Endearing or En-daring?:
The Pragmatics of Love in a Performance of Honey-Collecting Chants among the Petalangan of Indonesia

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In Petalangan honey-collecting chants (menumbai), bees are described as a pretty young girl who falls in love with a bee-shaman (juagan), a performer of the ritual. I attempt to analyze 1) how the process of Menumbai ritual is romanticized in relation to the actual working process of collecting honey, and 2) what kinds of linguistic features and devices are used to encode love in its songs. By focusing on Petalangan cultural specific discourses on love as a metapragmatic dimension of the Menumbai performance, this paper aims to call an attention to affective dimensions of language ideology in general.

1. Introduction

What do people do with words? I will begin by analyzing the sentence, "I love you." This sentence describes and expresses the speaker's feeling of love toward the addressee. According to Speech Act Theory, the expressive speech act has nothing to do with the "world," because the utterance of one's psychological state does not have any contextual effect in the world (Searle, 1979:11).[1] As a critique of this

universalized perspective of Speech Act Theory, I argue for cultural and contextual differences in the meanings and functions of speech acts by analyzing Petalangan honey-collecting chants.

Petalangan people practice the honey-collecting ritual called *menumbai* when they harvest honey from bee-nested trees. *Menumbai* literally means "enchanting bees with songs" (Turner, 1997). Petalangan people believe that the ritual engenders magic that protects the honey-collectors from being stung by the bees. Given that the *menumbai* songs are mostly love songs, I will discuss the functions and meanings of the performance of the songs. What do people do with the love songs? Why do people believe the love songs can be magic?

I will address the following questions in this paper:

First, how do the ritual songs encode love? By analyzing the textual organization of the ritual songs, I will discuss what kinds of conventional linguistic devices and rhetoric are employed to express love.

Second, why do people perform the love songs to collect honey? I will demonstrate that expressive speech acts can be used as "directives"-"the attempts by the speaker to get the hearer to do something" (Searle, 1979:13). My concern involves the Petalangan metapragmatic dimension that makes possible the link between expressive speech and directive speech.

Third, what are the instrumental functions of the love songs? I will demonstrate how the ritual songs are related to the actual working process of collecting honey. Rejecting the simple dichotomy between expressive and pragmatic speech acts, I will argue for the multiple and contextual meanings and functions of the performance of the ritual songs.

The ritual that I analyze in this paper was documented in March 1999, while I was conducting ethnographic field research among the Petalangan people of Riau in Indonesia from 1998 to 1999.

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[1] Searle (1979) modified Austin (1962)'s classification of illocutionary acts into five

major categories; assertives (representatives), declaratives, expressives, directives, commisives.

2. Ethnographic Background of *Menumbai* Ritual

Petalangan people are one of the indigenous ethnic groups in the Kampar river hinterlands of Sumatra, Indonesia. As an isolated and remote group, Petalangans engage in dry rice cultivation and fishing, and they remain dependent on forest products for their livelihoods. Honey is one of these important forest products, which people sell in nearby towns. Bee-nested trees in the forest, which are called *sialang*, are not private property, but the public property of each clan.[2] The clan leaders strictly regulate the collection and distribution of honey.

The collection of honey requires a specific ritual called *menumbai*, meaning "enchanting bees with songs" (Turner, 1997). In Petalangan beliefs, honey and *sialang* trees belong to forest spirits and not to human beings. Therefore, the practice of ritual songs is analogous to requesting permission to harvest the honey.

The performer of the *menumbai* songs is called *juagan* or *dukun robah,* meaning "bee-shaman." When the wild beehives of the *sialang* tree are discovered to be full of honey, the clan leaders organize a work team to collect it. The team consists of a bee-shaman who climbs the tree and the assistants who collect the honey on the ground[3] as the *juagan* gets buckets of honey down from the branches.

Menumbai ritual always takes place in the darkness of a moonless night, because if the bees see light they go wild and sting people. The ritual begins with the *juagan*'s recitation of magic spells. After he recites the magic spells quietly, he slaps the tree trunk and waits for an answer from the bees. The deep humming reply from thousands of bees indicates 'permission' for him to climb the tree.

Upon receiving an answer from the bees, the *juagan* starts to recite the *menumbai* ritual songs, and then climbs the tree and reaches the bee-nests. As he continues singing, he brushes the bee nests with a fire torch, and the spellbound bees fall with sparks of fire down to the ground. After all the bees are removed from the nests, the *jua-*

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[2] Based on a matrilineal system, Petalangan society is divided into 29 clans (*suku*). Members of each clan are presumed to have the same ancestry and show a high level of solidarity. These matrilineal groups consist of practical units for subsistence economy and family activities in daily life.

[3] The work team is also called *tukang sambut* (receivers).

gan takes the beeswax and lowers it by means of a rope and bucket to the ground where his assistants and clan leaders are waiting.

3. How to Encode Love in the *Menumbai* Ritual Songs
3.1. Lineal Organization of the Performance

During the *menumbai* ritual, 32 types of *pantun* are recited. *Pantun* is a traditional quatrain of Malay poetry that displays an alternate rhyme pattern. Semantically, each *pantun* consists of two metaphorical statements that are placed in parallel so that in combination they indicate a single hidden meaning.

The performance of *menumbai* ritual songs projects a series of imaginary scenes of interactions between *juagan* and bees. For example, Song 1 is performed before *juagan* climbs the tree.

(1) Song 1: Before climbing the tree.

1. *Popat-popat tana ibu*	1. Flatten-flatten the noisy land
2. *Mai popat di tana tombang*	2. Let's flatten the dented land
3. *Nonap-nonap Cik Dayang tidou*	3. Sleep-sleep Miss Beauty
4. *Juagan mudo di pangkal sialang*	4. Young *juagan* is at the bottom

As one typical form of *pantun*, it shows a rhyme in "*ibu*" and "*tidou*," "*tombang*" and "*sialang*." Semantically, the image of "flattening the land down" in the first two lines parallels with the scene of the "sleeping Miss Beauty" in the last two lines. By addressing bees as "Miss Beauty," and himself as "Young *juagan*," this scene portrays the first scene of *juagan*'s "getting permission" to see the girl. Given the *pantun* is conventionally considered a prevalent style used in courtship, its structure also enhances the images of romantic relationship in the *menumbai* songs.

As he climbs up the tree and works on the branches, *juagan* continues singing *menumbai* songs until he finishes his work. The main themes of the performance are 1) requesting permission to visit a girl, 2) approaching the girl's room, 3) meeting with the girl, and 4) saying good-bye. This series of imaginary scenes in *menumbai* songs is analogous to a type of social visit in Petalangan daily life.

3.2. Terms of Endearment and Performance Frame

Terms of address are an important means for framing sets of relationships between figures projected in a performance. In *menumbai* ritual, *juagan* addresses the bees with nicknames, such as "Miss Beauty" in Song 1, "*Itam Mani*," "Sweet and Black," in Song 2, and "*Putih Kuning*," "White and Yellow," in Song 3.

(2) Nicknames

a. Song 2

1. *Masak bua kombang mani*	1. Ripened fruit, blossomed sweet
2. *Masak sabutie dijaut ungko*	2. Ripened *Sabutie* (fruit), a monkey snatches
3. *Kami batumo nan Itam Mani*	3. We meet Sweet and Black
4. *Mangulang da'a ke muko*	4. Blood boils up to the face

b. Song 3

1. *Anak buayo mudik mendu*	1. Baby crocodile goes upstream
2. *Iyak sampai di pelabuhan*	2. *Iyak* (bird) arrives at the harbor
3. *Putih kuning bukakan baju*	3. White and Yellow, open clothes
4. *Abang menengok betubuhan*	4. Brother looks at the body

These nicknames are iconic indexes that address a pretty girl, referring to specific attributes of the addressee's physical appearance. "Sweet and Black" (Song 2) refers to a "dark skinned but cute person," while "White and Yellow" (Song 3) refers to a pretty girl who has white and bright skin. Implicating a speaker's positive assessments of an addressee as "beautiful" or "sweet," these epithets serve as terms of endearment.

(3) Song 4: Kinship terms

1. *Apo tensu kayu di imbo*	1. What are trees for in the forest
2. *Maiko buat papan benaik*	2. Let's come here to make a panel to climb
3. *Adik bongsu jangan baibo*	3. Youngest sister, don't be sad
4. *Kolam esok naik balik*	4. Next night [I will] return to climb

Other conventional terms used in the songs are "*abang*" and "*adik*," typical address terms for boyfriend and girlfriend. Note that these terms originally refer to the "elder sibling" and "younger sibling"

relationship, which extends to a romantic relationship.[4] In Song 4, for example, the bees are even called "*adik bongsu*," "the youngest sister," a person who is most cherished in the family. The analogy between lovers' and siblings' relationships is based on their similar affection of mutual care, such as love and compassion.[5] The terms "*abang*" and "*adik*" thus have an iconic property by evoking the conventional social roles and expectations of the similarly iconic relationship between siblings as care-givers and care-receivers. The *menumbai* ritual songs convey these affective meanings by invoking specific iconic relationships embedded in conventional address terms.

3.3. Embodied Emotions: Descriptions of the Performer's Perceptual Experiences

Menumbai ritual songs entail affective meanings through the visual descriptions of a speaker's perceptual experiences. In Song 3, for instance, the erotic implication of line 3's "Open clothes" is accompanied by the description of the speaker's perceptual experiences in line 4's, "Brother looks at the body."

Expression of love also draws on the description of the speaker's bodily sensations, which always appear with the description of associated events where the addressee is involved. The speaker's bodily senses and his interactions with the addressee emerge in cause-effect pairs. In Song 2, by saying "Blood boils up to the face," the performer conveys his excitement. The description of the event in line 3, "We meet Black and Sweet," provides cause for the speaker's physiological changes. Expression of love is not built upon the abstract statement of the mental states of the participants, but rather on the concrete

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[4] In Petalangan everyday speech practice, they tend to avoid personal pronouns corresponding to participant roles, such as speaker/ addressee. Instead, they are more likely to use the terms for their social roles or relations. The mutual usage of kin terms according to the interlocutor's kinship relationship is one example. The term '*abang*', for example, which means 'older sibling,' is used by the younger speaker as a second-person term and by the older speaker as a first-person term. The kinship terms or titles that inherently contain certain social relations and expectations between the participants are also used as indexicals between the interlocutors in their on-going interactions (Kang, 2000).

[5] In analyzing the Karo Batak's use of kinterms for lovers, Kipp also suggests that "the metaphoric comparison here is not exactly that lovers are like siblings, but that the love between lovers resembles, in some fashion, the love between siblings (Kipp, 1986:637)."

description of the speaker's bodily experiences in his interactions with the addressee.

4. Pragmatics of Love in the *Menumbai* Ritual: Back to the Context

4.1. Why Lovers?: Metapragmatic Dimensions of Language Practice

The textual organization of the *menumbai* ritual projects the participants as lovers through the resource of Petalangan social conventions. The analogy of the romantic relationship in the *menumbai* ritual, however, is not based on similarities, but rather on the "expansion" or "transferance" of meaning (Tambiah, 1973). In this sense, these terms are not referential but "creative" or "performative" (Silverstein, 1976). By using the mutual address terms of "*abang*" and "*adik*," *juagan* attempts to formulate his relationship to the bees as that of a lover in order to achieve his desired end of safely harvesting the honey. The *menumbai* ritual is believed to persuasively transfer the desirable properties of the relationship between lovers to the relationship between the bee-shaman and the bees.

Then, why lovers? Petalangans' cultural notions of love explain the metalinguistic dimension of Petalangan language practice. In Petalangan society, people conceive and perceive love as an exchange, frequently represented by that between love and material rewards. Expressions of love can be directives, because they evoke social bonds and roles embedded in relationships. A bee-shaman wants to formulate his relationship with the bees as one of lovers in order to serve his desires for the safe harvest of honey. People believe that his performance of love songs can create sentimental bonds with the bees, which are realized in an exchange between the bee-shaman's performance and the bees' offering of honey.

4.2. Intralinguistic Context: "I" and "You"

How, then, do songs bring magical effects in the immediate pragmatic context? In terms of intralinguistic context, the shaman's recitation of the magic spell before the public performance of the ritual songs links the iconic relationships in the performance frame to the present participants in the interactive frame (cf. Hanks, 1990).

This magic spell contextualizes the whole ritual by naming the interlocutors and by defining their relationships. In the spell, the bee-

shaman names the bee as "White Fly Maddened by Light" and the bee sting as "Fatima's broken needle."[6]

(4) *Monto robah* (Bee-spell)

1. *Bismillahiramahirrohim*	1. In the name of God
2. *Apo kejadian lobah,*	2. What's becoming of the bees?
3. *Lalat Putih Soi Majnun*	3. White Fly Maddened by Light
4. *Apo kejadian songat,*	4. What's becoming of the sting?
5. *Ja'um patah Siti Fatima*	5. Siti Fatima (girl)'s broken needle.
6. *Lobah jangan dibagi meamuk*	6. Bees, do not be allowed to be furious
7. *Lobah jangan dibagi menyongat*	7. Bees, do not be allowed to sting
8. *Songat engkau daku*	8. A sting on **your** chin
9. *Menyongat kataku*	9. "Sting" **I** say
10. *ba'u engkau menyongat,*	10. then, **you** sting,
11. *kini songat engkau daku*	11. this time a sting on **your** chin.
12. *Aku tau kejadian engkau*	12. **I** know what becomes of **you**.
13. *Ampo padi kejadian engkau*	13. Empty husk is what becomes of **you**.
14. *Nan bone tinggal di aku*	14. What is truly left to **me** is
15. *nan ampo jatuh melayang*	15. empty husk falling down
16. *ke langit langkah tujuh*	16. to the seven layered sky
17. *awan gemawan*	17. where lots of clouds,
18. *di situlah engkau.*	18. that is where **you** are.
19. *Kemano aku su'u*	19. Wherever **I** command
20. *ke situlah engkau po'i,*	20. that is where **you** go.
21. *engkau jangan menyulap kepado aku iko*	21. **You**, don't conjure **this me**
22. *Engkau pulang ke asal,*	22. **You** go back to the place
23. *engkau mulo jadi*	23. where **you** came into being,
24. *Aku pulang ke asal,*	24. **I** go back to the place
25. *aku mulo jadi*	25. where **I** came into being.
26. *Begitulah ca'onyo kito basahabat*	26. This is the way **we** keep friendship
27. *sonjak dahulu sampai kini*	27. from long ago until now.
28. *Bokat lailahaillahllah*	28. Please bless me, Allah is the only God

The usage of "I" and "you" in the magic spell provides an "interactive frame" where the interlocutors appear not as lovers, but as the shaman who orders and the bees who are subordinate to the shaman. Given that the second person pronoun "*engkau*" is only used to

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[6] Fatima is one of the most common female names in Petalangan society.

address a young child or to attempt to insult an adult,[7] using this pronoun locates the speaker as a higher or more powerful subject who can order and control the bees, as shown in lines 8 through 23. Embedded in the interactive frame of the magic spell, the public performance of the love songs becomes magic to order the bees not to disturb the shaman.

4.3. Extralinguistic Context: Menumbai *Songs and Working Process*

In the extralinguistic context, *menumbai* songs serve to indicate the shaman's working process to other working crew members.[8] The audience on the ground cannot see the bee-shaman, who is working at the top of the tree in the moonless darkness. Given that the expressive meanings of the *menumbai* ritual songs are through the descriptions of the bee-shaman's perceptual experiences, the *menumbai* can indicate the shaman's current position and activities that are otherwise not visually accessible to the crew on the ground.

For example, in Song 2, line 4's "blood boils up to the face," expresses the shaman's excitement at "meeting Sweet and Black," while it also indexes that the shaman is approaching the bee-nests. Likewise, Song 3 is performed when the bee-shaman begins to brush the nests to lure the bees away. Here "White and Yellow" describes the honey contained in the nest, while Line 3's "Open clothes" implies that the shaman is about to "open the bee-nests" to get the "white and yellow" honey.

When the shaman is about to finish his work and go back to the bottom of the tree, he sings Song 4, saying, "don't be sad." The expression of sorrow and regret upon parting also signals the bee-shaman's current activity-climbing down the tree. By romanticizing the relationship between the shaman and the bees, each song of the

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[7] A Petalangan speaker usually avoids addressing him/herself as "I (*aku*)." If the speaker uses "I" frequently, he/she is judged as having "high self" (*tinggi diri*), which means that he/she is very arrogant, with high self-esteem. Instead, the speaker uses a kin term or a personal name according to his/her relationship to the addressee. The speaker also avoids using second person pronoun forms, especially when the addressee is older and higher in social status in relations to the speaker (Kang, 2000).
[8] Brown (1984) rejects the simple dichotomy between expressive/ instrumental functions of magic. He argues that the Aguaruna hunting songs of Amazonian Peru are part of a general ordering process that encompasses the strategic use of thoughts, speech, objects, and acts to achieve practical ends (1984:545).

menumbai ritual also indicates the bee-shaman's current work process to the crew on the ground.

5. Conclusion: *Menumbai* Ritual as a Multi-layered Communicative Practice

In conclusion, expressions of love in *menumbai* songs can function as "directives" by evoking social bonds and roles between interlocutors, which are symbolized by the exchange between the performance and honey. The love songs also serve to indicate the honey-collector's working process in the immediate pragmatic context. Culturally-specific ways of encoding love in Petalangan society, such as descriptions of bodily perceptions or sensations instead of abstract statements of mental states, enable the bee-shaman in the tree to communicate his current activities to other workers on the ground. Unlike the universalized perspective of "one sentence-one meaning" in Speech Act Theory (Austin, 1962; Searle, 1979), the analysis of Petalangan *menumbai* ritual reveals the multiple meanings and functions of the performance.

Furthermore, by refuting the individualistic perspectives of Speech Act Theory (cf. Rosaldo, 1982),[9] Petalangan honey-collecting chants demonstrate the importance of social conventions and contextual constraints in explaining the performance of the ritual. Understanding the performance of Petalangan honey-collecting chants requires local knowledge of the "world," including Petalangan discourses of love, social role expectations, and the sentiments embedded in a specific social relationship. In addition, the Petalangans'? local understandings of "words," such as those of specific genre conventions, and their beliefs in the creative power of words, become the metapragmatic dimension of the performance of the *menumbai* ritual. The conventional forms of expression of love frame the *juagan* and the bees as lovers in the hope that this naming practice can transfer the desirable properties of a romantic relationship to the relationship of the bee-shaman and the bees, based on Petalangan beliefs in the creative power of words.

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[9] By examining Ilongot attitudes toward speech, Rosaldo (1982) critiques the individualistic perspectives of Searle's classification of speech acts. She argues that Ilongots "display less concern for the subjective meanings that an utterance conveys than for the social contexts in which utterances are heard" (1982:203).

Glossary

abang: Elder brother, boyfriend, or husband
adik: Younger sibling, girlfriend, or wife
juagan: Title for a honey-collector. Also called "*dukun
                      loba*" (bee-shaman)
menumbai: Enchanting bees with songs (lit.) Petalangan honey-
                      collecting ritual
pantun: A traditional quatrain of Malay poetry
sialang: Bee-nested trees
tukang sambut: Receiving workers (lit.). Members of the honey-col-
                      lecting crew on the ground. They make a "*jalan*,"
                      a road (lit.), a ladder to climb up a bee-nested tree,
                      and they collect honey on the ground as a *juagan*
                      lowers it by means of a rope and bucket from the
                      branches of *sialang* tree.

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