

# The Denotational Power of Speech in *Ma'marakka* Ritual

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**Abstract**—This study aims to analyze the denotational power of the utterance in the ritual and secondly and to observe the features of the ritual. Using a qualitative method, the research took place in Sangalla' District, Tana Toraja. The data were collected using participant observation in the place where the ritual was held. Library and field research were conducted by recording and interviewing *pa'marakka* and *passuling* together with some people who know about the topic. Data were analysed using a descriptive qualitative method such as ethnography analysis and textual analysis. The result of this research showed that the features of *ma'marakka* ritual involved contextualization, parallelism, metaphor, and comparison. Denotational text means what is being said. It concerns the meaning of the structure of the text and person deictic and spatial deictic. *Ma'marakka* ritual in Tana Toraja has the power to influence the nature, the society and the life of the dead person's family.

**Keywords:** *anthropolinguistic, denotational power, Ma'marakka ritual, Tana Toraja*

## I. INTRODUCTION

In Torajan society, a ritual is not just a belief system; it is a combination of law and belief. Ritual speech in Torajan community is a part of the culture that constructs the social life, and social interaction. This ritual straightens up the relation between human and God, between the human each other, and human with their environment (Palebangan, 2007). Language is analyzed as text. The text is seen as consisting of three levels, denotational text which answers the question "what is being said?", an interactional text which answers the question of "what is really happening", and the relation between the two is mediated semiotic indexicality (Sandarupa 2013). In this research, the writer studied the denotational power of *Ma'marakka* ritual speech. *Ma'marakka* ritual is a song accompanied by an elegy sung by a woman and accompanied by flutes. This ritual only used in the ritual of the death known as '*Rambu Solo*'. This ritual tells about the biography of the dead people and the lamentations of the families that left behind. It is performed on the reception day of a funeral ceremony when a group of guests arrives. The characteristics of this performance are the participation that indicates by a woman as singer and two men who play flutes. The song that is used in this ritual depends on the social class of the dead people. This paper will discuss the denotational power in the speech *Ma'marakka* ritual to understand the structure of the text that shows the power of ritual speech.

## II. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

### A. Ritual

Various communities perform many types of rituals which can be classified into initiation, magical, worship, celebration, protection, healing, transformation, and funeral. A ritual can be performed with special music, songs or dance, processions, consumption of special food, drink and much more. The ritual in Tana Toraja is signed while sacrifice by preceded of a word, poetic, essence responsible for power to release its utterance. Then, it must say, in some cases, sung. In Torajan culture, there are some dangerous words (taboo). Taboo is a powerful spell indicated a word as a key to revealing the speaker's location.

The Torajan language contains many terms of sadness, depression, longing, and mental pain. There is a strong belief that the words used in the wrong context is very destructive and may curse the speaker. Power talks about the performativity in a culture. The performativity concept will be found different from one culture to another. The process, which is made by people to create power, named contextualization that is the part of the denotational text (Sandarupa, 2013).

### B. Ritual Speech

Language and culture are related to each other. The main concern interdisciplinary study of linguistic anthropology is to relate language to culture in various areas of investigation use from ordinary conversation to ritual speech (Sandarupa, 2013). Anthropological represents the study of human and the correlation with their culture, especially in the term of language as a part of the culture. Among the objects of the study of anthropological is about the ritual text of the culture (ritual performance) such as the ritual text in *Ma'marakka* Ritual in a funeral ceremony.

Denotational text sees the text sentence as propositional presentation, a way of communicating information about the situation outside of the language. In "the voice of a child" Sandarupa said that the analysis of the utterance (text sentences) must go overstepped the sense relation, this means attention must be concerned about the thematic structure and information structure. "Communicative context is not dictated by the social and the physical environment around the speakers but emerge in negotiations between participants or speakers in social interaction" (Bauman & Briggs, 1990). This is why it is

important to perform a detailed analysis of text to understand the context. With this shift performance analysis has moved towards an agent-centered view. Contextualization is an active process of negotiation in which participants reflexively (Silverstein, 2001).

**III. METHOD**

The research was descriptive qualitative research. The qualitative research is a situated activity that locates the observer in the world. At this level, the qualitative research involves an interpretive, naturalistic approach to the world. This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret a phenomenon in terms of the meanings people bring to them (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011, as cited in Creswell, 2016). The writer used the ethnography approach to describe the social situation of a ritual especially the use of language in *Ma'marakka* ritual by focusing on denotational text theories for understanding the power of language in its ritual. The research took place in Tana Toraja which focuses in Sangalla' district (Tongkonan Tanete, Tongkonan Balik, Tongkonan Aa') and the interviewing itself take place in the place where the ceremony held and also in Tominaa's home. The time allocated for data collection is about two months from July to August 2017. In Pre-observation the writer had asked some people name indo' Elda and pong Daud who knows this *Ma'marakka* ritual also as the actor of this ritual. In collecting data in this research the writer interviewed Tominaa and some people who know about *Ma'marakka* then transcribed the data that has been collected in textual form.

In analyzing the data, the researcher used denotational text theory (contextualization theory) to find out the true meaning and features that constructed the text of *Ma'marakka* ritual, then, related to the social relation. At the last, the diectics of the ritual text were analyzed.

**IV. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

*Ma'marakka* is one of the rituals that still exists in Tana Toraja until now. *Ma'marakka* ritual is a song accompanied by an elegy sung by a woman and accompanied by flutes in *rambu solo*. This ritual performed on the reception day of funeral ritual *allo karampoan*. When a group of guests arrives in the reception hall *lantang karampoan*, another group from the family to *ma'papangnan* also enters the reception hall to welcoming the guest. *Pa'marakka* as the representative of the group can perform *ma'marakka* while entering a reception hall to send the lament and retelling the biography of the dead people.

*Ma'marakka* is the ritual song by using recited words of praise in a peculiar rhythm, which is the highest oral literature of Toraja for flattering and eulogizing the creation of God or even to affirm social ties among participants and reveal their identities. The words in *Ma'marakka* ritual are used to eulogy the dead person. *Ma'marakka* ritual only can be performed at a specific range of the social class. There are about forty kinds of songs. In Aluk Todolo, the main actor who could do the ritual song by using the highest language of Tana Toraja is the generation of *Ma'marakka* expert. The request for this ritual as

the complement ritual in the funeral ceremony has been raised; therefore, somebody who has the talent to give a speech in the public can perform this ritual.

**A. Textual Analysis**

There are two kinds of text, they are divided into four segments according to the hierarchy and gender. *Ma'marakka* text consists of three parts. They are the opening (stanza A and A'), then followed by the content (stanza B-D, and B-D') then finally the closing (stanza E and E'). Each stanza has four lines. For the stanza classes see Table I and Table II.

TABLE I. NOBLE CLASS

A	1. <i>Tabe' allo tabe' bulan</i> 2. <i>Tabe' bintoen tasak</i> 3. <i>La kiolapa umbating</i> 4. <i>Kilamban ma'rio-rio</i>	(Excuse to the sun and moon) (Excuse the bright star) (We want to send a lament) (Conveying the grief poems)
B	1. <i>Makarorong lando longa</i> 2. <i>Tumangi' salle a'riri</i> 3. <i>Tangna salongi bulawan</i> 4. <i>Tang na salondai gayang</i>	(The high house is silence) (Colonnade house is weeping) (Not passed by gold) (Not passed by golden creese)
C	1. <i>Uai mata talambi'</i> 2. <i>To'do damo' tasaile</i> 3. <i>Uai matanna gayang</i> 4. <i>To'do damo'na tarapang</i>	(We get the tears) (Tear drop in around) (Tears of golden creese) (Teardrop of pure gold)
D	1. <i>To senga'-senga' dadinna</i> 2. <i>Laen kombok garaganna</i> 3. <i>To dadi lammai bulan</i> 4. <i>Kombok lan matari' allo</i>	(His birth is different) (His creation is different) (A born from the moon) (Was created by the sun)
E	1. <i>Sidi'-sidi'ri batingku</i> 2. <i>Sakkodo'ri marioku</i> 3. <i>Mipokinalloi lalan</i> 4. <i>Lako lino sambalian</i>	(My lament is just a little) (My mourn is just a few) (As the provisions) (To the opposite world)

TABLE II. MIDDLE CLASS

A'	1. <i>Lamba' paongan perangi pi mati'</i> 2. <i>Lamba' paongan tandingtalinga pi</i> 3. <i>La ku tendeng ko marakka</i> 4. <i>La lamban marioku</i>	(Father, listen us) (Father, hear us) (I will sing you a lament) (My lament will begin)
B'	1. <i>Makarorong mi tarampak</i> 2. <i>Tumangi' mi to' bariri'</i> 3. <i>Ta'de barana' kalando</i> 4. <i>Ta'de lamba' paongan</i>	(The yard is silence) (Neighborhood is weeping) (High tree has gone) (Big tree disappear)
C'	1. <i>Uai mata talambi'</i> 2. <i>To'do damo' taratui</i> 3. <i>Uai matanna lalong</i> 4. <i>To'do damo' barana' kalando</i>	(Tears that afflict) (Teardrop has come) (Tears of a wise man) (Teardrop of a high tree)
D'	1. <i>Umbai tonna dikombok</i> 2. <i>Ia tonna didadian</i> 3. <i>Nadoloan kalimbuang</i> 4. <i>Naturui' mata uai</i>	(When he was created) (When he was born) (In advance of waterfall) (Spring in the back)
E'	1. <i>Sidi'-sidi'ri batingku</i> 2. <i>Sakkodo'ri marioku</i> 3. <i>Mipokinalloi lalan</i> 4. <i>Lako lino sambalian</i>	(My lament is just a little) (My mourn is just a few) (As your provisions) (To the opposite world)

**Opening**

Stanza A and A' is the opening of *Ma'marakka*. It is the excuse for sending the lament. Stanza A1 and A2 are greeting to the sky that is called *matari' allo* (sun) and *bulan* (moon) also *bintoen* (stars) which are in the highest position. This stanza describes the social class of the dead person as a noble. In stanza A1 and A2 the speaker is asking for the excuse to the

dead person to send her/him a lament. The use of metaphor in *Lamba' paongan* (A'1), which is literally means tree protectors, describes that a dead person is a man, and he is from the middle social class who always gives protection to his people during his life. It also was shown in *Tinting Paongan*, which literally means the rope protectors, describe that the dead person is a woman from the middle social class who is also protector to give safety and comfort to her people.

### Content

*Pa'marakka* starts the lament by telling the sadness of the family and the people in the village. The main kind of stories along presented in stanza B-D and B'-D'. Stanza B-C and B'-C', tells about the feeling loss of the people in the village and the family who was left behind. Then followed by the story of how the dead person was created. It is shown in stanza D and D'. The use of *lando longa* (B1) and *salle a'riri* (B2), describe the noble social class that refers to the family who was left behind. *Lando longa* and *salle a'riri* are noun parallelism. They have the same meaning that is Torajan traditional house (*tongkonan*). The use of word in *tarampak* (yard) in stanza B'1 and to' *bariri*' (neighbor) in stanza B'2 describes the middle social class that refers to the family who was left behind by the dead person.

The next stanza is telling about the birth of the dead person. How the dead person was created in the sun and was born from the moon. The dead person was sent down into the earth with a different birth. It's shown in the text of noble social class. The dead person has a different birth. He/she is not like other people, he/she was born to be a nobleman. This sentence is parallel with *laen kombong garaganna* (D2) means different a created. Then it is followed by to *dadi lammai bulan* (D3) which means a person who was born from the moon and *kombong lan matari' allo* (D4) means was created in the sun. *Bulan* (moon) and *matari' allo* (sun) symbolize that the dead person was born from high place. This actually means that the dead person was born as a nobleman.

In other text in the middle social class, the speaker uses lower words. *Umbai tonna dikombong* (D'1) "when he/she was created", have the same meaning as *ia tonna didadian* (D'2) "when he/she was born". These sentences are indicated by verb parallelism in the word "*dikombong*" "created" that forms that is the same with *didadian* "birth". The birth of the dead person in advance of waterfall "*nadoloan kalimbuang*" (D'3) and was followed by spring "*naturui mata uai*" (D'4). "*pada kombong landorundun*", born together with long hair (D'3). In the legend of Tana Toraja, *landorundun* is a woman that has very long hair. That is why in this sentence, the speaker uses "*landorundun*" to describe the dead person. It also means that the dead person is a woman. This actually means that the dead person was born with the blessings from the ancestors, so they are (dead person) expected to have a role in society.

### Closing

The last stanzas (E and E') are the closing of *Ma'marakka* ritual song. It describes that the lament will end. *Pa'marakka* reflects that the dead person will live well in the other world (*lino sambalian*). In this stanza, *pa'marakka* explains the purpose of her lament is to give the dead person provisions for

her journey to heaven (*lino sambalian*). The structure of the text that is used in this different range shows the power of each social class. The Power is effective only when some have power while others do not. The power of noble social class can only be seen if there is middle social class as the comparison. This is actually the purpose of this ritual; this ritual is a media to shows the power of nobleman using words.

### B. Contextualization

The social power in interaction ground the performance to bring the text more to reality or situational context (Sandarupa, 2013). In other words, contextualization closed the text with reality. The dialectic of contextualization describes the activity in the speech event.

### Person Deictic

Person deictic localizes the relation or position of the speaker and hearer. Person deictic in the text *Ma'marakka* ritual comes in independent lexical, prefix, and suffix either singular or plural form. The sentence *La kiolapa umbating* (stanza A3) refers to the speaker (*pa'marakka*) that wants to sing a lament to the dead person. The speaker contextualizes the performances by using deictic prefix the first person plural /ki/ /we/. The use of word /ki/ /we/ refers to the speaker as the representative of all the people in the funeral ceremony who ask permission to present the lament.

In stanza *Kilamban ma'rio-rio* (A4), the speaker contextualizes performance by using deictic prefix first person plural /ki/ /we/, in *kilamban* "we convey". The use of word /ki/ /we/ in this sentence refers to the speaker and all the audience that is present on the funeral ceremony. In stanza *Uai mata talambi*' C1 the speaker uses deictic prefix first person /ta/ "we" to contextualize the performance in "*talambi*" which is mean we get. The use of word /ta/ /we/ in "*talambi*", refers to the speaker and all the audience in the funeral ceremony. This word shows the intimacy between the speaker and the audience. In stanza *Uai matanna gayang* (C3), the speaker contextualizes the performances by using deictic suffix third person pronoun /na/ in "*uai matanna*" which is means "his tears" that refers to the family that are left behind. The word "*uai matanna*" is parallel with "*damo'na*", "his tears" in stanza C4. In *To senga'-senga' dadinna* stanza (D1) the speaker also uses deictic suffix third person pronoun /nna/ /'his'/'her'/ in "*dadinna*" "his/her birth" to contextualizes the performance that refers to the dead person whether the dead person is a man or woman. The word "*dadinna*" is parallel with "*garaganna*" which is means his/her creation. In stanzas *Sidi'-sidi'ri batingku* E1 and E'1 the speaker uses deictic suffix first person pronoun /ku/ /my/ in "*batingku*" "my lament". This sentence is parallel with "*sakkodo'ri marioku*" in stanzas E2 and E'2 which means "my lament is just a few". The use of word /ku/ /my/ in "*batingku*" refers to the speaker as the lamenter. In this stanzas *Mipokinalloi lalan* (E3 and E'3), the speaker contextualizes the performances by using deictic prefix second person /mi/ /you/ in "*mipokinalloi*" "provisions for you" that refers to the dead person. The speaker uses /mi/ /you/ that shows the politeness to the dead person as the higher or older person.

The sentence *La kutendengko marakka* (stanza A'3) refers to the speaker (*pa'marakka*) that wants to sing a lament for the

dead person. The speaker contextualizes the performance by using deictic prefix first person singular /ku/ "I" in "kutendengko", "I show you", also deictic suffix second person /ko/ "you". The speaker uses /ku/ and /ko/ that shows the intimacy between the speaker and the dead person. It also describes that the dead person is the middle social class. In this stanzas *La lamban marioku* (A'4), the speaker contextualizes the performance by using deictic suffix first person pronoun /ku/ "my" in "marioku", my lament. The use of /ku/ /my/ refers to the speaker as the lamenter.

### Spatial Deictic

Deictic 'lammai' in stanzas d3 and i3 mean "coming from", deictic 'lammai' indicates the movement away from the speaker and hearer toward the destination in general. It describes how the speaker narrates the life story of the dead person when he/she got their birth from the moon. The deictic 'mati' in stanza A'1 is used by the speaker to address the dead person that is direction toward the hearer. This means the speaker is directed her lament to the dead person. It can be seen in "lamba' paonganan perang pi mati" (A'1) and "tinting paonganan perang pi mati". The speaker to index the place away from the speaker and hearer uses deictic 'lako' in stanzas E4 and E'4. It is shown in "lako lino sambalian" which means moved away to the other world. Deictic 'sambalian', is a deictic that used by the speaker to index the place in over there. In stanzas E4 and E'4, "lako lino sambalian", the speaker gives the last message to the dead person on her way to the other world. The difference in the selection of words in those two types of text can be seen clearly in the use of deictic /ki/ and /ku/. In Torajan, society the use of deictic /ki/ is more polite than /ku/. As the researcher show in the source of data, the use of deictic /ki/ can be seen in the noble social class "la kiolapa umbating", "let us deliver a lament. This sentence is dedicated to the people who are respected. The use of this sentence shows the power of the dead person in society. In the middle social

class, the speaker uses deictic /ku/ in "la kutendengko marakka". The use of such deictic is addressed to the people who are equal with the speaker.

### V. CONCLUSION

The text of *Ma'marakka* ritual has its own contribution that shows the denotational power of this ritual. *Pa'marakka* does the speech use her authority. The structure of the text started from the beginning with the excusing to nature and the dead person to send a lament. Then, continue with the expression of sadness and loss of the family that left behind. And the last is the last message to the dead person on her way to puya. Every social class has its own way to show its power. One of the ways is using the funeral ceremony, including a kind of this ritual. Ritual makes the words alive. With ritual, people use words to show their identity. *Ma'marakka* is one of the rituals that use high speech by a powerful speaker (*pa'marakka*). It is a kind of eulogizing for the dead people by telling their creation, social statue and the identities of them (the dead person). This study is one of the examples of how to relate the language with culture.

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