Tongue Twisting Discourses in *wəddi mən*, Oral Game of Honeymoon in Eastern Tigrai

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
	The main objective of this article is to describe the linguistic Tongue Twisting Discourses in wəddi mən: Oral Game in Eastern Tigrai. In the rural areas of Eastern Tigrai, when people visit the bridegroom and the bride in their home honeymoon, they often prefer to play oral game of wəddi mən which literally means 'whose son', and functionally refers to 'whose bridegroom/ bride, fiancé/ fiancée someone is' as an entertainment and socio-linguistic practice; however, this socio-linguistic practice has currently been replaced by some modern entertaining games such as play cards and modern music. Because this socio-linguistic practice is still oral and has been transferred from generation to generation in words of mouth; it has been badly endangered. The data in this article describe language use phenomenon; therefore, the analysis employed qualitative approach. The main tool of gathering data for this article has mainly been ethnographic observation. The researcher has directly participated in the socio-linguistic event of wəddi mən. For its theoretical frame work, this article has been employing Systematic Functional Linguistics (SFL), the theory that more focuses on the use of language than its structure.

1. INTRODUCTION

Traditional marriages of Christian mainly in Tigrai and Amhara regions are often arranged by the parents of the bridegroom and the bride with a great deal of negotiation (Abraha Abadi, 2003). According to tradition and culture, the bride must be virgin when the marriage takes place. Tigrai, like other nations and nationalities in Ethiopia has its own unique cultural assets. It, for instance, has some unique practices in marriage system. These include traditional songs of marriage, cultural dishes in the feasts of marriage, and other traditional entertaining practices. One of the traditional entertaining practices is an oral game of honeymoon called *wəddi mən*, the focus of this article, mostly known in the Eastern part of Tigrai. The main focus of this article is to investigate the tongue twisting discourses and their function in the context of *wəddi mən.*

Many literatures present that discourse is a new linguistic phenomenon; however, according to Dijk (1985), discourse analysis is both an old and new

discipline. According to McCarthy (2011), discourse analysis is the study of the relationship between language and the contexts in which it is used. It has been applied in studies of several disciplines since the late 1960s and early 1970s such as: linguistics, semiotics, psychology, anthropology and sociology. Discourse analysts study language in use: written texts of all kinds, and spoken data, from conversation to highly institutionalised forms of talk. As a modern discipline, discourse has been developed in the mid twentieth century as new paradigm in several fields of the humanities and the social sciences took place that would eventually lead to the emergence of today's discourse study.

According to O'Donnell (2012), Systematic Functional Linguistics (SFL) is an approach to language developed mainly by M.A.K. Halliday in the U.K. during the 1960s, and later in Australia. As a theoretical framework, SFL is built on previous works of several influential linguists such as Bronislaw Malinowski and J.R. Firth. As O'Donnell (2012) states, Bronislaw Malinowski was a polish anthropologist who did most of his

works based on SFL in England. Systematic functional linguistic theory (SFL) is the very concern of language in terms of function. Halliday and Matthiessen (2004) have stated that functionality is intrinsic to language that "language is as it is because of the functions in which it has evolved in human species".

In some linguistic contexts, it is common to use tongue twisters so that we can train our tongue in language learning. Regarding tongue twisters, Mu'in et al (2017) state that tongue twister is a promising technique to teach pronunciation and fluency. They can also help to improve accents by using alliteration, which is the repetition of one sound. According to Conde et al (2017), many experts have defined a tongue twister as a sequence of words, phrase, or sentence that are difficult to pronounce quickly and correctly due to the repetition of the same sound, which can be a vowel or a consonant sound. In the case of *wəddi mən*, on the other hand, the participants use tongue twisting consonants sounds for tricking purposes. The participants think of some tongue twisting discourses and they ask the bridegroom and bride to casually say the series of expressions that can twist their tongue. The intension of the participants is not to make the bridegroom and bride learn the discourses, but to trick them so that they produce some sexual discourses as a result of their tongue twisted. The following tongue twisting discourses are common in the sociolinguistic practice of *wəddi mən*.

2. DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

(a) መርዓት፦   ብኸፈር   ሽሾ

        mərʕat: bi-χəfər   šišo

        Bride: INS-container   ant

        ብኸፈር   ፍልሖ

        bi-χəfər   filħo

        INS-container   termite

        ብኸፈር   ሽሾ

        bi-χəfər   šišo

        INS-container   ant

      ብኸፈር   ፍልሖ

      bi-χəfər   filħo

      INS-container   termite

      ብኸፈር   ሽሾ

      bi-χəfər   šišo

      INS-container   ant

      ብኸፈር   ፍልሖ

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bi-χəfər	filħo
INS-container	termite

Literally: container of ants and container of termites
Functionally: The repetition of these series of phrases twists the tongue of the speaker to the sexual word ሽልሖ /šilħo/, meaning 'dick'. The participants intentionally ask the bridegroom to casually utter these serious of phrases to twist the tongue so that he utters the name of male sexual organ.

The function of the discourse in (a) is not for the purpose of language learning. Tongue twisting expressions are importantly used in language learning; however, in the context of *wəddi mən,* the above discourse is used to trick the bride so that she calls the sexual organ word /šilħo/, meaning 'dick'. The immediate purpose of the participants to trick the bride like this is to make her ashamed of calling the sexual word, but their long-term purpose is to make her acquainted with sexual affairs so she cannot feel shy of doing sexual acts with her bridegroom. In the rural areas of the research area, some girls get married without having enough awareness about what to play with their bridegrooms. Therefore, participants use this kind if informal sexual training in the context of *wəddi mən.*

(b) *መርዓዊ:*	ጤል	እንዳ	አቦይ	አብራሃ	ቀንጢባራ
məriʕawi:	t'el	ʔinda	ʔabboy	ʔabraha	k'ənt'ibara
Bridgroom:	Goat	Of	father	Abraha	restless

ካብ	እታ	ምጥጣምስ	ምምጥታራ
kab	ʔita	mi-t'it'am-a-s	mimi-ti-t'it'ar-a
from	the	VN-truncate-3FSG	VN=RED-IMPFV-climb up

መጠረ		ትበልዕ	ተመጣጢራ
mət'ərə		ti-bəliʕ	təmət'at'ir-a
Buddleja polystachya		IMPFV-eat	PRF.Climb up-3FSG

ጤል	እንዳ	አቦይ	አብራሃ	ቀንጢባራ
t'el	ʔinda	ʔabboy	ʔabraha	k'ənt'ibara
Goat	Of	father	Abraha	restless

ካብ	እታ	ምጥጣምስ	ምምጥታራ
Kab	ʔita	mi-t'it'am-a-s	mimi-ti-t'it'ar-a
From	The	VN-truncate-3FSG	VN=RED-IMPFV-climb up

ትበልዕ ተመጣጢራ

መጠረ

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mət'ərə	ti-bəliʕ	təmət'at'ir-a
Buddleja polystachya	IMPRF-eat	PRF.Climb up-3FSG

ጤል	እንዳ	ኣቦይ	ኣብራሃ	ቀንጢባራ
t'el	ʔinda	ʔabboy	ʔabraha	k'ənt'ibara
Goat	Of	father	Abraha	restless

ካብ	እታ	ምጥጣሚስ		ምምጥታራ
Kab	ʔita	mi-t'it'am-a-s		mimi-ti-t'it'ar-a
From	the	VN-truncate-3FSG		VN=RED-IMPFV-climb up

መጠረ		ትበልዕ	ተመጣጢራ
mət'ərə		ti-bəliʕ	təmət'at'ir-a
Buddleja polystachya		IMPRF-eat	PRF.Climb up-3FSG

Literally: The goat of father Abraha, the restless

       Its truncating the tree is worse than its climbing up the tree. Climbing up, it
        eats Buddleja polystachya.

Functionally: When the bridegroom says the series of sentences above three times very fast, his tongue does not manage to utter the last words of each sentences; his tongue get twist to utter the vulgar word ምጥራ /mit'r-a/, meaning 'her pussy'.

(c) መርዓዊ:	ዓምዲ	ምድሪ	ግጥም
məriʕawi:	ʕamdi	midri	git'im
Bride:	pillar	earth	match

ሰማይ	ምድሪ	ጥምጥም
səmaj	midri	t'imtim
sky	earth	coil

ዓምዲ	ምድሪ	ግጥም
ʕamdi	midri	git'im
pillar	earth	match

ሰማይ	ምድሪ	ጥምጥም

səmay	mɨdri	t'ɨmtɨm
Sky	Earth	coil

ዓምዲ	ምድሪ	ግጥም
ʕamdi	mɨdri	gɨt'ɨm
pillar	earth	match

ሰማይ	ምድሪ	ጥምጥም
səmay	mɨdri	t'ɨmtɨm
sky	earth	coil

Literally: pillar and the earth matched.

Sky and earth coiled.[1]

Functionally: When the bridegroom says ዓምዲ ምድሪ /ʕamdi mɨdri/, meaning pillar and earth in the above series of sentences abruptly, his tongue is forced to be twisted and utter the sexual word ምጥሪ /mɨt'ri/ meaning pussy because of replacing the middle consonant /d/ by /t'/.

3. CONCLUSION

The tongue twisting discourses above in (a-c) are not easy to utter casually and quickly. If they are said repeatedly as discussed above, the speaker may unintentionally say the name of the sexual organs. Therefore, the participants order the bridegroom or bride in the game of *wəddi mən* to casually and repeatedly say the above-mentioned tongue twisting discourse for this purpose. When the tongue of bridegroom or bride got twisted and utter the name of the sexual organs, they feel shy. That is why the participants try to find some tongue twisting discourses like the above ones, and order the bridegroom and bride to utter them.

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The abbreviations INS, F, VN, RED, IMPFV, IMPRF, PRF, SG, and 3 stand for instrument, feminine, verbal noun, reduplication, imperfective, imperfect, perfect, singular and third person pronoun respectively.