially braided	Long, black, decomposed.
3	Crown	Golden, branched, turquoise stone, dangling ornaments (<i>pendilia</i>)	Gold headdress with green gemstone, simpler
4	Weapons	Gold trident with blue ornaments	No weapons
5	Fashion	Tuscan green, gold, white; fish scale motif; hanging fabric; <i>high slit</i>	Green long dresses, scarves or long cloths
6	Accessories	Gold accessories, <i>forearm</i> cuffs, <i>high heels</i> , <i>greaves</i>	Gold jewelry, shoulder straps
7	Dominant color	Green, gold, blue, purple	Green, gold
8	Elements of nature	Blue light, water waves, splashes of water, dark sky, lightning	Sea waves, cloudy sky

Source: Data analysis results (2026)

1. Analysis of Visual Signs: Hair

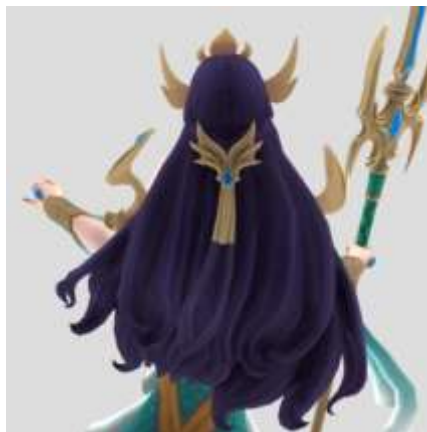


Figure 4: Kadita's back view shows long dark purple hair

Source: Screenshot from Mobile Legends: Bang Bang game (2026)



Figure 5: The head of the painting Nyi Roro Kidul by Basuki Abdullah

Source: Basoeki Abdullah (1970s)

In the character Kadita, the head is visualized with long dark purple hair that unravels to the shoulders, with several strands braided on the front. The most prominent similarities between Kadita and Nyi Roro Kidul in Javanese folklore are the long unraveled hair and the face of a beautiful and authoritative woman. However, Kadita's hair color is different; various visualizations of Nyi Roro Kidul, including Basuki Abdullah's paintings, generally depict long

black hair. Moonton changes the color to a dark purple that Heller (2009) associates with luxury, mystery, spirituality, and supernatural powers a symbolic transformation from the image of a Javanese royal woman to a fantasy character in a magical place. The braid on Kadita's hair is a visual modification that is not found in folklore representations, and can be understood as part of an *anime-style* stylization process as explained by Lamarre (2009).

According to Hall (1997), representation is the process of producing meaning through the sign system. Moonton retains long hair as a marker reminiscent of Nyi Roro Kidul, but changes colors and adds braids as an *encoding process* that adapts to the aesthetics of global digital gaming. Indonesian players who know the legend of Nyi Roro Kidul will still read Kadita's long hair as a marker of the identity of the Queen of the South Sea, while players who are not familiar with Javanese folklore tend to interpret it as part of the aesthetic of fantasy characters.

2. Visual Sign Analysis: Crown

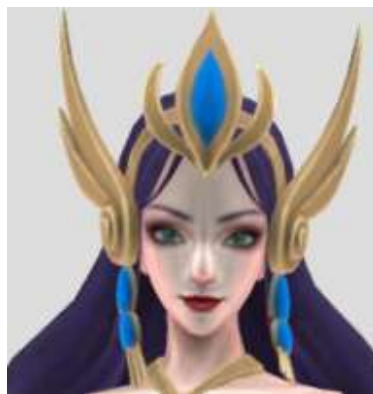


Figure 7: Kadita crown design in 3D form

Source: Screenshot from Mobile Legends: Bang Bang game (2026)



Figure 8: One of the illustrations of Nyi Roro Kidul by Basuki Abdullah

Source: Basoeki Abdullah (1970s)



Figure 9: Crown of Constance of Aragon with *pendolia* ornament in the form of dangling ornaments (Palermo Cathedral, Italy)

Source: Palermo Cathedral, Italy (13th century)

The Kadita crown is golden with branched ornaments that rise upwards and a turquoise gemstone in the center. On the left and right sides there are downward dangling ornaments, resembling *pendilia* in the history of Byzantine art decorative strands that serve as signs of the ruler's luxury and legitimacy (Kazhdan, 1991). In Basuki Abdullah's painting, Nyi Roro Kidul wears a simpler gold headdress by following the aesthetics of Javanese royal fashion. In contrast, the Kadita crown features a higher, branched, and decorative design showing a *stylization* process that adopts the conventions of fantasy characters in digital games (Lamarre, 2009). The combination of gold (luxury, glory, authority) and blue (depth of the sea, spirituality, magical power) constructs the image of Kadita as the Queen of the South Sea who has royal authority as well as supernatural powers (Heller, 2009).

3. Visual Sign Analysis: Face



Figure 10: Kadita's face in 3D

Source: Screenshot from Mobile Legends: Bang Bang game (2026)



Figure 11: Illustration of Nyi Roro Kidul's face on one of Basuki Abdullah's paintings

Source: Basoeki Abdullah (1970s)

Kadita's face is oval with a pointed chin, bright white skin, large eyes with turquoise irises, and purple eye makeup. Compared to Basuki Abdullah's realistic representation of a Javanese female with balanced anatomical proportions and a natural impression, Kadita's face shows the characteristics of the *anime aesthetic*: larger eyes (supporting emotional expression), lighter skin (the Asian visual industry's beauty standard), and more dramatic makeup. According to Lamarre (2009), this stylization process allows characters to appear expressive and easily recognizable. *Purple eyeshadow* constructs the image of Kadita as a ruler of the sea who has magical and mysterious powers (Heller, 2009). Moonton does not reproduce the literal representation of Nyi Roro Kidul, but transforms it through stylization so that a new identity is formed that conforms to the visual conventions of digital games.

4. Visual Sign Analysis: Costumes and Weapons

Kadita's costume does not resemble kebaya, kemben, or Javanese royal clothing; the design is closer to a fantasy character's costume with a *bodice* resembling a shell, a fish-scale patterned skirt, *high slit*, *forearm cuff (bracer)*, *high heels*, and *greaves*. The dominance of green maintains a visual connection with Nyi Roro Kidul as the ruler of the South Sea. The fish scale motif becomes a *visual motif* that directly connects Kadita with the underwater world (Tillman, 2011). The gold-colored *Greaves* are a visual marker that communicates a character's readiness for battle (Edge & Paddock, 1988), a transformation from mythological figure to *hero* in MOBA games. Wessing (1997) explained that Nyi Roro Kidul does not have one standard representation so that each medium can present a new representation according to its context.

The trident is an addition of attributes that are not found in the representation of Nyi Roro Kidul in the tradition of Javanese society, including Basuki Abdullah's paintings, where power is represented through royal symbols, not the attributes of war. However, the trident has universal symbolic value: in Greek mythology, the trident is an attribute of Poseidon as a symbol of power over the ocean (Graves, 1955), and in the Hindu tradition, the trident is an attribute of Lord Shiva that symbolizes divine power (Zimmer, 1946). The presence of the trident on Kadita shows the adoption of universal symbols associated with power and the element of water, as well as serving as a *signature weapon* that strengthens the character's identity and clarifies his fighting ability (Tillman, 2011). The combination of gold (the authority of the ruler) and blue (the depth of the sea, magical power) in the trident builds a visual image that combines the authority of a queen with her identity as the controller of the ocean.

Analysis of Verbal Signs

1. Speech during Character Selection: "*Samudera mematuhi kehendakku!*"

The words "*Samudera mematuhi kehendakku!*" appeared at the moment of hero selection. At the level of denotation, each word is understood literally: *samudera* refers to the vast expanse of the sea, *mematuhi* means obeying commands, and *my will* indicates the will of the speaker. At the level of connotation, the oceanic lexeme develops as a symbol of the great and difficult forces of nature, *adhering to* constructing the power relations between the ruling and the governed, while *kehendakku* affirms the authority and legitimacy of the speaker. At the level of myth, this speech reproduces the myth of Nyi Roro Kidul as the ruler of the South Sea in Javanese cosmology the sea is not only understood as a geographical space, but a spiritual territory under its authority (Wessing, 1997).

Table 2. Verbal Sign Analysis: "*Samudera mematuhi kehendakku!*"

Signs	Denotations	Connotations	Myth
Samudera	A very wide and deep expanse of sea.	It symbolizes the great, vast, and difficult power of nature.	In Javanese cosmology, the ocean especially the South Sea is not only understood as a landscape, but also as a spiritual space that is believed to be under the rule of Nyi Roro Kidul. The sea is seen as a sacred territory that is the center of authority of the Queen of the South Sea and the supernatural powers that accompany it (Wessing, 1997).
Mematuhi	Following obeying commands.	or Shows the existence of a power relationship between the ruling party and the ruled party.	Naturalizing the belief that the South Sea is under the authority of Nyi Roro Kidul as the ruler of the sea. In Barthes' (1972) perspective, such constructions developed into myths because the relationship between rulers and the sea was seen as natural and accepted as part of the community's belief system (Wessing, 1997).
Kehendakku	The will or order that comes from the speaker.	Represents authority, legitimacy, and absolute power.	Confirming the identity of the speaker as the ruler of the ocean which represents the position of Nyi Roro Kidul as the ruler of the South Sea in Javanese cosmology (Wessing, 1997).

Source: Data analysis results (2026)

2. Verbal Signs in The Battlefield

a. "*Salah satu tombakku hilang, apakah ada yang melihatnya?*"

This speech appeared when Kadita moved around in the game. At the level of denotation, the speech conveys literal information that the speaker has lost one of the spears and asks about its whereabouts. At the connotation level, the floating movement serves as a visual sign that distinguishes Kadita from ordinary characters connoting the magical power that comes from the water element. *Tombakku* lexeme does not only refer to a weapon, but rather as a symbol of authority and character identity. At the mythical level, the combination of floating movements and water elements builds the idea of a sea ruler who has spiritual authority

over the waters (Wessing, 1997), in line with the speech that connects the identity of Kadita with the trident as an attribute of her power.

Table 3. Verbal Sign Analysis: "One of my spears is missing, has anyone seen it?"

Signs	Denotations	Connotations
Salah satu	Indicates one part of the whole that is owned.	Hinting that the speaker has more than one spear so losing one of them does not take away his identity or power.
Tombakku	A spear owned by the speaker.	The spear became a symbol of authority, strength, and fighting ability. In the visual context, the spear refers to the trident that Kadita carries as her character's identity.
Hilang	Out of place or not found.	Showing that there is something valuable and important for the speaker.
Melihatnya?	Ask if someone knows the whereabouts of the missing object.	Showing communication with other parties outside the speaker; confirms that the object being searched is believed to still exist.

Source: Data analysis results (2026)

b. "Kenakan baju hijau dan jadilah bagian dari kerajaanku!"

This speech appeared when Kadita activated her first skill. Denotatively, speech contains an invitation to put on green clothes and join the speaker's kingdom. At the connotation level, the lexeme of "*baju hijau*" is no longer just a color of clothing, but a symbolic marker that connects identity with Nyi Roro Kidul the color green has long been associated with the Queen of the South Sea in the Javanese tradition (Wessing, 1997). The phrase "*kerajaanku*" connotes power, authority, and territory that is under the control of the Kadita. At the level of myth, this speech reproduces the idea of Nyi Roro Kidul as the ruler of the supernatural kingdom of the South Sea, where the invitation to wear green clothes is interpreted as an invitation to enter his territory.

Table 4. Verbal Sign Analysis: "*Kenakan baju hijau dan jadilah bagian dari kerajaanku.*"

Signs	Denotations	Connotations	Myth
Kenakan	Using or wearing something on the body.	An invitation or command to follow the identity offered by the speaker.	Shows the process of acceptance of the authority of the sea ruler through certain symbols.
Baju Hijau	Clothes that are green.	Green is a symbol that connects characters with the sea, nature, and the identity of the ruler of the sea.	In some traditions of the Javanese people, the color green is associated with Nyi Roro Kidul so that its use is associated with the symbolism of the South Sea (Wessing, 1997).
Jadilah	Become or join something.	Indicates an invitation to enter a certain group or power.	Represents the relationship between the ruler and the party within his territory.
Bagian	Elements that are included in a unit.	Shows a sense of belonging and attachment.	Describe the acceptance of the authority of the rulers of the sea in the belief system.

Signs	Denotations	Connotations	Myth
Kerajaanku	The territory of the speaker.	It symbolizes power, authority, and dominion over a territory.	In Javanese cosmology, Nyi Roro Kidul is positioned as the ruler of the occult kingdom of the South Sea so that the concept of the kingdom becomes an important part of its representation (Wessing, 1997).

Source: Data analysis results (2026)

c. "[Laughs] Akulah ratu laut selatan!"

The speech "[Laughs] I am the Queen of the South Sea!" was uttered when Kadita's first skill was pressed twice to blow the waves towards the target. At the level of denotation, speech is a declaration of identity: Kadita introduces herself as the Queen of the South Sea. At the level of connotation, the expression *[laughter]* builds an impression of confidence and superiority, the Lexeme "akulah", affirms the legitimacy through the emphasis of the particle, the queen lexemes symbolize leadership and authority, while the phrase *Laut Selatan* is associated with the sacred space of power of Nyi Roro Kidul. At the mythical level, speech revived Javanese cosmology about the South Sea as a supernatural kingdom under the authority of its ruler (Wessing, 1997; 2016).

Table 5. Verbal Sign Analysis: "[Laughs] Akulah ratu laut selatan!"

Signs	Denotations	Connotations	Myth
[Laughs]	Kadita laughed before speaking.	Demonstrate confidence, superiority, and courage (Knapp et al., 2014).	The expression of laughter builds the myth that a ruler with supreme power shows no fear or doubt when facing his opponent. According to Ekman (2003), vocal expression can be a marker of social dominance and authority.
Akulah	Kadita declared herself.	Affirmation of identity and claims of authority (Alwi et al., 2017).	Halliday and Hasan (1976) explain that lexical choices build the social identity of the speaker. The use of <i>aku</i> builds the myth that the legitimacy of a leader comes from the identity inherent in him so that his power is seen as legitimate.
Ratu	Kadita calls herself a queen.	The Queen as a symbol of leadership, authority, and legitimacy of power.	Weber (1978) explained that legitimacy is the basis for the acceptance of power by society. The title of queen establishes the myth that a female leader has a legitimate right to rule and be obeyed.
Laut Selatan	Shows the South Sea region.	It is associated with sacred spaces related to Nyi Roro Kidul (Wessing, 1997).	In Javanese cosmology, the South Sea is the domain of Nyi Roro Kidul. This belief gave birth to the myth that the South Sea is a sacred space under the authority of a supernatural queen (Wessing, 1997; 2016).

Source: Data analysis results (2026)

d. "*Berhenti, dan dengarkan nyanyianku yang indah!*"

This speech appears when Kadita activates *Breath of the Ocean* (skill 2), a burst of water that suddenly appears from the ground and lifts enemies into the air. Denotatively, the sentence contains two commands: for the opponent to stop moving and listen to Kadita's singing. At the level of connotation, the use of lexemes *berhenti* and *dengarkan* builds a power relationship that places Kadita as the party able to control the actions of his opponent. *nyanyianku* lexeme presents the meaning of spiritual power that goes beyond physical attacks singing as a medium of supernatural charm that accompanies the power of the sea (Cirlot, 1971). At the mythical level, this speech reproduces the belief about the supernatural charm of Nyi Roro Kidul which has a supernatural attraction that can affect humans (Wessing, 1997; 2016).

Table 6. Verbal Sign Analysis: "*Berhenti dan dengarkan nyanyianku yang indah.*"

Signs	Denotations	Connotations	Myth
Berhenti	An order for a person to stop his movements or activities.	Showing Kadita's authority and control over his opponent. Imperative speech shows the position of the speaker as the party with power (Alwi et al., 2017).	Weber (1978): power allows one to obtain obedience from another party. The 'stop' command builds the myth that rulers have the authority to control the actions of others.
Dengarkan	A command for someone to hear or pay attention to something.	It contains the meaning of obedience and demands that the opponent focus on Kadita (Halliday & Hasan, 1976).	This speech builds the myth that the voice of a ruler has authority so that it is worthy of being heard and obeyed.
Nyanyianku	Songs or songs owned by Kadita.	Singing is a symbol of attraction as well as magical power. In various traditions, sound and song are often seen as having the power to influence humans (Cirlot, 1971).	Wessing (1997; 2016) shows that Nyi Roro Kidul in various Javanese traditions is often associated with charm and supernatural attraction. Kadita's singing reproduces this myth in the game media.
Indah	Has beauty or is pleasant to hear.	Constructing an image that Kadita's power is not manifested through violence alone, but through charm and elegance.	Burke (1757) explained that beauty has the ability to arouse interest. The myth that is built is that beauty and beauty are part of the strength of a Queen of the South Seas.

Source: Data analysis results (2026)

e. "*Jangan menganggap remeh kekuatan ombak.*"

This speech appeared when Kadita combined *skill 1* (sliding with the waves) and *skill 2* (vertical burst of water). Denotatively, speech contains a prohibition against underestimating the power of the waves. At the level of connotation, the lexeme *jangan* places Kadita as the party who has the authority to set the limit, the phrase *menganggap remeh* that the threat faced by the opponent has a level of superiority that should not be ignored, the lexeme *kekuatan* affirms Kadita's extraordinary ability, and the lexeme *ombak* to be a dynamic and destructive representation of natural energy (Cirlot, 1971). At the mythical level, waves are not just a natural phenomenon, but a manifestation of the power of Nyi Roro Kidul which is respected and feared on the coast of Java (Wessing, 1997; 2016).

Table 7. Verbal Sign Analysis: "*Jangan menganggap remeh kekuatan ombak.*"

Signs	Denotation	Connotations	Myth
Jangan	The word forbidden to prevent someone from doing an action.	Showing the authority of Kadita to give warnings to his opponents (Alwi et al., 2017).	According to Weber (1978), power is an opportunity for a person to gain obedience despite facing resistance. The use of 'don't' builds the myth that rulers have the authority to set boundaries that must be obeyed.
Menganggap remeh	Judging something as unimportant or harmless.	Describing the misperception of the power possessed by Kadita.	Halliday and Hasan (1976) explain that lexical choice builds social relationships between speakers and speech partners. The phrase 'to be underestimated' builds the myth that doubting the authority of the ruler will bring consequences.
Kekuatan	The ability or energy to do something.	Symbolizes the power and ability to control the elements of the sea.	Weber (1978): legitimacy is the basis for the acceptance of power. Power is not only interpreted as physical ability, but as a source of inherent legitimacy for the ruler.
Ombak	Waves that occur at sea level.	Waves are a symbol of the energy, dynamics, and destructive power of the sea (Cirlot, 1971).	Cirlot (1971): water and waves are symbols of the power of nature that are able to give birth to life while bringing destruction. Wessing (1997; 2016): in Javanese cosmology, the power of the South Sea is understood as a manifestation of the existence of Nyi Roro Kidul. The waves build the myth that the waves of the South Seas are a representation of the power of the Queen of the South Seas who are both respected and feared.

Source: Data analysis results (2026)

f. "*Hadapi kemurkaan samudera!*"

This speech was spoken when Kadita activated the *ultimate ability* (*Rough Waves*), where her body disappeared and gave rise to five large waves that spread in all directions like a tsunami. At the level of denotation, Kadita ordered his opponent to face the anger of the ocean. At the level of connotation, the lexeme *hadapi* places Kadita as the party that forces the opponent to face directly with his power, the lexeme *kemurkaan* becomes a metaphor for the forces of nature that are released destructively, and the lexeme *of the ocean* represents an unlimited source of power (Cirlot, 1971). At the mythical level, the visual of the large waves that filled the battlefield reproduce the belief of the coastal people of Java that the ferocity of the South Sea is a manifestation of the power of Nyi Roro Kidul (Wessing, 2016).

Table 8. Verbal Sign Analysis: "Hadapi kemurkaan samudera!"

Signs	Denotations	Connotations	Myth
Hadapi	Commands to face or confront something.	Showing courage as well as the challenge given by Kadita. The form of imperative places the speaker as the party who has authority over the speaking partner (Alwi et al., 2017).	Weber (1978): power allows one to direct the actions of another party. The use of 'confront' builds the myth that the ruler has the right to determine when her opponent accepts the consequences of her power.
Kemurkaan	A very large state of anger or terrible anger.	It does not just show emotions, but symbolizes destructive forces that are ready to be dropped on the opponent (Cirlot, 1971).	In many mythological traditions, natural disasters are understood as manifestations of the wrath of supernatural forces. 'Wrath builds' the myth that the power released by Kadita is not just an attack, but a punishment from the ruler of the sea.
Samudera	A very wide sea.	It is a symbol of space that holds strength, life, and threat. Cirlot (1971): the sea symbolizes the origin of life, infinity, and the uncontrollable forces of nature.	Wessing (1997): The South Sea in Javanese cosmology is understood as the domain of Nyi Roro Kidul. Wessing (2016): coastal communities interpret large waves as a manifestation of the presence of the queen. The 'Ocean' builds the myth that the sea is a sacred space that has a will and is able to bring havoc through its ruler.

Source: Data analysis results (2026)

g. "Bunyi lonceng selalu menyertai kehadirananku!"

This speech appears as an initial marker before the ability set reaches its peak. At the level of denotation, speech states that every presence of Kadita is always accompanied by the sound of a bell. At the level of connotation, *bunyi lonceng* is not only an ordinary sound, but a *soundmark* (Schafer, 1977) that is a marker of the arrival of a ruler. Cirlot (1971) explained that the bell is symbolically associated with the transition to the sacred space and the presence of a higher power. The use of lexemes *selalu* and *menyertai* building an image that Kadita's identity is fixed and consistent. At the mythical level, this speech reproduces the belief in the Nyi Roro Kidul tradition that the appearance of supernatural figures is always preceded by certain signs that can only be understood within the framework of Javanese people's beliefs (Wessing, 1997; 2016).

Table 9. Verbal Sign Analysis: "Bunyi lonceng selalu menyertai kehadirananku!"

Signs	Denotations	Connotations	Myth
Bunyi	Sounds that can be heard by the sense of hearing.	Being a marker of the arrival of an event or the presence of a person.	Schafer (1977) explained that soundmarks can function as a sign of the identity of a space or event. Sound establishes the myth that the presence of a ruler is always recognized through certain signs before her figure appears.

Signs	Denotations	Connotations	Myth
Lonceng	An appliance that produces a sound when struck or moved.	Being a symbol of calling, commemoration, or a marker of presence (Cirlot, 1971).	Cirlot (1971): bells symbolically function as a medium that connects the human world with sacred space. Wessing (1997) showed that the presence of Nyi Roro Kidul is often marked by certain symptoms that are understood by the community as a sign of its emergence.
Selalu	Indicates something that goes on continuously.	Describe the continuity and consistency of Kadita's identity.	Halliday and Hasan (1976): lexical choices can build the meaning of sustainability. The use of 'always' builds the myth that the identity of a ruler is fixed and always inherent in every appearance.
Menyertai	Following or being present with something.	Shows the inseparable relationship between the mark and its owner.	Halliday and Hasan (1976): lexical cohesion forms the relationship of meaning between elements. The use of 'accompaniment' builds the myth that certain symbols become an inseparable part of the identity of the ruler.
Kehadiranku	Kadita's presence.	Affirming the identity as well as the existence of Kadita as a figure who has authority.	Weber (1978): the legitimacy of power is inherent in the figure of the leader. 'My presence' builds the myth that the presence of a ruler alone is enough to bring influence and authority.

Source: Data analysis results (2026)

h. "Rahasia kedalaman samudera adalah milikku."

This speech appears during the activation of *the passive skill Thalassophobia*, which is an automatic regeneration mechanism that restores Kadita's health after receiving an attack. Denotatively, the speech confirms that all secrets in the depths of the ocean are owned by Kadita. At the level of connotation, *rahasia* lexeme represents an exclusive knowledge that is not accessible to everyone; the phrase *kedalaman samudera* becomes a metaphor for an unexplored source of power (Cirlot, 1971); and *miliku* lexeme asserts ownership of the entire mystery. The mechanism of *Thalassophobia* recovery represents water as a symbol of life and regeneration (Eliade, 1959) something that for ordinary humans is a source of fear (*thalassophobia*) is actually a source of strength for its ruler. At the mythical level, speech builds the belief that the South Sea is a sacred space with knowledge and power that can only be mastered by the Queen of the South Sea (Wessing, 1997; 2016).

Table 10. Verbal Sign Analysis: "*Rahasia kedalaman samudera Adalah miliku.*"

Signs	Denotations	Connotations	Myth
Rahasia	Something that is unknown or hidden from others.	It shows the existence of exclusive knowledge that only Kadita has (Danesi, 2010).	Eliade (1959) explained that sacred spaces always contain knowledge that is not accessible to everyone. The 'secret' establishes the myth that the rulers of the supernatural realm have knowledge that ordinary humans do not have.
Kedalaman	Parts that are far from the surface.	It symbolizes something hidden, mysterious, and difficult to reach. Cirlot (1971): depth is a symbol of the unknown world as well as space that holds latent powers.	Eliade (1959): space that is beyond the reach of humans is often understood as a sacred area where supernatural forces dwell. 'Depth' builds the myth that the greatest power lies in space beyond human reach.
Samudera	A very wide and deep sea.	It is a symbol of the infinite vastness, mystery, and power of nature (Cirlot, 1971).	Wessing (1997): The South Sea is the domain of Nyi Roro Kidul in Javanese cosmology. Wessing (2016): the sea is understood not just as a geographical space, but a sacred space that holds supernatural powers. The 'Ocean' builds the myth that the sea is a territory that can only be controlled by the rulers of the South Sea.
Adalah	A conjunction that expresses identification or affirmation.	Show certainty to the statement submitted.	Halliday and Hasan (1976): grammatical choices can strengthen the identification relationship between the subject and the predicate. 'It' builds the myth that Kadita's claim to power is something certain, not conjecture.
Miliku	Showing ownership by oneself.	Affirming the authority and full rights of the Kadita over something in question (Alwi et al., 2017).	Weber (1978): legitimacy is the basis for accepting a person's right to control an area or resource. 'Mine' establishes the myth that all power in the depths of the ocean is the exclusive right and authority of the Queen of the South Seas.

Source: Data analysis results (2026)

i. "Samudera akan membalaskan dendamku!"

This speech was spoken when Kadita experienced death in the game. Denotatively, the speech states that the ocean will take revenge for Kadita's defeat. At the level of connotation, the use of lexemes *Samudera* personifying the sea as an agent that can act in place of Kadita (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). The use of lexeme *akan* shows that Kadita's defeat is not the end of her rule, but a mere delay. At the mythical level, speech reproduces the belief that the power of the Queen of the South Sea does not end when her body falls the sea still acts as an extension of her will (Wessing, 1997; 2016). In Hall's (1997) perspective, this speech is a form of

encoding that maintains Kadita's mythological identity even though the MOBA game mechanics require the existence of a *death* condition.

Table 11. Verbal Sign Analysis: "*Samudera akan membalaskan dendamku!*"

Signs	Denotations	Connotations	Myth
Samudera	A very wide sea.	It became a symbol of unlimited natural power and a source of power of Kadita (Cirlot, 1971).	Wessing (1997; 2016): The South Sea is the territory of Nyi Roro Kidul which is understood as a sacred space. 'The Ocean' establishes the myth that the sea has power that keeps working even when its ruler is not present in person.
Akan	Indicates events that will occur in the future.	Describe the conviction and certainty that the retribution is not over, but only delayed.	Halliday and Hasan (1976): grammatical choices build time relations in discourse. 'Would' build the myth that the power of the ruler does not stop at a single event, but continues beyond the circumstances at hand.
Membalaskan	Retaliation for an adverse act.	It shows that the sea is personified as a party capable of acting on behalf of Kadita (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980).	In traditional societies, natural phenomena are often understood as manifestations of sacred forces capable of acting against humans. 'Retaliation' builds the myth that the forces of nature can be the executors of the will of the supernatural rulers.
Dendamku	The desire to take revenge that Kadita has.	It shows that Kadita's relationship with the ocean is personal and inseparable.	Wessing (1997) shows that Nyi Roro Kidul is understood to have full authority over the South Sea. Possessive '-my' builds the myth that the will of the ruler and the will of the sea are one and the same so that the sea acts as an extension of the queen's power.

Source: Data analysis results (2026)

CONCLUSION

Using Barthes' semiotics and Hall's theory of representation, this study finds that Kadita in Mobile Legends: Bang Bang actively reworks Nyi Roro Kidul into a warrior archetype fitted to MOBA conventions, rather than simply reproducing the original Javanese myth: Moonton's encoding turns the mystical sea queen into an aggressive, dynamic "Warrior Queen," with visual cues (trident, greaves, combat-ready silhouette) and verbal cues (commanding lines like "Samudera mematuhi kehendakku!") working together to replace her passive mystical aura with an active, dominant combat identity. The study further shows that this represents an "adaptive myth" Kadita's local cultural roots are detached from their original context and repackaged for a global audience, with visual and verbal signs (more than the written lore) doing the work of building her identity as a fierce sea ruler, demonstrating that local cultural figures can be reshaped for global digital markets without fully losing their mythological core. Based on these findings, the study recommends that developers like Moonton keep incorporating local culture authentically while meeting global market expectations and

respecting original cultural contexts; that academics use this research as a reference for studying cultural representation and adaptation in digital media; that Indonesian players and the public gain a more critical, appreciative view of how local myths are reconstructed in games; and that future researchers examine other characters or games with local cultural elements, conduct cross-cultural comparisons, or apply frameworks like postcolonial studies or cultural hybridity for deeper insight into global digital adaptation.

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