Mundhum Discourse: Interpreting through Ethnographies of Communication

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Abstract

This paper attempts to see the Limbu Mundhum from the perspective of ethnography of communication model that is the factors involving in the contextual interpretation of the classical texts or ritual performances. The textual data are based on one of the main portions of the Limbu Mundhum recitation especially *'Yaapmi Pongmaa Mundhum'* Origin of Man. The necessary information has been drawn from both the empirical observation as well as library studies. As this study is based on non-numerical data and endeavors to understand concepts, ideas or experiences, it typically falls under the qualitative research involving the theory of linguistic anthropology. The major finding of this paper is that a text cannot be interpreted in its fuller range of meaning unless the text is not analyzed through the ethnographies of speaking model. The paper may be helpful for the interpretation of rites and ritual performances through ethnographic perspective.

Keywords: discourse, ethnographic communication, grammatical structure, interpretation

Introduction

Candidly speaking, the question may be raised as to why the Mundhum be set against the ethnographic perspective and what the phrase 'ethnography of communication' stands for and the like. To respond the above query, one must be fully aware of what the Mundhum is. The Limbu Mundhum is the accumulated form of speech situations. It has thus comprised varieties of speech situations within this. From the linguistic point of view, the Mundhum is merely a discourse that is, the socio-linguists define "discourse is generally used to refer to stretches of spoken or written language which extends beyond an utterance or a sentence" (Holmes, 2008, p. 356). Socio-linguists and anthropologists consider that all kinds of verbal materials as texts containing discourse within. To achieve the fuller meaning of any text, only verbal analysis is not enough. So the sociolinguists, especially John Gumperz and Dell Hymes

played a crucial role to introduce a new framework for the discoursal analysis. In this regard, Hymes (1974) proposed an ethnographic framework which takes into account the various factors that are involved in speaking. He further specifies as "ethnography of communicative event is a description of all factors that are relevant in understanding how that particular communicative event achieves its objectives" (p. 5). Fundamentally, this technique is fairly a context depended or pragmatic study of a text. Emphasizing on the context, Holmes (2008) focuses that "context is clearly crucial in interpreting what is meant and pragmatics extends the analysis of meaning beyond grammar and word meaning to the relationship between the participants and background knowledge they bring to a situation" (p. 357). Hymes formulated the acronym SPEAKING for the various factors related to the ethnographic description. The following is the consideration of each factor of the acronym 'SPEAKING' with specific portion of the Limbu Mundhum myth 'The Origin of Man' as an example.

Objectives

The objectives of this study are as follows:

a. To clarify the concept of 'ethnography of communication,'

b. To analyze the Mundhum text *yapmi pongma Mundhum* 'The Origin of Man' applying the elements 'SPEAKING (i.e. Setting and scene 'S', the Participants 'P', Ends 'E', Act sequence 'A', Key 'K', Instruments 'I', Norms of interaction and interpretation 'N' and Genre 'G')

c. To suggest practical implications

Methodology

This paper attempts to analyze the Mundhum text basing on the pragmatic explanation concerning factors of ethnographies of communication. The study avails both the primary as well as secondary sources of data. The design of the study would primarily be qualitative one and the theory it is based on is linguistic anthropology or more specifically the ethnography of speaking model.

Interpretation and Analysis

This section primarily deals with interpretation and analysis of the Mundhum discourse on the basis of ethnographies of communication. The notion of 'ethnographies of communication' was initiated by the work of Gumpertz and Hymes under the discipline of socio-linguistics.

The Concept of 'Ethnography of Communication'

Ethnography of communication is a technical term which is related to the ethno linguistics. About this ethno-linguistics, Crystal (2003) provides its definition as "a branch of linguistics which studies language in relation to the investigation of ethnic types and behavior" (p. 166) . This definition implies that ethnic 'type' and 'behavior' cannot be discerned or analyzed just by applying the general norms of traditional linguistics. In order to clarify this concept Hymes refers to Bloomfield's examples as there is quite different between the linguistically same structure uttered by a beggar, 'I'm hungry' (to obtain food) and a child 'I'm hungry' (to avoid going to bed). Again the ethnography is the language type employed by the certain ethnic group which is said to have a common ancestral link. The socio-cultural patterns differentiate the linguistic behavior from one ethnic group to the other. In this sense, Crystal (1997) holds the opinion that "religious practices, long standing institutions and traditional customs are all important in this respect"(p. 34). Having observed these ethnic phenomena Gumperz (1972) states "the studies of ethnographic categorization processes provide a method of relating verbal behavior to social process, adding an important dimension to the linguist's grammatical analysis" (p. 206). He means ethnography of communication offers the methods and units of analysis of ethnographic research into communication.

Dell Hymes's ethnography of communication has evolved as a new distinctive sub-discipline with the fusion of two disciplines as anthropology and linguistics respectively. This novel theory has revolutionized the study of interpenetration of language and culture. This revolutionary method can aptly be applied for the thorough analysis of the Limbu Mundhum too. It is the most suitable because Erickson (2009) holds opinion on ethnography of communication that "it tends to focus on the culturally stylized speech rather than on the more casual speaking activities" (p. 287). He further claims that in the study of interaction, this idea leads to an interest in the regularity of cultural patterning, in fairly formal ritualized situations of communication. Likewise, Saville-Troike's (2009) conclusion on ethnography of communication is that a central goal is thus discovering and formulating rules for appropriate language use in specific contexts (p. 353). She further explains about the rules as "they are tied to the share values of the speech community and typically reflect an ideal cultural perception" (p.353).

Regarding the ethnographies of communication or speaking Hymes (1974) defines as it is intended to indicate the necessary scope and to encourage the doing, of

studying ethnographic in basis and kind of patterned complexity with which they deal. Differentiating it with the traditional concept of linguistics, he further argues that it is rather not linguistics but ethnography, not language but communication which must provide the frame of reference within which the place of language in culture and society is to be assessed. The similar view has been forwarded by Holmes about the ethnographies of communication or speaking. She defines it as an approach to analyzing the language which has been designed to heightened awareness of culture-bound assumptions. She means that the traditional approach to describing communication system is inadequate because the traditional approach only describes the rules and grammatical patterns. The grammatical patterns cannot help to deduct the contextual meaning. The same sentence can have various meanings depending on the contexts and situations. Grammatical rule alone is not determinant factor for deriving the appropriate meaning.

The Mundhum text is interpreted and analyzed applying the factors forwarded by Hymes (1974) in the popular form of acronym 'SPEAKING' as follows:

The Setting and Scene (S)

The 'setting' refers to the time and place whereas 'scene' refers to the abstract psychological situation where the speech takes place. These two elements are very important to analyze and to achieve the meaning of the discourse. The 'The Origin of Man' is one of the important myths of the Limbu Mundhum. This is to be recited in different occasions of the ritualistic performances. Mainly, this mythical version is referred to during the cultural rite called as '*Tongsing Tokmaa'* which Subba (1998) defines it as "the most important ceremony of the Limbus" (p. 156). He further clarifies the *Tongsing Tokmaa Mundhum* as an act of cooperation, coming together, coming in an agreement or consolidation or becoming correct or fitting. But technically, the term '*Tongsing'* is the name of a small bamboo basket (Nep. *Daalo*) full of earth/soil on which small sticks are planted pointing upward in the middle representing dead spirits and alive ones. This basket is placed at the bottom of the twin bamboo poles hosted in the center of the house yard. Kainla (2051 BS/2004 AD) also holds the similar view as Subba about the meaning of the '*Tongsing Tokmaa'*. He defines it as a ritual of winning cooperation of ancestors and divinities through incantation, invocation, dramatic performances and using symbolic paraphernalia. It is, after all, ancestral worship to win their favor so as to bring about peace, progress and prosperity for the succeeding generations. The twin bamboo poles of about twelve feet height hosted in the center of the yard, contain four items of objects at different heights. At the bottom of the poles,

there is a small bamboo basket (Nep. *Daalo)* filled it with soil and short sticks along with 'a wizards' tool made from a bamboo' (Lim. *Mukto Sing;* Nep. *Ghungring*) planted on top. At about four feet above the ground, a drum (Lim. *Niyaaraa Hangusing-* Nep. *Dhol Baazaa*) is hung down the poles. In the third step, there is a middle sized bamboo basket (*Ya-Rumbho/Lumbho* Nep. *Thunse)* is hung nearly four feet above the drum (Lim. *Ke/*Nep. *Dhol*). Finally, there is an altar on top of the poles containing jars of liquor and the head of the sacrificial pig.

Ground seat is prepared by spreading straw mat and woolen mat on the top in such a way that the *Saambaa* (Limbu priest or the authentic person of the Limbu Mundhum) can face towards the altar. The *Saambaa* is assisted by a person locally known as '*Yaagaapsibaa*' who helps the *Saambaa* (priest) to light oil lamp, incense, beat metal plate and follow the incantation which the *Saambaa* utters. The *Yaagaapsibaa* closely follows and carries out the instructions and demands made by the *Saambaa* throughout performances. There are family members along with other senior kinsmen of neighbors as to watch and listen to the possible forecast be made by the *Saambaa* although no conversation takes place during the ritual performance. The time of the ritual performance is preferably the night resuming from the late evening. Most of the ritualistic performances are held at the night time in the belief that the divinities, spirits and other supernatural forces prefer visiting and revealing during the night while the mortal beings fall asleep. The fire is also lit in one corner of the yard because the rituals are mostly held in the winter seasons as people have leisure at that time. The winter nights are extremely cold so the fire is a must to warm up and to supply the burning coals to light dried leaves incense (Nep. *Dhup*) or the dried gum obtained from pine or *Sal/Sakhuwa* tree. Before the ritualistic performance begins, the *Saambaa* and his assistant (*Yaagaapsibaa*) are served   meal and liquor to their heart content. When the evening meal is over, the *Saambaa* and his assistant start the preparation for the ritual performance. The *Saambaa* or *yebaa* gets dressed with certain apparels, aigrette (*Waasaang-* Nep. *Pagari*), garlands of acorn seeds (*Phegbo–*Nep. *Rudraaksha Maalaa*) and belt. The necessary materials like tiger nails, wild boar's tusks (canine), snake vertebrae, thunder bolt, bone of Yeti, brass bells, larger cowries, crystal quartz, etc., are taken out from the bag and put in the proper places around the altar (*Saangbhe*). The altar (*Saangbhe*) is also decorated with different flowers, shoots, sapling, leaves and branches of certain plants. Locally prepared incense and the oil lamp are lit in the worshipping place. There are some kerosene lamps or lanterns placed at certain corners for the light. Around the court yard, there are spectators of different age groups sitting

eagerly for the commencement of ritual performance. This is what the setting scene looks in the *Tongsing Tokmaa* ritual performance.

The Participants (P)

Participants in a discourse or conversation are essentially important especially for devising the accurate meaning. The considerable matter about the participants is to have knowledge about their roles, the status they hold in the society, the age group they belong to, the relationship they have among them and other factors like these are minutely calculated. The types or the occasions are also the determining factors about the participants' role. Regarding the participants Wardhaugh (2000) maintains that "they (participants) include various combinations of speakers-listeners, addressor-addressee, or sender-receiver" (p. 243). These combinations are based on two or more persons' participation in the interaction or the conversation. Apart from these combinations there are other types on the basis of involvement such as monologue, soliloquy and asides on the part of speakers and over hearer, by stander and audience on the part of the listeners.

In the corpus of Limbu Mundhum - *Tongsing Tokma* ritual, The Creation/Origin of Man' is essential part to be referred to during the performance. This Mundhum myth contains many episodes. Detailed recitation of the whole version takes longer period so most often the *Saambaa* or *Yebaa/Yemaa* chooses to curtail down the version or skip off some episodes. The *Saambaa* is the principal participant of this discourse. He fulfills the role of addressor. On the other hand, the addressees are sometimes deities, divinities, dead spirits, ghosts and other supernatural beings; and sometimes the mortal beings of the mundane world. When the *Saambaa* evokes through litany and propitiates through certain liturgical procedure, the participants are basically the deities. But sometimes he also calls *Tuttu Tummyaahaang* 'senior respectable people' for listening to him about the divine counseling and admonition. At such address, the human folks are the participants as passive listeners (audience) for exchange of dialogue between humans is impossible while the performance is ongoing. The *Saambaa's* address at that time feels more like a monologue or soliloquy.

Ends (E)

According to Wardhaugh (2000) , "ends refer to the conventionally recognized and expected outcomes of an exchange as well as to the personal goals that the participants seek to accomplish on particular occasions," (p. 243). Any utterance must have its own purpose whether that may be directly or indirectly stated. When we relate

the 'ends' to the Mundhum's myth 'The Origin of Man', we can find certain intended goal in terms of whole discourse (text) as well as personalized goals. The same myth 'The Origin of Man' has to be referred to different contexts and occasions. This myth is referred to mainly in three different rituals as '*Tongsing Tokmaa, Mekhim Chokmaa* and *Khaaumaa* (*Miʔwa-Saangmaa*) related to the rituals of retaining cooperative feelings among kith and kin, of nuptial tie and of purification after relative's death. The myth 'The Origin of Man' is referred to in the *Tongsing Tokma* ritual in order to "strengthen social relationship and cooperation initiated and performed by a particular family or families for their welfare, prosperity and happiness" (Kainla, 2051 BS, p. 2). It is mentioned during the rite of *Mekhim Chokmaa Thim* (matrimonial tie) to recall antiquity and to realize how the creator god first created the husband and wife.

The sole purpose of creating the first conjugal was to make the world look suitable and beautiful by having children and thus to retain the human existence forever. Similarly, the mythical reference recurs in the *khauma* as well as *miʔwa-sangma* (Death Rituals) to remind and console the mourning and bereaved families about the certainty of the death due to the curse hurled down to the newly created man by the creator god (*Porokmi Yomphaamibaa*) when he unexpectedly found response from the human figure created with the admixture of trivial matters like shits of birds, ashes of the Himalayan bamboos, yellow color soil and water of stone hole. The myth says that the god had first created the human by mixing precious metals like pearls, diamond, gold and silver but that was found to be unable to speak then uncaringly mixed up very trivial things and surprisingly that figure happened to reply the god's call. So in fury, he condemned the human to death. As the human life begins out of the ashes and soil so does it end in the ashes and soil was the core content or idea of the divine curse to the human beings.

Now, it is better to specify the discussion about the myth 'The Origin of Man' referred to in the ritual *Tongsing Tokmaa* and its goals (ends) in terms of the whole discourse as well as individual basis. The *Saambaa* is, undoubtedly, the main important person in the ritual performance. So definitely he has multi-purpose of his verbal dealings. First of all, he lets the people gathering there know that the ritualistic performance is to commence right away. Then he calls upon his *gurus,* deities and divinities to have a strong favor from them so that no evil thing may happen to him and no interference may occur throughout the whole mission. For this favor, he invokes through litany. By so doing, he hopes the intended supernatural beings would be pleased with his loyalty and devotion. In turn, strength, guidance, blessings and wisdom

would be bestowed upon him thus enabling him to overcome whatever difficulties there may come on the way to his mission. He evokes the master spirits to bless him so that he would be able to maintain social solidarity as the intention of family or families who are organizing the ceremony. He occasionally addresses to the senior people present there and in this he wants to inform about certain message also tries to prove how smart he is at the Mundhum recitation in a sequential order. The occasional address made to the senior people has also got a purpose that is; he wants to establish the contact with them.

There are other participants who can be categorized into two kinds. One kind of category is concerned with the mortal beings. This group includes the family members, neighboring people and even the assistant of the *Saambaa* (*Yaagaapsibaa*) and the *Saambaa* himself. The other group is related to the supernatural beings in which there are the master spirits, deities and other heavenly figures whoever may be addressed to in course of performance. The goal of the family members might be getting the ritual successfully accomplished. They are always serious whether they can manage the affairs quite satisfactorily or not. This is their prime concern. The village senior people to whom the *Saambaa* addresses as *Tuttu Tummyaang Yaaklaa Suhaang* (respectable and learned personalities) have a goal to check whether the *Saambaa* can recite the Mundhum sequentially and he can follow steps of the ritual orderly or not. Last but not least, the assistance of the *Saambaa (Yaagaapsibaa)* may have goal to fulfill is that he may be able to carry out successfully whatever duties are assigned to him. Most portion of the discourse is employed dealing with the supernatural beings. This implies that there is very few occasions where there is conversation between human participants. The *Saambaa* spends a larger scale of time making prayers, offers, earnest request and so forth to the master spirits, deities and other divine forces. Naturally, question rises in our mind as what purposes do supernatural forces have to fulfill to the mortal beings? This question can pose everyone in difficulty. Therefore, we can only assume that the purpose of the heavenly figures is to fulfill human desires, lead them to the path of righteousness and instruct through images or symbols.

Act Sequence (A)

Act sequence, as Holmes (2008) quotes, "is the ordering of the speech act" (p. 366). The phrase itself suggests of how the whole discourse has been arranged. In other words, it is concerned with how something is said and what is said. Regarding this point, Wardhaugh (2000) states that "act sequence refers to the actual form and content of what is said: the precise words used how they are used and the relationship of what

is said to the actual topic at hand" (p. 243). Basically it includes the two aspects as message form and message content. They, according to Hymes are central to the speech act and focus of its 'syntactic structure'; they are also tightly interdependent. From this point, the Mundhum myth 'The Origin of Man' is essentially an oral narrative surviving since the time immemorial. In this regard, Subba (1998) holds the view that "Mundhum is surviving on oral tradition mainly through the Limboo priests- the *Phedaangmaa, Saambaa,* the *Yaae* (*Yebaa and Yemaa*)" (p. vi). The Limbu priests are thus the men of great importance who are serving to transfer the Mundhum from one generation to another.

The Limbu Mundhum myth- 'The Origin of Man' is orally narrated through recitation. This myth embodies different episodes in it. First of all, the myth begins narrating about the universe. In the beginning, as it refers to that there was nothing at all except the pervasive darkness and infinite vacuum. The supreme god, *Taageraa Ningwaaphumaang* first created the universe-the planets including the Earth and the Moon and the Stars including the Sun and the North Star. He then created angels, deities, divinities and gods out of himself. After that, he delegated the power of creation to one of the gods- *Porokmi Yomphaamibaa.* According to the wish of the Almighty God- *Taageraa Ningwaaphumaang, Porokmi Yomphaamibaa* focused his view towards creating wind, water, cloud, soil, stone, streams, rivers, seas, oceans, mountains, valleys and so on. The water animals created and put into the water. Likewise, the shrubs, plants and trees were created along with the plant eating creatures. He got to realize that even after the creation of these all things, something was still lacking and the world seemed quite unsuitable from the absence of that particular thing. A vague idea came into his mind and that absent thing was the human being.

The creator god- *Porokmi Yomphaamibaa* wished to create very beautiful figure of the human being made up of precious metals. So he blended different precious metals to build up human figure. When the figure was completed the creator god was delighted to look at the beautiful image of human being. He was then hurried to put life into the newly created image but alas! It proved to be almost impossible. The god was thunderstruck. There was nothing left for the god except hopelessness and indignation. In fury, the god tore the image apart limb by limb and threw the parts to different four directions. Those hurled parts, one of which happened to sink into the water, became water deity, some sank in the mud-became the deity of land and some rest became ghosts and evil spirits.

Having thought that the creation of human from the precious things was worthless attempt, the creator god again tried to create human being. But that time, he was not going to create the man from the mixture of valuable metals, rather he was going to do that by the trivial items like shits of different birds, yellow colored soil, ashes of the Himalayan bamboos and water from hollow tree trunk or stone hole. The task of creating human figure was over but the creator god- *Porokmi Yomphaamibaa* or the team of creators was not fully confident about its success. However, the god put the life into the human being. Putting the life into the human image, he made a call to test whether the soul entered the idol or not. Surprisingly, it was quite unexpected matter for the god that the human figure replied the god's call in no time.

The reply could prove that the desire of the human creation was accomplished even then the creator god was not satisfied with that because his intention was not the 'man' which could be created out of such trivial things (admixture of the birds' shits, polluted soil and bamboo ashes). Earlier he had thought to create the human out of precious metals like diamond, pearls, gold, silver and iron so that the created human being would be extremely beautiful, immortal and strong as well. The god happened to think that it was really a cruel joke upon his creation. So having felt a sheer humiliation, the god, all of sudden, spat on the face of the newly created human being with showering curses upon it.

When the divine curses showered upon ill-fated human, immediately it withered away and became lifeless. The god was shocked to see the human in that position. He was dumbfounded and could not decide what to do the next. At this confused situation, he was compelled to realize that the blows and buffets were showering upon him one after another. After a long pensive thought, he decided to visit the Almighty Father in order to have right admonitions about the challenge. As he got to the Almighty Father, he explained all the incidents to the Supreme God, *Taageraa Ningwaaphumaang* and also begged for the suggestions. *Taageraa Ningwaaphumaang* told *Porokmi Yomphaamibaa* that the cause of human's death was curse called down upon it. *Porokmi Yomphaamibaa* listened attentively to the suggestions forwarded by the Supreme God.

As the creator god got back, he blessed the lifeless statue and blew the vital strength into the human figure. The lifeless human figure revived and was full of strength. One uncorrectable thing with the curse was that the human life could not be made immortal. This established the tradition of inevitable death in all the living beings including human. When the lifeless statue regained the life, the creator god named the

human as *Muzingnaa Kheyongnaa*. *Muzingnaa Kheyongnaa* was female and the first human being created in the world as referred to by the Limbu Mundhum. As the time went on, the first human- *Muzingnaa Kheyongnaa* gradually began to grow. She did not have parents nor did she have any kith and kin. So she was called as the descendant of the Sun, the Moon, the Earth and Stone.

Muzingnaa Kheyongnaa became young but she was harassed of not having anyone as guardian, mate, relative, or so on. She started roaming about the different places especially to quench the carnal desire. One day when she was whistling having sat on a tree branch, a gentle breeze seemed to be entered into her privy part. Later on, she happened to bear an asexual son named *Susungge Laalaangge*. In the full youth, the boy became a skillful hunter. Despite his mother's warnings, he set out for hunting towards *Sinyuk Muden Laaze* 'Bhot or Tibet' and *Temen Warak Laze* 'Southern Plain'. Wherever he went, he had sexual relationship with maidens he met. The maiden he met in the *Sinyuk Muden Laze* was *Thosulungma Phiyaaklungmaa*. She got a male baby named *Susuru Suhaamphebaa*. Likewise in southern plain *Susungge Laalaangge* had met with *Yosulungmaa Phiyaaklungmaa* and she had a female baby named *Tetlaaraa Laahaadongnaa*.

Susuru Suhaamphebaa and *Tetlaaraa Laahadongnaa* were thus the brother and sister of different mothers. The brother and sister could not meet to each other and did not know their relationship because they were residing in different places- *Susuru Suhamphebaa* in the *Sinyuk Muden Laaze* (Tibet) whereas *Tetlaaraa Laahaadongnaa* in the *Temen Warak Laze* (Southern Plain) respectively. As they both got young, they were seduced by their own half- brothers (Saangdaang Khewaa and Lingdaang Khewaa) to have incestuous relationship provoking that they (*Susuru Suhaamphebaa* and *Tetlaaraa Laahaadongnaa*) had no consanguinity relation between them. Eventually, *Susuru Suhaamphebaa* and *Tetlaaraa Laahaadongnaa* had incestuous relationship and they had many offspring.

One day, *Tetlaaraa Laahaadongnaa* happened to beat her pet dog (bitch) called *Khiyadongna* with a broomstick. The bitch was worried and went to the Supreme God, *Taageraa Ningwaaphumaang* to complain the maltreatment meted to her by her mistress. In the process of explanation, the bitch tolled the Almighty God that *Suhaamphebaa* and *Tetlaaraa Laahaadongnaa* were having many children though incestuous relationship. She also referred to the Almighty God that *Tetlaaraa Lahadongna* had beaten her with a broomstick without any apparent reasons. Having listened to *Khiyaadongnaa's* complaints, He too decided to go to *Suhaamphebaa* and

Tetlaaraa Laahaadongnaa's residence for the justice. The Supreme God made an announcement that the relationship between *Suhaamphebaa* and *Tetlaaraa Laahaadongnaa* was utterly immoral and sinful as well. Then onward, they should separate forever on equal sharing of their babies. In order to divide the number equal and impartially they placed the children on the gold sieve to filter. The eight children fell down through the sieve and the rest of the equal number remained on the sieve. Those who dropped down the sieve, they were handed over to *Tetlaaraa Laahaadongnaa* as her part, and those rested on the sieve separated for *Suhaamphebaa* as his sharing. The eight children who fell under the guardianship of *Tetlaaraa Laahaadongnaa*, they were known as *Saawaa Yet-haang* and were considered to be the famous *Saambaas*. The present Limbu people are supposed to be the descendants of the same *Saawaa Yet haang Saambaas.*

Although this Mundhum myth 'The Origin of Man' can be thought merely as story in its surface, it is essentially based on the both literary and religious discourse. It has obviously distinct form and feature in its own. The language is highly embellished with the figures of speech. The simultaneous use of figurative and rhetorical devices has made the expression more cutting, pointed and sharp. The choice of proper words in the proper place has further enriched its form and meaning. On being religious discourse, it encapsulates admonition, morality, ethics, human values, and so on. In brief, what the Mundhum myth 'the Origin of Man' tries to say is that the creator god (*Porokmi Yomphaamibaa*) first failed to create the human being by mixing and blending precious metals like diamond, pearls, gold, silver, etc., with the intention of making ever living (immortal) human being. When he was failure to do that, he indifferently mixed up trivial things like cinder, shits of different birds, yellowish soil and water from the stone holes. After creating the human statue, he put the spirit into it and called to test whether he was successful or not. Surprisingly, he found the statue was live and responded to the creator. Paradoxically, the creator god was not happy. In tacit fury, he happened to cast a spiteful curse upon the man wishing its death. Man is thus condemned to death ever since the curse it received. The content of this myth is that everyone should confess life is essentially mortal. Man turns to the same things like ashes and soil with which his body was supposed to be composed of.

Key (K)

Key is concerned with the emotional tone, manner or spirit in which the message is delivered: light-hearted, serious, precise, pedantic, mocking, pompous and so on. Hymes considers it as modality among grammatical categories. So far as the tone

of the Mundhum myth is concerned, it is entirely precise and serious. It is because the key is often traditionally ascribed to an instance of some other component as its attribute; seriousness, for example, may be the expected concomitant of a scene, participant, act, code, or genre (say a church, a judge, use of Latin, obsequies)(Hymes, 1974). The chief participant in this discourse is the *Saambaa* who is constantly dealing with either the senior respectable persons known as *Tuttugen Tummyaang Yaaklaagen Suhaang* or the supernatural beings like gods, deities, divine spirits and so forth. The Limbu Mundhum may make use of nonverbal signaling key in the forms of wink, gesture, posture, style of dress and musical accompaniment. It seems that the discourse has genuinely followed the 'Cooperative Principle' proposed by H. P. Grice (1975) and the 'Politeness Principle' by George Lakoff (1978). Cooperative Principle by Grice (1975) suggests that in a conversation (discourse) one should make contribution as required, at the stage at which it occurs, and by the accepted purpose of direction of the talk exchange in which the participant is engaged. This maxim involves three dimensions namely maxim of quality, quantity and relevance. Likewise, Lakoff's principle maintains that the politeness is inevitable for the effective communication. It has six different aspects as tact, generosity, approbation, modesty, agreement and sympathy maxim. Whether we consider about cooperative principle or politeness principle, they come under the manner or tone of speaking. Let us take a very simple example: Suppose, a person speaks very roughly or rudely, at this we happen to comment what a 'manner' it is. So politeness, rudeness, lightness, seriousness, etc., are all the types of speaking manners.

Instrumentalities (I)

This involves the channel of speech employed during the conversation or communication. In this regard Wardhaugh (2000) states "instrument refers to the choice of channel, e.g., oral, written or telegraphic, and to the actual forms of speech employed such as the language, dialect, code or register that is chosen" (p. 244). The Limbu Mundhum is often recited orally to date though its written versions are available nowadays. The language employed in the Mundhum is entirely formal creating markedly different from that of day to day communicative language. The Mundhum language is essentially religious type in itself which is never used in commoners' interaction. It involves liturgical forms like invocations, petitions, doxologies, intercessions, thanksgivings, rosaries, litanies, chants, hymns, psalms, canticles and so forth (Crystal, 1997). So this type of language can have the analogy with that of *Sanskrit* language which is only used in the religious purposes.

Norms of Interaction and Interpretation (N)

About the norms of interaction, the sociolinguists hold the opinion that it generally refers to the specific behaviors and proprieties that attach to speaking and also to how these may be viewed by someone who does not share them e.g. loudness, silence, gaze return and so on. Generally, the norms of interaction would be that one must not interrupt, normal voice should not be used and turns in speaking are to be allocated in a certain way. Norms of interaction as stated by Hymes, obviously implicate analysis of social structure, and social relationship generally, in a community. On the other hand, norms of interpretation implicate the belief system of a community. In Mundhum recitation, there is no interaction taking place rather the *Saambaa* is supposed to recite the Mundhum mythology in the narrative form. As the *Saambaa* is to start the recitation, first of all he addresses the senior people present around him. All the people present there normally take their respective seats. They are very attentive towards the *Saambaa*'s address. They are silently gazing at the *Saambaa* to listen what he is supposed to recite. The *Saambaa* usually sits by the altar (*Saangbhe*). The Mundhum is not recited by standing or by walking to and fro except in the death rites especially during the rite of cleansing (*Khaaumaa*). As the *Saambaa* finishes reciting one verse, he waits his assistance (*Yaagaapsibaa*) to repeat the same verse line. The *Saambaa* pulls the tone longer addressing to senior people when he comes to the interval period or at end of one episode.

Genre (G)

The term 'Genre' is not strictly referring to the literary genres like prose, poetry and drama; however, it refers to clearly demarcated types of utterance such things as poems, myths, tales, curses, oration, commercial, form letter, proverbs, riddles, sermons, prayers, lectures and editorials. Even some sociolinguists like Holmes (2008) opines the phone calls, business meeting, conversation, interview, blog, advertisements, etc., all come under the genre. In this sense, genre can hold wider range encompassing diverse utterances (p. 365). Likewise, Hymes (1962) views that "the notion of genre implies the possibility of identifying formal characteristics traditionally recognized" (p. 61). He further states that genres often coincide with speech events, but must be treated as analytically independent of them. When we look into the Limbu Mundhum from its generic perspective, it appears to be entirely poetic in its nature. The Mundhum is often recited as though the whole corpus is made up of versified utterances. There is no room for conversational type of language. Under the poetic expressions as Crystal (1997) quotes, there are prayers, petitions, doxologies, litanies, hymns, chants, rosaries,

psalms, canticles and so on (p.389). Whatever forms there may be, they all are sung and recited.

The practical implication

While talking about usages of ethnographic perspective, it can help the person explain and interpret the texts in the fuller range of meaning. The factors like setting, participants, ends, act sequence, key, instrumentalities, norms of interaction and genre are essential for the consideration in the ethnographic communication. No classical text is thought to be complete explanation until and unless the interpreter considers these factors. Of course, a grammatical pattern or an utterance cannot have fixed meaning on its own. The real meaning depends on context and situation. The elements involved in ethnography of communication provide the ground for interpretation and explanation. Because of this reason, ethnography of communication can be practical tool to interpret and explanation of the ritual performances.

Conclusions

Ethnography of communication is one of the significant issues anthropology and systematic study of individual culture. However, it has close affinity to the sociolinguistics because the sociolinguistics is a descriptive study of all aspects of society including cultural norms, expectations, and context on the ways language is used and the society's effect on language. It tries to study language in relation to the ethnic types and behaviors. In other words, it can provide a method of relating verbal behavior to social process adding an important dimension to the linguist's grammatical analysis. From the literary point of view, Mundhum appears as merely a discourse or a text. The Mundhum corpus 'The Origin of Man' and in its native terms *'Yaapmi Pongmaa Mundhum*' can be best explained by applying the tools of ethnographies of communication: 'SPEAKING'- acronym (Setting, Participants, Ends, Act of sequence, Key, Instruments, Norms of interaction and Genre) formulated by Hymes. In a way, this kind of analysis attempts to avail the possible context and situation in order to draw the fuller range of meaning. Similarly, the tools of ethnographies of communication can be applied in other types of texts and discourse of any kind.

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