

The Poetry of Taking Power in Toraja Indonesiaⁱ

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Abstract

This article demonstrates how Torajan badong ancestral ritual speech parallelism is put into practice, and how this process is subject not only to regularities but also to happenstance, potentially of the most unpredictable sort. The value of a sign in ritual speech parallelism is fixed by its contrasts to other signs. Its use, however, is saturated with pragmatic value according to the subject's interests. As a result, despite the fact that this ritual is highly prescribed, the possible outcomes are unpredictable because its use may put the conventional senses of signs at multiple risks, contingency and a site of contestation.

The writer applies a set of linguistic tools in novel ways to analyze not just the freshly composed poetic text but also what the performers do with the text to achieve their sociopolitical goals and is influenced by works in a) the ethnography of speaking in particular the display of competence in performance b) conversation and discourse analysis (Coulthard 1985; Levinson 1983), c) literary studies (Bakhtin 1981) and analysis of poetic forms such as multiple layers of parallelism, repetition, and figurative speech (Jakobson 1960), d) semiotic analysis of indexicality that functions to connect text with context (for examples, Peirce 1944, Silverstein 1976). The first three show us the pattern of ritual speech parallelism in use, and the semiotic analysis provides the tool to connect this pattern with other aspect of Torajan culture i.e. poetics and social form, poetics and politics.

Here the analysis of the performance presents two important facts about badong. The first seeks to connect some selected features of textual parallelism and a form of social life as the general goal of successful performance. The second is to focus on the more dynamic aspect of the ritual performance, the more elemental forces that operate on a deeper level, that renders the badong fragile and may cause failure. It focuses on such risk and analysis is, therefore, paid to how social actors are involved in such interaction using interactive parallelism to advance their socio-political and cultural goals. Badong ritual becomes the site of power contestation.

1. Introduction

One can generally distinguish two genres of speaking in Torajan society. The first is called *kada dipamololo*, 'straight talk' which is sometimes called *basa biasa*, 'ordinary speech' and the second is *kada-kada dipasilopak*, 'paired utterances' or 'ritual speech parallelism' sometimes called *basa tinggi*, 'high speech'. While conversations and narratives are characterized by the use of ordinary words, ritual speeches by parallelism. Like Chamula genres of verbal behavior these two genres of speaking show a continuum of increasing formalism and invariance (Bauman 1984 [1977]).

One may further distinguish rituals that employ monologic speech from dialogicⁱⁱ or discursive interactions. The monologic form is used by a ritual specialist, *tomina* in some levels of smoke – rising rituals – *rambu tuka*'. An example is the marriage ritual – *rampanan kapa*' especially in the context of marriage proposal.

The dialogic and interactive speech form are typically characteristics of the smoke – descending rituals – *rambu solo*'.ⁱⁱⁱ For example, *retteng*, 'poetic argumentation', *dondi*', 'poetic duel' and *badong* ritual, 'chant for the deceased'.^{iv}

Within these two types of ritual one can distinguish two types of parallelism, the ordinary and the interactive. The ordinary parallelism fits the kind of parallelism that is reported by Fox in eastern Indonesia spoken by a single ritual specialist (Fox 1988). The other type, which becomes the focus of this article, is the interactive ritual speech parallelism that appears in *badong* ritual, a kind of song and dance performed in certain rank of death ritual by a group of people constructing the identity of the dead person and living family members.

For quite some time now, linguists, linguistic anthropologists (Veen 1966) and ethnomusicologist (Rappoport 2009) have given descriptions about verbal, non-verbal and musical aspects of badong ritual. The approaches have provided us with important knowledge about a level of various aspects of the ritual. From the textual point of view, the analysis has concentrated on the symbolic aspect of the decontextualized textual parallelism provided by informants. The underlying assumption is that the badong performance is a token of the type which is always successful. Its main function is to make a statement about reality out there, a stylized version of grief and lament, representing an attempt to arrive at a vision of unity and harmony among participants and community to counteract the loss of an important person whose death could interrupt this harmony.

While such findings are interesting, the ritual has been reduced to its semantic or denotational level of text expressed in ordinary paired arrangement of parallelism as used in monologic performance by a single ritual speaker.

This article further develops the previous study by having a more comprehensive and integrative look at badong' textual' performance. By focusing on performance, the writer is able to observe a more elaborate parallelism as used by social actors in socio-political and cultural context.

The rationale of the study is to provide us with a better understanding of the complex nature of Torajan parallelisms and of how the Torajans use them to advance their socio-political goal in ritual performance. It is to explain how to relate poetry to contextual factors, parallelism and power, poetics and sociopolitical matters through the use of semiotic indexicality. It will, therefore, portray the Torajan community as a changing society, where the nature of interactional forces such as modernity, Christianity, and local values are visible in the performance.

The outcome is to show how complex parallelisms have the potential of social, political and cultural significance and to suggest the new method of documenting badong for its preservation.

2. Ethnographic context

Toraja is located in the north of the province of south Sulawesi. For a long time, this area has been isolated because it is encircled by mountains and for long there had no road connection to this area until the arrival of the Dutch in 1905 and the Japanese in 1942. Since Toraja has no writing system, its past is known with difficulty. There are a number of artifacts such as antique cloths, old coffins, knives and ornaments that have been found but to-date there has been no systematic archeology or account of pre-historical Torajan material cultures. Thus, little is concretely known about Toraja prior to the colonial period.

Today Toraja has 446.000 inhabitants living on 3500 square kilometers of mountainous terrain. Approximately 1.5 million Torajans live outside of Toraja in other parts of Indonesia. These individuals sustain the traditional culture by sending money for the repair and construction of tongkonans, and for ritual sacrifices. They introduce new ideas into Toraja when they return for ceremonies and vacations. In the more densely populated areas of the towns of Makale and Rantepao as well as in remote areas, television and radio import new values on a daily basis.

2.1 A brief history

Torajan society is informed about the past by established beliefs, rooted in tradition and supported by the ancestor-orientation of the religion– (Nooy-Palm 1979, 1986). Unlike neighboring peoples such as the Bugis, the Makassar, and the Mandar who have their chronicles written on *lontar* palm leaves (Abidin 1971), Torajans, thus largely depend on oral tradition (Waterson 1997).

The Torajans' contact with the lowland people such as Bugis can be obtained from informants' account and on archival research done at Makassar National Archive. In this institution I found some Bugis *lontar*^v that discusses Toraja: the Enrekang Lontar Text Number 01/MKH/7/UNHAS/UP. Rol. 2 no. 7 and Lontaraq Sidenreng Rol 75/4.

The first *lontar* mentions about the contact with Luwu in the middle of 15th century.^{vi} At that time there was the civil war of 'brothers' between Puang Para'mak of Rano Ma'kale (the ruler) and Puang Rambu Langi' of Mandetek (war leader) of the chiefdom of Mandetek. The event was recorded during the reign of the king La Tanro Bungadea Arung Buttu at Enrekang.

The cause of the war, as informants related, was that the former's son killed the latter's son named Pabiung as they fought for a noble lady of Mengkendek. Puang Rambu Langi' wanted the case to be settled according to tradition, but it was rejected by the king. As a result, he staged war against the king. This was recollected as *rari sangka'taran lolo ma'pempissan*, 'the first war between brothers'. At first, Puang Rambu Langi' was defeated. He then asked for help from the king of Luwu' Datu Kelali' (Dewa Raja) and together they fought against Puang Para'mak and defeated his army. This is because the king Datu Kelali' (1491-1521) came with a strong army who already had modern weapons when at the time the kingdom had already iron resources (Bulbeck and Caldwell 2000). It was even told in the *lontar* that the defeated ruler with his entourage fled to Mamasa and Pitu Ulunna Salu, then to Kaili and finally, to Kutei Kalimantan because the Luwu' army continued to harass them.^{vii}

Another *lontar* called Lontaraq Sidenreng ROL 75/4 with the file name Toraja mentioned about the dispersal of seven brothers, the sons of Puang Sanggalla' who fled to Sidenreng and formed a petty kingdom there near Tempe Lake because their oldest brother, La Maddaremmeng who replaced their dead king, was extremely cruel and deprived his brothers of their power.^{viii}

The early contact with the low land can also be found in the earliest Western written source in Gervaise's work (1685) which reports Torajan slaves arriving in Siam (see also (Bigalke 2005; Nooy-Palm 1979; Volkman 1985). In 1680, the French ambassador in Siam bought a Toraja slave from a group brought there by Makassar traders (Pelras 1996). The historians Bigalke and Pelras reported that there were indeed wars between Toraja and Bugis, as an outcome of which Toraja prisoners of war were sometimes enslaved.

The army of Bone, Bugis, invaded Toraja two times in the 17th century. The Torajans successfully resisted

this influx; one such event has been referred to as *Untulak Buntunna Bone*, 'the resistance of the Bone (Bugis) army'. The multiple invasions ended in an agreement which guaranteed peaceful neighbourly relations.

The contact with the low land kingdoms have effected changes in Torajan communities. These changes have only intensified since the arrival of Dutch in the area in 1905 followed by the Protestant Missionaries in 1913 and Catholic in 1937. They encountered a community with a unique culture that had been preserved, but also had experienced internal discord between villages. They established security at the price of usurping local power. Like in the rest of Indonesia, this colonialism persisted until 1947 when Indonesia, including Tana Toraja succeeded in gaining independence.

Many have analyzed the changes that have taken place in the highland since the arrival of the Dutch and the emergence of Indonesian nation state have effected transformation up in Toraja (Adams 2003; Adams 1988; Adams 1995; Crystal 1971; Volkman 1985; Volkman 1984). Conversion to Christianity has taken place massively. During the time of my fieldwork, however, the theme of 'the feeling of loss' and the long for the revival of their tradition were aired suggesting to return to the ancestral practices that give active roles to the ancestors.

Based on genealogical records, the first evidence of Aluk To Dolo was found in the 6th century or even prior to that. The autochthonous religion of the Torajans has a myth of creation and provides a unified vision of the world. It also focuses on ancestor worship. Elaborate mortuary rituals are performed to assist the spirit of deceased parents to go to the land of souls called *Puya*, where they ascend to heaven to become gods (*to membali puang*). As gods, they become revered ancestors who can intercede for the living. Despite the official protection of Aluk To Dolo by the Indonesian government and inclusion in the sect of Hinduism in 1969, only 5% of the inhabitants of Tana Toraja currently profess to adhere to Aluk To Dolo. However, numerous Aluk To Dolo values still permeate Torajan society, for instance in beliefs about illness and child rearing.

Protestant Dutch Missionaries under the leadership of Van de Loosdrecht (Bigalke 2005) arrived in Toraja in 1913 and were met with resistance. The murder of Van de Loosdrecht in 1917 made him ultimately a hero among Protestants. Catholic Missionaries followed in 1937. Both initiated educational programs as a way to seek favor with the population and to make the new religions palatable. Today while Indonesia at large is predominantly Moslem, about 80% of the Torajans are Christians. Perhaps this can be attributed to the fact that both Aluk To Dolo and Christian religions are extremely structured and concerned with cosmic and social order. Where Christians have adopted local religious elements and placed them side by side to their own practices, syncretism is in the making.

In many places in the world, traditional religious practices and rituals are disappearing. In Toraja, however, especially its mortuary rituals are very much alive in Christian practices.

In the beginning, the process of acceptance was slow. In fact, it has taken decades to negotiate which practices of the local belief system are acceptable to Christians, and a degree of flexibility has characterized these negotiations. For instance, the Catholics interpret the ascending roof line of the tongkonan as pointing to God the Almighty in the center of the firmament while originally half of this iconic image reflects the enfolding sky, femaleness, fertility, and the other half the rice barn, maleness and war (Sandarupa 2007). This negotiation has led to syncretism as well. The Christians, however, have expected to do deeper than that by focusing on the practice of inculturation.

In relation to change in the use of ritual speech parallelism, the Regulation baptizes the old practices, where the Christians have been busy with metapragmatic business of how to use parallelism in a new context. First, Christian religion has received the local tradition as long as it is revised and purified. Words associated with local deities and ancestors are crossed out and replaced with Christian names and Gods, which means the dislocation of power of the ancestors and is expanded to Christian kinship such as Abraham (Bigalke). In Christian ritual performances, badong and retteng rituals continued to be practiced, but the name and references are no longer to ancestors and local deities but to Christian Gods. Secondly, change also occurs in the adoption of new values and norms that social actors bring to the interactive activity of social organization, as we will see in the performances below. As we will see, ritual performances often fail when speakers brought these divergent norms and values into interactive activity of ritual action.

Some further changes occurred when Indonesia obtained its independence. With the adoption of Panca Sila as the ideology of the state, Aluk To Dolo adherents have further complication. In general, others' observation of some process of aestheticization of other local cultures elsewhere by participating in a national culture (Acciaioli 1985) can also be applied to Torajan ritual performance.

2.2 Previous study of badong

Like many other ritual speeches in eastern Indonesia (Fox 1988; Keane 1997; Kuipers 1990) Torajan ritual speech is an elementary form of poetry whose basic structural unit is couplet (Coville 1988; Fox 1988; Keane 1997; Kuipers 1990; Veen 1965; Veen 1966; Zerner and Volkman 1988). Torajan couplets are characterized by

parallelism that is found around the world (See Fox 1988). Torajans consider couplets as the central authoritative texts, which are the privilege of certain ritual priests (tomina, tomenani, toburake). What others know are only fractions of it.

The badong ritual has historically attracted ethnographers, travelers, tourists, and missionaries alike. Previous researchers have approached the complex ritual in one of its aspects and from a certain perspective. Some have a general explanation of the relation between badong and elaborate death rituals (Koubi 1982; Nooy-Palm 1979; Nooy-Palm 1986; Wilcox 1989 [1949]). Others such as Kaudern and Holt have focused on non-verbal aspects such as performers (males and females), formation of a circle, dance movements and context (Holt 1938; Kaudern 1929).

In Kaudern's discussion of games and dances in Central Celebes (the former name of Sulawesi) between 1912 and 1920, which he defined as Paloe Toradja, Koro Toradja, Poso Toradja, and Saadang Toradja, he included the *ma'badong* dance performed by males and females. Kaudern drew on Nobe's work, a Dutch official, who had actually observed the performance. Holt discussed some aspects of this ritual, such as the formation of a circle in the performance of the badong, dance movements and context.

Recently, Rappaport (1997) has seen badong as text and music texture focusing on the latter. An excellent discussion of this topic in relation to music can be found in Rappaport's paper entitled *Ritual, Music and Christianization in the Toraja Highlands, Sulawesi* (2004) and in her book that includes samples of badong performances from different regions in Toraja (Rappaport 2009).

It is van der Veen, the Dutch linguist, who makes documentation on the decontextualized badong text and defines it as 'the chant for the deceased' (1966), which became the title of his collection. He devotes an entire volume to the collection of badong ritual texts based on the deceased's rank, together with their annotations. He appears to be interested in textual content, which is characteristic of missionaries' work during that period. This is not surprising because missionaries wanted to know the locals' perspective about life after death. As van der Veen said, "there are two themes that can be discerned in the badong: the expression of grief for the death of the deceased, and the veneration of the dead person (van der Veen 1966, 3).

With these previous researches on badong we have come to know some aspects of it i.e. the music and the content of textual lines of badong. The present article is more comprehensive in that it considers the dialectic interplay between this denotational aspect and interactional text which will lead us to have a better understanding of the dynamic interplay forces the social actors bring to performance.

It should be mentioned briefly that badong performance has undergone a complex change. As has been said above, the local cultural element can be integrated into Christian practice as long as it has undergone some kind of purification. What has been removed from the traditional badong performance is its power to present vividly the coming into being of the dead person and to send the spirit back to heaven. As such badong has been separated from the power of ancestral spirit.

The crucial aspect of badong still defended is its social function. The textual lines are still held as indicative of rank. In performance, attention has to be paid to the correct use of parallel lines that fit the rank of the dead person. The lines *inang lain ke to lain/inang senga' ke to senga'* //exceptional is this man [woman] can only be sung to describe the rank of high class (puang, ma'dika, parengnge').

So badong continues to be performed in the funeral ritual but it is only a portion, not a complete one as was used to be, performed in front of the guest house - *lantang karampoan* to welcome arriving guests during the day. One can also see a longer performance at night time but again it will not be a complete one performed the whole night till morning.

Despite the fact that it has been reduced to art, the Torajans still strictly observe the taboo of performing badong outside the context of death ritual. While other ritual performance can be done outside of ritual contexts, badong is strongly associated with death ritual. Considering the fact that funeral ritual has become the Torajan identity, once Jakarta invited Torajan badong performers to do the performance there. Such invitation, however, was totally rejected even though it has been considered as art. In other words, badong is still strongly tied to the context of death ritual performance.

3. Foundations of language in sociopolitical and cultural contexts

In this article the writer applies a set of linguistic tools in novel ways to analyze not just the freshly composed poetic text but also what the performers do with the text to achieve their sociopolitical goals. These strategies include a) the ethnography of speaking (Bauman 1984 [1977]; Rappaport 2009), in particular the display of competence in performance b) conversation and discourse analysis (Coulthard 1985; Levinson 1983) c) literary studies (Bakhtin 1981 [1935]) and analysis of poetic forms such as multiple layers of parallelism, repetition, and figurative speech (Jakobson 1960) d) semiotic analysis of indexicality that functions to connect text with context (Jakobson 1960; Peirce 1940[1955]; Silverstein 1976). The first three show us the pattern of ritual speech parallelism in use, and the semiotic analysis provides the tool to connect this pattern with other

aspect of Torajan culture i.e. poetics and social form, poetics and politics.

3.1 Performance

Some have approached ritual (and ritual speech parallelism) from semantic or denotational point of view. For some time, the dominant approach has been semantic, focusing on the efficacy of symbols (Geertz 1973a; Geertz 1973b). Such approach has been criticized because it overemphasizes rules, maps, and meaning in analyzing rituals (Bourdieu 1977 [1972]; Bourdieu 1991). Symbolic forms such as words and rituals do not render themselves intelligible; moreover, social actors do not always share the meanings of these symbols. In Silverstein's words, the approach has been reduced to denotational aspect of ritual (speech parallelism) analogous to Saussurean langue (Silverstein 1984; Silverstein 1998; Silverstein 1976).

The article takes a different stance by focusing on performance of poetry. Such stance requires a different methodology that allows an observer to document and scrutinize the elaboration of poetic textual signs or ritual speech parallelism in use and how through dialogic interaction meanings are constructed together by interactants that aim to reconstruct social cohesion and to take power.

One source is the ethnography of speaking that focuses on speech event and contextualization of meaning in performance. Performance consists 'in the assumption of responsibility to an audience for a display of communicative competence' (Bauman 1984 [1977]). Ritual performance takes place in a specific time and setting. In it interaction, practice (politics) and verbal art – oral poetics come together. It shows its structural organization, which appears in roles as an ordered system. It is an event, a collection of activities not just the enactment of a pre-existing script or text. It is a fashioning of social reality as well. Ritual in this sense focuses on the aspect of performativity (Austin 1962; Tambiah 1985).

The 'responsibility' points toward the agency aspect of meaning (Hill 1993). This, of course, can be traced back to Peircean philosophical pragmatics who states that sign's relation to object is merely a 'standing for' relation (Peirce 1940[1955]). Consequently, it raises a profound issue of representation. As Hanks points out if there exists rupture that divides meaningful forms and objects stood for, how can they ever be connected and reconnected again (Hanks 1996). In other words the locus of 'expressive force and meaningfulness' is no longer in sign as assumed by Saussure (Saussure 1966 [1959]) but in evidence of agents' shared knowledge. It is in such real use of poetic signs in ritual context that meaning becomes destabilized.

Social actors involved in ritual context have the potential to resist and manipulate structural constraints, and sometimes to marshal enough creative power to transform their relations within the structure (Giddens 1982; Giddens 1990 [1979]; Peirce 1940[1955]). As a whole the outcome of performance is never assured because performance itself may put 'conventional senses of signs at multiple risks' (Keane 1997; Sahlin 1985). Thus, the use of ritual speech parallelism becomes a site of contestation.

3.2 Fragility of ritual

In such situation, the performance of ritual and ritual speech parallelism is fragile and therefore, open to two possibilities. Either a performance is a success or failure. In discussing the Merina circumcision ceremony in Madagascar, Bloch argues that the "highly formalized language" and the "rigidly prescribed behavior in dance movements" order the actions and relationships between participants. This rigidity leaves no space for the structure of role relations and authority to be challenged except by the total refusal to use the accepted form or the total refusal of all political conventions, since "you cannot argue with a song" (ibid. 37). Numerous authors have provided evidence against Bloch's thesis (Bloch 1975; Parkin 1984; Schieffelin 1985; Werbner 1977).

For one thing, Bloch recognizes the possibility of ritual failure. This is something not unusual. As Geertz noticed about Javanese rituals (Geertz 1973), the badong as a ritual exhibits also a degree of fragility, a fact that has not been previously stressed. This fragility expresses itself in events such as described below where a political ambition guided the eventual leader and the ritual is interrupted. The complex dynamics underlying Torajan funeral rituals in general and the badong in particular, are not always obvious to the casual and even academic observer.

The wellknown Torajan anthropologist, Waterson has been informed of the number of cases that may contribute to the failure of attending a house ceremony because of the refusal of a gift like a pig by the core member of the family, thus invalidate membership to such house (Waterson 1995).

Most contemporary linguistic anthropologists agree that ritual speech does not imprison the participants. In addition to giving a description of successful badong performance, the writer also presents an additional layer of conflict in badong performance that becomes manifest between members of the community.

My observations of badongs support the idea that ritual speech empowers participants to challenge authority. Behind the scenes a struggle may be taking place between family members about what is gained for instance by the person who can provide the buffaloes, and the less affluent members of the family.

3.3 Parallelism

Poetic elements such as parallelism characterizes all human verbal interaction including the badong performance that employ a special kind of parallelism i.e. repetition with variation. Basic to the idea of

parallelism is the notion of multifunctionality of language use. In his effort to characterize a total linguistic theory, Jakobson (1960) proposed his functional model of speech act and poetic function. In it he argues the importance of poetic function which 'projects the principle of equivalence from the axis of selection into the axis of combination'. What in Saussure exists only in virtual realm (Saussure 1966 [1959]) becomes transformed into textual realm. This poetic function leads to parallelism as a specific example. Parallelism is 'identification and differentiation' or 'repetition with variations . . . any form of parallelism is an apportionment of invariants and variables' (Jakobson 1966). In general, the formal style of this oral tradition is the use of parallelism.

As Boas said a long time ago, "the investigation of primitive narrative as we as poetry proves that repetition, particularly rhythmic repetition is a fundamental trait" (Boas 1925; Finnegan 1969; Tannen 1989). One form of repetition is parallelism (Jakobson 1960), and it is for this reason that Jakobson defines it as 'the recurrent returns' or 'repetition with patterned variation'.

Repetition is central to the establishment of a semiotic system because it leads us to judgments of identity and difference which are the basis of classification (Brown 2001). Repetition is manifested in various forms, but what interests me here is the verbal repetition in performance spoken by two different categories of speaker as a semiotic device accomplishing something.

The notion of ritual speech parallelism has inspired research in many parts of Indonesia and the world. In Indonesia some works have focused on the study of parallelism emphasizing semantic aspect equivalent to Saussurean langue (Fox 1988; Sandarupa 1989; Zerner and Volkman 1988).

Others (Atkinson 1992.; Bowen 1991; Errington 1988; Keane 1997; Kuipers 1990). have taken another path by focusing on its use, saturated with pragmatic value according to the subject's interests. Thus, when a ritual actor quotes an ancestral parallelism in a specific context for a certain purpose, he chooses that parallelism for his own pragmatic interests.

Finally, there have been a number of publications on the interaction between poetics and politics (Abu-Lughod 1988.; Brenneis and Myers 1984; Caton 1990). Duranti has indicated how agency is exercised through language employing some features of grammar such as ergative markers, transitive and intransitive verbs (Duranti 1994).

3.4 Verbal interaction in poetry

It is generally known that one crucial aspect in which drama is different from poetry is in its emphasis on verbal interaction. However, the claim of this article is that contrary to this general idea, it is found that Torajan poetry has a structure and some qualities of conversation such as 'exchange, turn taking, adjacency pair, insertions, and sequences (Levinson 1983). In addition, the social aspect, in Goodwin's words, 'the social organization, a form of ritual action constituted through the differentiated but collaborative work of multiple participants' (Goodwin 1996; Goodwin and Goodwin 2004) becomes crucial. In order to maintain the sense of what is happening, participants simultaneously attend to a range of different types of organization such as adjacency pairs (Coulthard 1985), sentential grammar, and participant framework (Goffman 1981). Goodwin asserts that 'the notion of grammar is not restricted to the sentential grammar (rules, structures, and procedures) but also encompasses structures providing for the organization of the endogenous activity system within which strips of talk are embedded' (Goodwin 1996:331).

In this approach, *badong* chant is viewed as a process, a linear ongoing event, which moves from unit to unit with some insertion sequences. It is through such verbal interaction that social actors construct and negotiate their relationship through what they say. In this ritual, the exchange that takes place between social actors is a fixed order of moves. As Sinclair and Coulthard says there are three basic moves in verbal interaction, Initiation (I), Response (R), the Follow-up (F) abbreviated to IRF (Sinclair and Coulthard 1975). This is applied in understanding the *badong* with the tropic structure I-R with no F. As a process, the acts performed by social actors are related and the occurring pattern is the use of pairs of lines known as adjacency pairs whose features are as follows: different speakers produce two utterances, and they are ordered. The first utterance belongs to the class of first pair parts, and the second to the second pair parts.

Turn-taking is the management of cooperation in rituals in which one person speaks and another follows. The ritual leader has the right to speak first and then responded by the responsorial group. Sequences occur in times and moves from parallel unit to another unit. Insertion is prescribed.

3.4 Tropic structure as conversation

In addition to gender-encoded parallelism, another distinctive feature of this ritual is its conversation mode. An exchange occurs between the ritual leader who composes the line (M) and responsorial group who repeats the line creating the first adjacency pair (M') and continued with the second line (F) by the ritual leader and repeated by the responsorial group (F') creating double parallelism.

As performance is unfolding, the relations among social actors appear as follows. The *badong* leader, on the one side, becomes *to mantolo' bating*, 'the skewer of lines' and the responsorial groups *to ma'badong*.^{ix} The

expression *to mantolo' bating* [I] means the person who arranges lines into units in which each unit is contiguously related one to another.

On the other side is the responsorial group called *to ma'badong*. This expression refers to co-performers who function as a responsorial group [R] in a performance event. As a whole it means 'people who perform badong'. Thus the first adjacency pair is *to mantolo' bating*, 'the person who skewers the lines' [I] and *to ma'badong*, 'persons who chants the badong lines' [R]. In other words, the ritual leader, Initiation [I], composes a line and offers it to co-performers, Response [R] to chant the line. The same thing is repeated in the next pair of parallel lines. This ritual activities portrays the tropic structure that can be shown as follows:

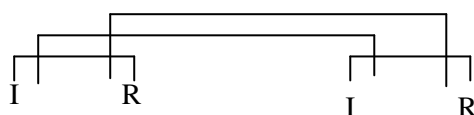


Figure 1: Tropic Structure of badong ritual

This tropic structure is further reproduced at the lower level when interaction takes place between the divided co-performers.

For successful performance, the preferred pair is, of course, command–conform, in which the ritual leader's order to chant the line is followed by co-performers. It indicates the relation between ritual leader [I] who, by announcing the line, is in the position of implicitly commanding the plurality of co-performers [R]'s side, to conform to [I]'s command to repeat the line and sing it to a certain melody (*badong*) in accordance with certain movements of hand and feet, and body (*ondo*). In short, within this chant performance, there is a hierarchical relation between [I] who is framing the total performance and [R] who must conform to what the ritual leader implicitly command.

3.5 Semiotic Indexicality

The article shows the usefulness of the concept semiotic indexicality in understanding badong ritual performance. It answers the question of a comprehensive view of ritual speech parallelism. As Silverstein suggests an analyst needs to analyze the linguistic features of ritual speech parallelism from the functional perspective (denotational text of what is being said) and relate it context (interaxial text of what is really happening) through the mediation of semiotic indexicality.

The terms index and indexicality come from Peirce. In talking about how sign is related to object through the ground of representamen Peirce sees such relations in three ways. When a sign is related to an object based on the idea of similarity it is called icon. If it is on existential, contiguity or causal relation then it is index. If it is on convention then it is symbol (Peirce 1940[1955]).

Semiotic analysis of indexicality provides the tool to connect the patterns of ritual speech use with other aspects of Torajan culture. Index then is one of the important bases to connect meaningful form and context. Later Silverstein uses indexicality as the level of mediating denotational text and interactional text (Silverstein 1984; Silverstein 1998; Silverstein 1976; Silverstein 1993).

He further develops the notion of index that refers to two aspects of semiotic relations: 1) appropriateness (indexical presupposition), where the oral text relates to features of its context by virtue of their co-presence and 2) creativity (indexical entailment), where the use of oral text functions to create the aspects of reality it indexes (id; see also Hanks 1992).

It is through a metapragmatic act that text is connected to context. In this case social actors use pragmatic signs that connect the conceptual realm expressed through semantic role of agentivity with context.

Applied to the context of ritual speech parallelism, Silverstein uses the term metapragmatics to refer to both explicit and implicit metatalk, that is, the talk about the talk (Silverstein 1993). Social actors use metapragmatic capacity discursively and strategically to transform their social relations. A strategic use of implicit metatalk and collaboration in ritual as verbal shorthand keeps the flow of chant without breaking the frame. Agents can evaluate and explain their use of speech acts and those of others, including the rationalizations behind them. This metapragmatic capacity allows social actors to make evaluations and alter their future action. A metapragmatic description thus provides us (social actors and analysts) with empirical evidence of what might be happening at the moment of speaking in any ritual performance.

4. Data and Methodology

4.1 The problematic performance

The *badong* ritual to be described here is a failed and disrupted performance. The problematic performance took place in June 1996. It was voluntarily performed by people who lived in the same village as the dead person

(badong pa'tondokan). It took place on the second night of the seven-night funeral ritual of an old lady in Mengkendek village. As the performance was unfolding, the number of performers increased to between 50 and 60 persons. However, the trouble began when they arrived at chanting the lines that describes her work activities (life in this world), which touches on her rank (segment 1 below).

During the performance that was conducted by the ritual leader Pong Jen, another person, Pong Lua', suddenly challenged him and took over the leadership.^x The following three segments capture the critical moments that render this performance problematic.

Segment 1, under the leadership of Pong Jen:

Pong Jen : *te mai bamba balo'na* 'This spread area [of land] as the source of riches'

Co-performers : *te - ma - i bam - ba - ba - lo ' - na*

Parallel line:

Pong Jen : *pessulunan kumuku'na* 'The entrance [of land] where she worked hard'

Co-performers : *pes-su-lun-an ku-mu-ku'-na*

Segment 2: Pong Lua' who was part of the performance from the beginning suddenly took up leadership and cited the following lines which were repeated by the co-performers:

Pong Lua' : *ia kami tu kami nna* 'it is us, it is us'

Co-performers : *ia - ka - mi - tu - ka - mi - nna*

Pong Lua' : *unnula' lindo na boji* 'who are following the face of this night'

Co-performers : *unn - u - la' - lin - do - na bo - ji*

While the chant was going on, another participant, seeing the awkward situation went to tell him not to continue and to respect the first leader. However, as the last line was chanted by co-performers, he continued with another line representing an even stronger challenge which was as follows:

Segment 3:

Pong Lua' : *pada londong te umbating* 'This [we] who are lamenting are of equal rooster'

Co-performers : *pa - da - lon - dong - te - um - bating*

He meant it, because, he entered the center and made various fight movements with his hands and feet (*massila'-sila'*), as an invitation to the appointed leader Pong Jen to fight. However, before any fighting took place, the performance was stopped and all the performers crowded to the center to prevent the fight.

5.1 The conflict of interpretation

The disrupted performance is part of a pattern in which events can go awry. After observing almost 200 badong performances in northern and southern Toraja, the writer has found that in approximately one in ten the badong performance fails. In general, the performance becomes problematic not because the lines are not good parallel lines or the number of syllables is wrong. Nor is it because their denotational meanings are disputed.

Rather, it is because the ritual leader composes a line that may offend a segment of the guests or the ritual leader 'honors' the deceased person and situates her in a higher rank than she is. In other words, problems arise mainly when the composed lines makes explicit 'the parameters of structure of ongoing event' such as deference indexes of speaker-hearer relations is incongruent with real situation. But more often because it is the difference in interpretation of the symbolic meaning of the parallel lines especially in a changing society such as Toraja. The clashes can be personal but often revolves around Christian and modern values vs traditional ones. The consequences of this deliberate or accidental 'faux pas' play out behind the scene and can range from a cessation of the ritual to chasing the performers away.

According to some informants, lines (1) to (2) of segment (1) are problematic and they become the source of conflict of interpretation.

1) [I] *te mai bamba balo' - na* 'This spread area [of land] as the source of riches'

D D door magic POSS

[R] *te - ma - i bam - ba - ba - lo ' - na*

2) [I] *pes - sulun - an k-um-uku' - na* 'The entrance [of land] where she worked hard'

PREF push into SUF whetstone POSS

[R] *pes-su-lun-an ku-mu-ku'-na*

The conflict centers on the interpretation of some expressions such as *bamba balo'na* and *pessulunan kumuku'na*. Note in line 1) the use of referential index *te*, 'this' and *mai*, 'movement towards speaker'. These referential indexes indicate her land perceived as flowing toward the speaker. The word *bamba* is door, *balo'* is amulet.^{xi} The gate represents the promise of her riches. It also refers to the funeral ritual right derived from where she lives, her estate, the community, and her guests with their gifts flowing into the area on the reception day.

Line 2 contains the word *pessulunan*, which has the root *sulun*, 'to put into', and *pe - an* as a circumfix. The word *pessulunan* is the pushing together and heaping up of her whetstone. We find the possessive *-na/* in both

lines as the subordinate clause: her working whetstone.

The next expression is *kumuku'na*, a beautiful symbol and doubly derived form. The root is *kuku'*, which is the whetstone; the use of the infix /-um-/ in *kumuku'* means 'to use the whetstone'. This expression shows her to be a person who works hard by bending down, similar to the person who sharpens her knife. So we find the parallel meaning between the two lines where *bamba* (door) is *pessulunan* (entering into), and *balo'* (amulet) is *kumuku* (using the whetstone). Here, *kumuku'* becomes the magical equivalent of an amulet in the hand of someone successful, so the whetstone becomes like an amulet of riches.

Denotationally speaking, Pong Jen's composition claims that her riches and the elaborate funeral ritual come from the value of work hard. He asserts that his lines are perfectly good. He has created the two parallel lines that fit the description of the dead person's rank as middle class. As a "classificatory" son-in-law, he knows that the expense of the sacrificed pigs and buffaloes during the funeral is borne by her children's hard work, including his own. What he says is consistent with what he has done: he works hard to be able to run a small restaurant (*warung*). He says that every single day of the week, he and his son go to the nearby town of Ma'kale to buy palm wine and meat to cook and sell. He is able to reconstruct his *tongkonan* house using the money he and his wife obtain from this small business. In short, the value of hard work shapes his composition and the symbolic interpretation of the lines in the performance.

For Pong Jen, the two lines describes the family's successful life by highly valuing 'work', a value of actual life brought in by modernity and Christianity almost a century ago. As he said, 'realistically the only way to defend one's social rank is to work hard. Only by working hard can someone be able to stage an elaborate ritual'.

Pong Lua', however, holds a totally different view about the symbolic signification of the lines. He and the co-performers feel that the focus of these lines paint the dead woman as a hard working one, rather than one of noble descent. He is of the opinion that those lines are insulting to the whole family group. He says such construction of lines downgrades her social rank to that of an ordinary person (*tana' karurung*). As he claims, and others supported, the dead lady belongs to an important class. In the lines that follows, he even uses the expression 'face of the night' as an allusion to the 'face of moon used to refer to noble class status (see below). Thus for Pong Lua', the value attached to the lines is still informed by the tradition in which, in former times, high class people control the use of land, and they do not need to work, because of the availability of individuals and slaves who work for them.^{xiii}

5.2 The poetry of taking power

In this part the writer uses existing linguistic tools in novel ways to demonstrate how the performance of the badong brought about the change in leadership.

Crucial in the transfer of power is the employment of distinctive conventionalized communicative means to key the performance. The main keys are cleft-construction, adjacency pairs and implicit metatalk, parallelism and repetition and, finally figurative language. These traditional elements are a *sine qua non* for any leader's effectiveness.

5.2.1 Cleft-construction and pragmatic aspect

In advancing his challenge, the speaker strategically selected particularly powerful parallel lines with peculiar characteristics, a cleft-construction. A cleft-utterance is a construction that has two parts, 'it' as its subject and what appears to be a relative clause at the end (McCawley 1998[1988]). Let us look at the segments of text used to challenge the initial ritual leader:

- 3) [I] *ia kami tu kami - nna* 'it is we, it is we'
 3SG 1PL EXC D 1PL EXC MDL/CF
 [R] *ia - ka - mi - tu - ka - mi - nna*
- 4) [I] *unn - ula' lindo - na bongi* 'who are following the face of this night'
 PREF snake face POSS night
 [R] *unn - u - la' - lin - do - na bo - ŋi*

Syntactically, lines 3 and 4 above constitute a single construction *ia kami tu kaminna unnula' lindona bongi*, 'it is we, it is we who are following the face of night'. This cleft-utterance fulfills the function of 'focusing' a constituent of the corresponding simpler utterance *kami unnula' lindona bongi*, which means 'we are following the face of night'. This is an answer to an implicit question *inda unnula' lindona boŋi?*, 'who are following the face of the night?'

In this cleft-utterance, the focus of information is on the complex agentive subject. It is accomplished by repeating the phrase [*ia kami*][*tu kaminna*], which is then followed by an actor focus construction with the restrictive relative clause as modifier. This takes the whole proposition and makes it a modifier of the presupposed entity. The restrictive clause is *unnula' lindona bongi*, 'who are following the face of this night'. Thus, the whole meaning is 'it is we - exclusive who are following the face of the night'. This is a peculiar way

of constructing a cleft-construction, where the subject of the simpler sentence is repeated twice.

Line 3, *ia kami tu kaminna*, consists of a repeated free morpheme of pronoun and other shifter such as the deictic *tu*, and the communicative epistemic modality */-na/*. The repetition of pronouns ‘we – exclusive’ is for the purpose of emphasis. The repeated ‘we - exclusive’ is followed by the epistemic marker */-nna/* that tells us the modality of the proposition, which Givón calls the communicative epistemic modality (Givón 1995). It is a surprising assertion, a contrastive assertion, whose meaning is not what you expect. The speaker asserted the truth of the proposition he talked about.

Line 4 uses an actor focus construction marked by the use of the prefix */uN-/* to the noun *ula*, ‘snake’, and the creation of the transitive verb meaning ‘to follow’. The subject referent has been implied in the previous line *kami*, ‘we - exclusive’. The *nomen patientis* is *lindona bongi*, which literally means ‘the face of the night’. The word *lindo* means ‘face’, and */-na/* is the suffix possessive that indicates the part - whole relation with reference to *bongi*, ‘night’.

The presence of a number of linguistic markers such as deictics and constituent focus informs us that this is a pragmatically marked structure. Pragmatic aspects include the use of shifters such as the pronouns *kami*, ‘we - exclusive’, and the deictic *tu*, ‘that near the addressee’ or ‘far from the speaker and addressee’. The focus is doubly emphasized. Unlike ordinary cleft-construction, in which a subject is mentioned only once, the agentive subject in this particular construction is repeated twice.

This use of pragmatic markers has contributed to the ambiguity of the whole utterance, and it is precisely this ambiguity that makes it a very effective political speech.

5.2.2 Speech act, an instance of ambiguity

In carrying out his speech act, the challenging ritual leader has an intention: being recognized as the leader. Let us now look at the data from the speech act analysis. I will show how from the perspective of performative analysis uncertainties arise. Interactionally, the purpose of the utterances is to express social relations and personal attitudes, establish common ground and point of view, and negotiate role relationships. In order for this to happen, there is a need for cooperative illocutionary acts, conditions that are not always fulfilled.

Following Hancher, I will assume that from the point of view of performative analysis, Pong Lua’s utterances contained an amalgamation of illocutionary forces, a combination of commissive and directive (Hancher 1979). The speaker commits himself to some future course of action. Since the line does not contain an explicit performative verb, the illocutionary acts could be interpreted as containing degrees of commitment that varies from undertaking, to promising, to guaranteeing, that if they support him, the future leadership will be better. These illocutionary acts are not just unilateral; they require some response from the recipients, i.e. original leader Pong Jen and the co-performers, also in the form of illocutionary contributions. With regards to the co-performers, the same creative line can subserve other illocutionary forces, for instance directives to get the recipients to do something. In this case, since the line does not have an explicit performative verb, we can assume that the rival leader’s offering of a line to be chanted can be interpreted by his co-performers either as a weak attempt, such as a suggestion, or as a strong attempt, such as a request, order or command, that the co-performers repeat and chant the line. What he does is to try to make the singing group represent his own category of people, instead of the category of people that the previous leader represents.

Even though he successfully achieves an illocutionary force, there is still a moment of uncertainty because of what Gould calls ‘the illocutionary suspension, or perlocutionary delay, of the utterances’ (Gould 1995) on addressees, including the previous leader and the co-performers. The problem here is that by successfully performing the illocutionary acts of undertaking, challenging, and commanding, it is not immediately obvious why the addressees react cooperatively. It is temporarily uncertain which perlocutionary effects would result, e.g. acceptance, conviction, or outrage.

By virtue of repeating and chanting the line, the co-performers ratify and give recognition to the challenger as the new leader. The propositional content of denotational textuality becomes ‘we follow you as the leader of the group standing here’. In other words, by getting an illocutionary acceptance from the co-performers, new leader Pong Lua’ and co-performers are successful in creating a cooperative illocutionary act, which Hancher calls a ‘collective speech act’, and together they formally create the ritual challenge. The whole group, using the first person pronoun we – exclusive, repeat and chant the line, which means ratification and an acknowledgement of the leadership, and further means that the challenging leader gains full support from his co-present co-performers. What is happening is that the ‘we co-performers are following you as the leader’ further validates the transformation of social relationship from equal co-performers to hierarchical relations between the leader and co-performers.

For the success of the ritual challenge to be complete, the initial leader has to accept his exclusion from leadership as the performance goes on. This means he has to recognize the new leader, and, as the performance continues, he has to accept the fact that his role is badong taker and not giver (leader). The speaker’s desired perlocutionary effect is the chanters’ acceptance and response, as signified by their repeating and chanting his

lines.

5.2.3 Deft Interactional Structure: the play on duplex signs and ambiguity

What we have seen above is that as the performance is unfolding, further ambiguity arose, especially when the metaphor for leader, *lindona bongi*, is used.

Let us now pursue further ambiguity that arises from the repetition of a single continuous form of lines 3 and 4. When taken as a whole spoken by Pong Lua', and then repeated by the co-performers, the line becomes *ia kami tu kaminna unnula' lindona bongi*, 'it is we, it is we who are following the face of night'; the two lines become parallel.^{xiii} The structure of tropic relations is parallel since they both set up the same ambiguity, i.e., who is the leader?

What contributes to the ambiguity of the line is the metaphorical expression *lindona bongi*, 'face of night'.^{xiv} The metaphor *lindona bongi*, 'face of the night', refers ambiguously to its referent 'leader', because it does not specify which one. The whole line provides a double reading by evoking its paradigmatic opposed line. In the first reading, 'we-exclusive are following the leader', where the literal reading is that the old leader is the leader, and that we are following him.

In the second reading, however, the fact that the new person has uttered it and the others are following means that leadership has changed. Thus when the new leader composes the line, the whole meaning of it is 'we-exclusive are following the leader'. But he who is saying this is not following the old leader, because he is taking the role of a leader and wants the chanters to follow him. It is very subtle; it is a deft interactional structure or a very accomplished *halus* structure.

Thus by [I]'s saying 'we are following the leader', he is not following the leader, and he does this by using implicit metatalk. In this case he has thereby created the ritual challenge and constructed himself as the 'face', while all the co-performers [R] who repeated the line became the body, the corporate group, and thus an image of society as the totality, in the symbolic face-body relation.

The whole utterance then, is a metapragmatic utterance. It is a description about what they are doing, that is, 'following the leader'. It is a metapragmatic utterance about what is happening, which is, of course, as shown by the performance itself, 'following the leader'.^{xv}

In short, the expression *lindona bongi* is a personification of the metaphor for the leader himself. The whole line, [I] and [R], can then be read as follows: 'we follow the face of night' where the face of night is the ritual leader.

Let me repeat the multiple layers of the typical parallelism that emerges from the performance and how they contribute to the uncertainty of ritual at this stage. The first parallel lines consist of line 3, uttered first by leader B [I] and then repeated by co-performers [R]. The same parallelism occurs in line 4. Thus taken together, we have two parallel lines. Taken as a whole it is actually a single cleft-construction: *ia kami tu kaminna unnula' lindona bongi*. But once this line is enacted in performance, further complication arises. First, this single line has its implicit metatalk because of the ambiguous referent of 'leader'; in one line the expression 'the face of the night' refers to A, the original leader, and in the other, to B, the challenger. Second, once the whole line is finished being sung by the co-performers, the single line 'it is we, it is we who are following the face of the night' (referring to B) evoked its paradigmatic metatalk, 'it is we, we, who are *not* following the face of the night', referring to the challenged original leader A.

5.2.4 Collaboration creativity

Puang Lua's taking over the leadership could also be called an usurpation of power because in this event his ritual speech act accomplishes his goal to challenge the original leader.^{xvi}

Interestingly, the new leader carries the challenge out by following the conventional way of performing the ritual. Not only does he get co-performers to follow him as the new leader, but he also manages to sideline the original leader. He does it by using the pronoun we - exclusive and duplex sign.

The use of the deictic *tu* before we - exclusive after being ratified by the co-performers indexes 'the thing [chanters] near the addressee', and hence the we - exclusive - NEAR YOU (the original leader Pong Jen), which further reinforces such claim of exclusion. Thus, there is a mutual recognition here since the right to challenge implies an equality; hence, if challenge, then recognition.

The second line *unnula' lindona bongi*, 'we follow the leader', makes it much more explicit at two levels. As the *lindona bongi* is taken to be the metaphor for leader, by uttering the explicit line 'we follow the leader' in line 4, he and the co-performers are not following the leader. By not following the leader through their collaborative speech act of 'we follow the leader', together they construe and transform the challenger into the leader, thereby usurping the power of the original leader A. The challenger has constructed himself as the center, replacing the original leader.

For the successful transfer of power, cooperation and improvisation are necessary. By speaking up formally and publicly to original leader Pong Jen, Pong Lua' challenges and effects a number of transformations of social relations, namely between the new leader and the original leader, and between their respective constituents. This

culminates in the acceptance of the new leader (B) and the total support from the co-performers for him to be in charge of the next performance segment, replacing the former leader. This successful ritual challenge is the work of collaborative creativity.

5.2.5 Stronger challenge

- 5) [I] *pada londong te umbating*
equal rooster D lament
'This [we] who are lamenting are of equal rooster'
6) [R] *pa - da - lon - dong - te - um - bating*

Lines 5 and 6 are an even stronger challenge because in them, the challenger stated that they are on equal terms and both are equal leaders, indicated by the use of the word *pada*, 'equal', and that both of them are *londong*, 'rooster'. The use of the word *londong*, 'rooster', has intensified and increased the force of the previous challenge. In the Torajan culture, the term rooster is associated with the image of fight or war, called *rari*. The term in this challenge implies that they are equal and ready to fight when necessary, the way roosters fight. It constitutes one of the strongest challenges in ritual performance. B means it literally, because after announcing this line, he enters the center and makes various fight movements with his hands and feet (*massila'-sila'*) as an invitation to the original leader to fight. At this point the performance is stopped.

5.2.6 Beyond the ritual frame

5.2.6.1 The socio-political uncertainty

Despite the fact that there is a norm that demands people to stay in peace and forbids them to bring disagreements and fights into death ritual performance, the take over of leadership and the metapragmatic talk that surrounds the dispute about these lines happen in real ritual event. Such violation of ritual norm is understood, semiotically speaking, as being shaped by and at the same time indexes the broader socio-political and cultural context.

The resultant power transfer has persisted over time showing the enduring power of the badong in contesting power relations. This can be visible in the specific badong organization in which the two leaders are involved.

Prior to the performance some rivalry has already existed between the appointed and challenging ritual leader; this is known in the community. The badong ritual brings this split to the surface.

Pong Jen comes from a small village in Sangngalla' from a moderately well-off family. He marries Pong Lua's first cousin on Pong Lua's father's side, so they are "classificatory" brothers-in-law. After Pong Jen's marriage, the couple first moves to the remote village of Sillanan, where his wife's family members, and Pong Lua' live. It is here that Pong Jen becomes a member of the *badong* group led by his wife's family member, Ambe' Benggo.

In the 1980's new shops at the market place of the neighboring village Mebali, are built by the government, and Pong Jen seeks a renter's permit for a small *warung* (foodstall). In the long run, his *warung* became known for the special way he provides local food (pa'piong) and palm wine (tuak). People come from as far away as the towns of Ma'kale and Rantepao.

He and his wife then move to Mebali. Occasionally, they return to his wife's natal village of Sillanan, located at the foot of the mountain some kilometers away, where Pong Lua' continues to live as a farmer. In addition to running a small *warung*, Pong Jen is also an active member in the Protestant church, and because of his talent for composing parallel lines, he is often invited to be a master of ceremony (*protokol*) in rituals. Pong Lua', on the other hand, continues to live in Sillanan, closer to the leader of their *badong* organization.

A series of events have produced tension among members of *Pa'badong Sillanan*, here called *Sillanan Badong Organization* (SBO), well-known across Toraja. The tension revolves around the leadership of the SBO. This becomes even more visible when the authoritative leader Ambe' Benggo died in 1993. Under his leadership, SBO has grown and becomes well known, because, as people note, it stands for the preservation of the traditional *badongs*. Under the influence of Christianity and modernity other organizations have begun to deviate from this ideal. Before he died at the age of 75, Ambe' Benggo has delegated authority to potential individuals for leading occasional performances at various places. While Ambe' Benggo was ailing, three persons are interchangeably assigned to lead, Pong Jen, Pong Lua' and another person, Pong Ka'ka'. The latter lives in two different places.

Before long, this practice develops into an implicit competition. Although each leader tells members of the performers troupe about the weaknesses of one or both of the other leaders, apparently performances go on smoothly. After three years of leadership uncertainty, a complication emerges. As I observed, membership in the organization have grown larger, as has dissatisfaction with its financial matters. During the time of my study, there are no written documents recording the list of members, performances, or the amount of money received from donations for various performances.

Instead, much talk flows around about the misuse of money. As Pong Jen reveals to me, he is suspicious about the possibility of corruption extending back to the time when the authoritative leader is ailing. The other

two leaders say the same thing but without a direct accusation. After each performance, the organization usually obtains some donation from the organizers of the death ritual for whom they performed. All of this is usually controlled by the leader.

However, some troupe members allude to the fact that they do not receive what they expect from their ritual leaders. As usual, criticism against one another is not direct, but is conveyed to third-party members and then further relayed. Of course, the sender when confronted, could then immediately deny that he has spread the rumor.

Of the three persons, Pong Jen claims that no-one could compete with him. Another member told me that among the three, he is the most expert person on this ritual. As he said, Pong Jen knows the *ondo* very well and the quality of his voice (*oninna*) is pleasant to listen to (*mammi' dirangngi*). Moreover, his verbal skill surpasses that of the other two. "Unfortunately," says this man, "Pong Jen is not native to the village where the organization exists, and so his composition is not as well founded sometimes." On another occasion, when I ask the well-known ritual singer Tato' Dena' and the young *tomina* (ritual specialist) Marten, they both agree emphatically that Pong Jen is sometimes rude in his composition.

Pong Jen considers this rudeness an asset; he says he is expert on *retteng* (poetic dueling). He is known as sharp in using the lines to criticize his adversaries in public, which people do not like. But he adds that he wants to be like a *gora-gora tongkon*, 'sitting throat'. He acknowledges that the burden of the *badong* ritual leader is a heavy responsibility (*passanan magasa*). One of the most difficult aspects is to compose lines that really fit the rank of the dead person.^{xvii}

Others, including Pong Lua' criticizes Pong Jen when he makes a big mistake in a performance at Leatung, Patua', his own village. As ritual leader Pong Jen intentionally composes the lines higher than the rank of the dead person and his family members. Despite the fact that the family who organizes the funeral ritual is of low class (commoners), he composes lines that fit high middle class rank. His evaluation is not based on social rank, according to Pong Lua', but on the elaborateness of the death ritual, in which a large number of pigs and buffaloes are sacrificed. The deceased's children have made a wide social network because of their jobs. This fact, a new situation, calls for this exception according to Pong Jen's reasoning. The high-class representative think that this is an incorrect performance because the words are not true words (*tangngia kada tongan*).

Pong Jen is also criticized because in another ritual event he has advised the children of the deceased to use symbols such as beadworks, red cloths and *krisses* (ceremonial knives) as decoration in front of the reception hall (*lantang karampoan*) where they receive guests. When someone protests such use of symbols, he advises the children to answer simply, 'this comes from pens and papers'. This answer has a deep implication, meaning the authority is no longer based on tradition. Instead, it is a novel construction of authority based on education.

Pong Lua' is a quiet person and apparently is very knowledgeable about tradition of the community in general, and the tradition of their *badong* organization in particular. Unlike Pong Jen, who is invited to Christian rituals Pong Lua' seems to concentrate on the knowledge pertaining to the preservation of their distinctive *badong* organization. Someone tells me that Pong Lua' has magic that he uses to protect the whole troupe when others place magic on them while they are performing. He is also sharp in his criticism and well known for his knowledge of poetic dueling.

In people's view, Pong Ka'ka' is the least expert among the three. In his speech he always talks with a high tone, and is a bit bombastic (*tibura'-bura'*). Another member says that in a performance in Awa', near Ma' kale, people throw stones at them because they are offended by the lines Pong Ka'ka' composes. According to the viewpoint of the organizer in Awa', Pong Ka'ka' makes a comparison between big waves on the sea with a big wave of people attending the ritual. It is an elaborate death ritual (*siampa' re'dena tasik* 'find a boiling water on sea, *kumaladanna bura-bura*, 'the coming up of foams'). However, the organizer think that these lines depicts him as being able to organize this big ritual because of the money he obtains from outside Toraja. As the organizer says, "I have been called *puang* since long time ago, so I am not 'new rich'."

The three would-be leaders have an equal chance to be chosen as the leader of this organization. As Pong Jen expresses it to me, "it would be good if they soon organize a meeting to elect a new leader. But the other two never accept his suggestion." As I find out later, Pong Lua' and Pong Ka'ka' collude to prevent Pong Jen from becoming the leader of SBO.

For several years after Ambe' Benggo's death, the SBO has no formal leader. There has long been a discussion about who would be the leader. From various sources, I learn that the organization is not in a rush to find a single leader because they continue to be invited to do the performances of death rituals in different villages. The sponsors of the death ritual usually contact one of the three ritual leaders, and whoever is contacted becomes the ritual leader for that particular performance. The chosen and invited leader constitutes a form of acknowledgement for the leader's authority. The three have equal competence. Becoming a leader in a particular performance means the control of payment obtained from organizers and its distribution to members.

After the event the SBO continues to split without any single leader. Each of the three would-be leaders

claim the same performers and use the same name SBO, when he is invited to do a performance.

5.2.6.2 Power and community

The power of ritual leader continues to exist within a community at large.

As we have seen above, the badong ritual leader has authority by possessing magic, verbal skills and other knowledge. In its religious dimension, the power that this leader wields over another originates mainly from the claims of the control of the transformation of black spirit (bombo) into god (to membali puang). When these spirits reach the status of god, it is believed, they will attain some power and with this power they will return all the gifts given, and multiply three forms of life such as rice, animals and human beings (tallu lolona). Thus the power of such performance is to sustain economic reciprocity with the spiritual ancestors and the welfare of the community at large.

However, with the advent of Christianity and modern Indonesia, such power continues to decrease. What clearly remains is its function to preserve its sociopolitical dimension. In social terms, the performance is still sensitive to and powerfully constructs the rank identity of the dead person and the living as commoners, middle and high class people necessary in life and life after death.

The conflict of interpretation and the take over of leadership in performance index the clash between people who hold to Christian values and to Aluk To Dolo values in the present Toraja. Tradition, represented by rank versus modernity by equality constitutes the pivotal conflict in the ritual. It is reasonable to ask why rank still plays a dominant role even if many individuals have adopted Christian and Indonesian values?

This is rather contradictory since for Christians everybody should be equal. Does it index a religious component that has been seemingly downplayed? One might speculate that the advent of Christian and Indonesian values has suppressed the traditional religious belief system. The suppression of Aluk To Dolo values may cause their re-surgence. The belief that ancestors can intercede for the living is also part of Torajans contemporary religious beliefs, in particular Catholicism. To what extent the original beliefs still underlie today's funerary rites and the badong in particular remains a matter of speculation.

In short, I have argued that the political significance of the ritual has been shaped by and indexes contact with outside world and the changing Torajan society.

6. Conclusion

When the overall aim of the paper is formulated, the complexity of the badong performance is emphasized. It is probably appropriate to also speak of the complex matrix against which this badong takes place. A pre-existing simmering discord among the leaders is manifested as a competitive attitude in their interaction. Much of this complexity would have remained hidden if the badong had been analyzed only on a denotational textual level. In contrast to previous researchers who rely on interviews to get parallel lines, in a non-performed texts (single parallelism, consisting of two lines), in this paper by looking at the performance I have discovered double interactive parallelism consisting of four lines.

the application of conversational analysis to Torajan poetry in a novel way that enables me to find this tropic structure is able to elucidate how the badong can bring about changes of potential social and political significance. In its original meaning, the power of performance enables the transformation of black spirit (bombo) into gods (to membali puang) who are continued to be worshipped since they are one of the sources of blessing. At the same time, the badong brings people together in times of life crisis where they have permanently lost somebody. Even though the badong can be seen as a contemporary social gathering, in all its components it suggests the reestablishment of unity, a very religious aspect.

This is particularly clear when seen in how textual cohesion is played out. The characterization of the lines is with the first one being male (1) and the second one female (1). In the performance, repetition by the congregants inevitably renders them male (2) and female (2). Paired lines are arranged foremost as husband and wife (simuane tallang). By the cultural standards of the times, cohesion indexes the type of relationship existing in Torajan society, the typical marriage relation. The male/male lines parallel a brother/brother relationship from one tongkonan and the two female lines a sister/sister bond from another tongkonan. This brother/brother, sister/sister arrangement echoes both the separation and union of cosmic elements, heaven and earth that is found in the creation myth. This form of parallelism indexes an ideal type of marriage known as *ma'pampangan*. Thus through the use of such parallelism, the social actors show their power to effect unity and fertility in the consciousness of audience.

In the last analysis, I bring to the debate about badong the possibility of its failure. It also has political significance which represents a rich source for power contestation. The badong described in this paper elicited, however, a clash of modern Christian and Aluk To Dolo values expressed in poetic lines that permitted the conflict of interpretation. Christian work ethics were pivotal in this clash. The composed poetic lines representing ethics of working hard, associated with contemporary Christian middle class values, do not match comfortably with noble class, traditional values.

One of the central problems that linguistic anthropologists face in interpreting social action through the use of speech is the problem of attributing agency to participants in public events. This problem arises when members of different groups engage in social interaction where they participate in a mixed-group activity, such as the *badong* ritual. Rather than assuming ‘individual’ and ‘group’ as loci of agency prior to interaction, I have shown that the relevant attributes of agency are constructed and contested in the practice of the *badong* ritual performance. I have shown how agency arises out of the collaborative interaction between individual and group to create challenge. I thus offer a paradigmatic example of how agency is not just the property of the individual but is a property of the group as well (Merlan and Rumsey 1991); without the latter the former cannot bring about transformation.

There is an uncertainty that lingers under the *badong*, partially caused by the leader’s lines and partially by the interpretations of the co- performers and the audience in general. The *badong* leader builds up authority by possessing extensive knowledge of composition, parallelism, rank, authorial voice, local histories, genealogies, coreography and geography of the area and how these are combined together to create ambiguity, subtelety, a deft – interactional – *halus* – structure to control other people’s actions in a power transfer in ritual performance as revealed through the play on referential index or duplex signs. Unlike Bloch’s data on the Merina of Madagascar, Torajan ritual speech empowers participants to challenge authority. In short, at the interactional level, I have demonstrated how social actors exploit poetry to take power and receive immediate recognition. Unique is the subtlety, cleverness, indeed the *halus* quality by which this is achieved.

As a result, through moments of interaction, and only through cooperation between the individual initiator and corporate group (agents), the performance provides an opportunity for the social actors to challenge the existing type of ritual exchange structure without breaking the ritual frame. ^{xviii}

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ⁱⁱ The opposition between monologic and dialogic performance is here used not in Bakhtinian sense of the terms (Bakhtin 1981). In Bakhtin, the term dialogic is used to characterize the discourse that does not valorize one official point of view, one ideological position, and one discourse. A single speaker's utterances may address the utterances of others and be double-voiced that speaks a clash between different social, political and ideological

positions. In this article, however, the term monologic is used simply to refer to a single speaker and dialogic to two or more speakers.

ⁱⁱⁱ These two types of ritual have been analyzed extensively by Koubi (1982), Waterson (1984), Volkman (1985), Nooy-Palm (1986), Coville (1988), Rappaport (2009) for examples.

^{iv} The main death ritual leader is a speechless ritual specialist. In the southern Toraja he is called *toma'kayo*. In the northern Toraja he is called *tomebalun*, 'the one who wraps the corpse'.

^v Despite the fact that historians are wary of these manuscripts as lacking a reliable measure of time, such *lontar* as exist are useful since they record detailed genealogies of the noble families, dynastic tables, ancient diaries, specific developments in individual polities—their origins; the progressive organization of their territorial and political institutions; the deeds (wars, conquests, treaties, alliances) of their surface rulers; their talents, insufficiencies and wrong doings; and various technical innovations (from c. 1400). These manuscripts are kept by the Makassar and as well as by the Bugis who call them *lontara'* and have been kept in some courts or by some noble households since the seventeenth century (Pelras 1996).

^{vi} Contact with Luwu' is also preserved by Torajans through stories. Waterson (1997) has collected some of the stories. I have collected some also.

^{vii} Since then, the kingdom of Luwu' occupied Toraja land. In order to establish firmly in Toraja Datu Kelali' married the daughter of the local chief Pagonggan of Batu Alu, Bubun Bulaan. Batu Alu is one of the sub districts—*penanian* of Sanjalla' petty kingdom. Since Datu Kelali' was installed as the paramount king of that *penanian*, he basically acted as representative of the colonizing Luwu' kingdom. At last the king of Sanjalla' kingdom staged war against him, and informants remembered it as the longest civil war within this kingdom that lasted for seven years, which ended with agreement (*basse*) with the return of sovereignty to the king Puang Timban Boro of Kaero (the second *palodang*).

^{viii} The king has the absolute power, and considered him self to be the representative of the divine being in the world. All first agriculture produce had to be given to the center. In subsequent development, as a result of expanding his territories (*penanians*) there were some local wars.

^{ix} The prefix /maN-/ creates a verb which means 'to do', and the prefix /to-/ simply means person. The noun *bating* and the verb *umbating* are used to refer to a way of crying with speech without music and dance, associated with the way female cry. With respect to the degrees of named ways of crying, *umbating* is almost without order. The use of the word *mantolo'* introduces sequential order into parallel lines. The root *tolo'* means 'skewer' in the context of skewering pieces of meat on stick. This is of course a metapragmatic act. In this way, *bating* is equivalent to *kadong badong*, 'ritual text', and with the introduction of words into lament order is thereby ideologically achieved. With this explanation the *badong* appears as the cultural style of lamenting.

^x This is not something unique to Toraja. Keane reported that in one of the performances he recorded, one well-known madman took up leadership and orated in couplets and the respondent followed him. As Keane said, "when a well-known madman stood up to orate in couplets the respondent chimed right in. The flow of cry and response went smoothly, unaffected by the fact that what the man said was, everyone agreed, incoherent. As long as the formal structure was successful, the respondent carried out his role without hesitating" (Keane 1997, 116).

^{xi} There are many kinds of magic objects: *balo' pare*, 'the magic object for reproduction of rice', *balo' peossoran*, 'the magic object that helps someone to be rich', *balo' tang natama la'bo'*, 'the magic object against knife' etc.

^{xii} As we have seen, the lines that the ritual leader composes for performance are not just related to an expression of grief for the dead person and his journey to the next world, but they also touch on contextual factors in relation to the life phases and social status markers of the deceased and of the leaders. In other words, recognition of the structure of society is a crucial part of this performance.

^{xiii} When the challenging ritual leader utters line 3, 'we' could be interpreted as 'the pronoun of authority' representing the co-performers literally standing in the performance.

^{xiv} Note here how the literal meaning of temporality *bongi*, 'night', is constructed to create the personification of the metaphor for the leader himself. As a metaphor the line compares two things. The word *bongi* is associated with death and darkness. Remember that *badong* ritual is only performed at the death ritual at night, hence the expression *badong bongi*, called *ossoran*. This use of the term is consistent with the names given to the hierarchical order of death ritual performances; for example, the one night ritual (*sang bongi*), the three night ritual (*tallung bongi*), and the five-night ritual (*limang bongi*). Because of this, the death ritual priest is called *ta'dung kalillinan*, 'the umbrella of darkness'.

^{xv} The body part *lindo* (face) is a metonym for the whole body. When people meet with each other it is called *sitiro lindo*, 'see each other's face', *mellindomo sanda lindona*, 'all have shown faces', *dipolindo kalua'*, 'the one used as face' (that is, something presented that represents/re-presents the giver), and finally *ma'lindo batu*, 'to have a stone face' (to present the self in humiliating way). Combined together, we can say that *lindona bongi*

refers to the leader of the night *badong* ritual “taking face” as the symbol of the leader or the totality.

^{xvi} In this culture the right to compose a line in performance is given to a single leader. Interrupting someone’s speech is considered impolite (*ma’barotokki*). Ordinarily, a speaker whose speech is interrupted will be angry. He would say, *da’mu ma’barotokki tu*, ‘do not make an interruption’.

^{xvii} This especially occurs in the case when the deadperson is born from mixed marriage between high class people and middle or low class ones.

^{xviii} It is interesting to speculate about Pong Lua’s motivation. Did he wake up that morning and decided that that day he would challenge or take on Pong Jen? As a *badong* leader in the original tradition, his responsibility as he knew is to protect the ritual and to honor the dead person properly. One can consider him certainly brave to take on the assigned leader and sideline him. The data do not permit us to conclude whether this power move was premeditated and or whether he had consulted some co-performers in advance, about the chance for success.

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