

# CULTURE IN COMMUNICATION OF THE EDE PEOPLE THROUGH THE VOCATIVES IN THE *Y'KHING JŨ* EPIC

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## Article history

Received: June 16<sup>th</sup>, 2021

Received in revised form: October 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2021 | Accepted: October 26<sup>th</sup>, 2021

Available online: January 27<sup>th</sup>, 2022

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## Abstract

*In communication, the way of addressing shows the attitudes and affection of the speakers and reflects the positions, perceptions, social and cultural relationships, and language abilities of the individuals in the community. To clarify the characteristics of the Ede people's communication culture, the article analyzes the communication characteristics of the Ede people through relationships, methods, and rituals of addressing in the Y'Khing Jũ epic.*

**Keywords:** Characteristics; Communicate; Ede people; Vocative; *Y'Khing Jũ* epic.

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DOI: [http://dx.doi.org/10.37569/DalatUniversity.12.1.910\(2022\)](http://dx.doi.org/10.37569/DalatUniversity.12.1.910(2022))

Article type: (peer-reviewed) Full-length research article

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The Ede people have a long history and cultural tradition in southern Indochina. Similar to the other indigenous peoples in the region, the Ede's epic poems belong to a unique cultural spectrum in the Central Highlands folklore collection. Scholars assert that epics are "encyclopedias" in which we learn about ethnic history, culture, geography, customs and traditions, art and literature, etc. These unique forms are handed down by the method of singing-telling, created and preserved by artists and the public.

Besides the *Dam San* epic and other works, the *Y'Khing Jũ* epic of the Ede people is not only valuable in terms of content and artistic value, but it also reflects the diversity of ethnic culture in which the communication culture of the Ede is one of the unique factors creating value in the work. With an interdisciplinary approach (literature-culture-ethnography), characteristics of the communication culture of the Ede people are examined through rituals, attitudes, social positions, and relationships through a system of vocatives in the Vietnamese version of the *Y'Khing Jũ* epic, collected and compiled by Buôn (2019). The article clarifies the Ede people's communication culture as reflected in the *Y'Khing Jũ* epic and concurrently affirms the unique value of the epic in the treasury of Central Highlands folklore.

## 2. RESEARCH METHODS

Epic is a genre of art and literature and a document of ethnic culture; therefore, an interdisciplinary approach of literature, culture, and ethnography is used in the article.

- Method of recording and description: The method of listing the vocatives appearing in the *Y'Khing Jũ* epic serves as the basis for describing the characteristics and meanings of the vocatives in various contexts.
- Analytical technique: The method is to survey the vocatives in the *Y'Khing Jũ* epic and to evaluate them on a linguistic level to assess their meaning and cultural value in the context of the characters' communications and relationships.

## 3. RESEARCH RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### 3.1. The concepts of vocative and communication culture

#### 3.1.1. The concepts of addressing and vocative

Addressing is a term used to describe the act of referring to oneself or others in communication. In the Vietnamese dictionary, addressing is defined as "making a reference to oneself or others with a vocative that indicates the nature of the relationship" (Hoàng, 2001, p. 1163). "Addressing is the act of self-referral when talking to others and calling others something in the conversation (including the person being mentioned) to express the nature and feelings with others in social relationships" and "vocatives are

words, phrases, and linguistic structures (in which words play a fundamental role) used to communicate" (Truong, 2003, p. 23).

Thus, it can be understood that vocatives in Vietnamese are words and phrases (identifiers) used to identify ourselves in speaking with others and to refer to others in relationships, including people mentioned in the conversation. When approaching the *Y'Khing Jũ* epic, readers acknowledge the value of the content related to the hero Y'Khing Jũ and are captured by the unique forms of address used by the Ede people in communication. That uniqueness is reflected in the analysis of the forms of address used in relationships, manners, and rituals by the characters in the *Y'Khing Jũ* epic.

### *3.1.2. The concepts of communication and communication culture*

According to social psychologists, communication is an informational process that includes making and maintaining contact between individuals in a community or society. Approaching communication in terms of function, B. Parugin said that "Communication is the interaction involving the objects and information exchanged in which moral connections are formed, created, and revealed" (Hoàng et al., 2007, p. 165). In terms of systematic features, communication is considered a process "intentional or unintentional, in which feelings and ideas are expressed in verbal or non-verbal messages. It is a dynamic process, irreversible, interactive, and contextual" (Nguyễn, 2010, p. 10).

Communication is the contact, interaction, or exchange of information to reflect individuals' psychology, emotions, attitudes, etc., in society. This particular contact creates "the relationship between people through which psychological contact arises and is manifested in the processes of exchanging information, understanding, feeling, and having an influence on each other" (Nguyễn & Hoàng, 1991, p. 18). It can be said that communication is an interaction between two or more people through language to exchange information, emotions, knowledge, to interact, and modification. Through communication, people create multi-dimensional relationships to exchange information, thoughts, feelings, and establish new connections in society. Through communication, individuals acquire knowledge, contributing to the development of the community and society.

Overall, communication includes combinations of the subjects and objects in contact, gestures, words, behaviors, attitudes, manners, feelings, etc. The elements in the communication process are usually followed by the rules and principles of the community and society. Therefore, communication is one of the elements that constitute communication culture. And communication culture is a part of the culture, used to refer to the principles and customs in relationships between people. Communication culture is not only language-based expressions, but it is also a combination of behaviors, attitudes, manners, levels, etc., of the subjects and objects in communication. Communication culture appears in all aspects of social life. Communication culture is vividly expressed in social relationships and reflected in the literature and art of each nation. This article initially defines the communication culture of the Ede through vocatives used in the

*Y'Khing Jũ* epic, which potentially contributes to reflecting the uniqueness of the communication culture expressed in folklore.

### 3.2. Relationships in Ede communication as reflected in the vocatives in the *Y'Khing Jũ* epic

#### 3.2.1. Close relationship

A close relationship refers to the relationship with relatives and close friends. Close relationships are expressed in all languages and literary works; the *Y'Khing Jũ* epic is no exception.

- Addressing in the family

An example is the love of *Y'Khing Jũ*-*Hbia Yào*, *H'Yang* with her *dãm dei* (her children), the *dãm dei* with their *amuôn adei* (their grandchildren), etc. Through the way the characters address themselves in the oral epic, listeners will identify the relationships between these characters. When a woman calls a man her brother, it is a reference to the kinship between an older sister and a younger brother or an older brother and a younger sister. If a man calls a woman an *amuôn*, it denotes an uncle-niece relationship. If a man calls someone *anak*, it refers to his biological or adopted son or their brother's child, etc. For example, *H'Yang*'s mother calls her brother and tells him, "Awa Prõng Mung Hdãng! Prõng Hdãng's son of *Aê Du Diê*, invite Mrs. *H'Bia Lim Luôm*. Your nephew *H'Yang* is crying" (Buôn, 2019, p. 319). *H'Yang*'s mother calls her brother *awa* Prõng Mung Hdãng, and calls her daughter *amuôn õng* *H'Yang*. Calling *awa* shows that this person is your uncle (mother's brother). *H'Yang*'s mother should have referred to Prõng Mung Hdãng as *ayõng* (brother), but she called him *awa* (uncle); this is how her son calls him. And *amuôn õng* (his niece) emphasizes the relationship between her daughter and her brother, not *anak kào mniê* (my daughter). This way of addressing is similar to that of the female members and their brothers and sisters in the Ede family.

Ede men are not only essential members in domestic and external affairs on the mother's side. In the *Y'Khing Jũ* epic, the *dãm dei* of *H'Bia Yào* are placed in a parallel storyline with the events related to the hero and the central female characters. They appear often and play an indispensable role in marriage, festivals, and economic activities even in war. For example, the image of the *dãm dei* of *H'bia Yào*, who actively asked *Y'Khing Jũ* to be their niece's husband, is shown quite specifically in terms of work:

We want someone to clear the fields, plucking buds. We want someone to chase the parrots away, ride the elephants, order the servants, drink with, etc. If *Y'Khing Jũ* asks for a triple-size blanket, we will give it to him as long as he knows how to take it off and put it on, and as long as he knows how to ask and to greet (Buôn, 2019, p. 335).

Therefore, the details of the girl's *dãm dei* meeting the boy's *dãm dei* in the marriage rites are similar in both literature and real life. It shows that although the

marriage is in a matriarchial culture, external affairs do not belong to women but men despite blood relations and inheritance relations being defined according to female lines.

- Addressing in social relationships

Most of the vocatives used in kinship also address common social relationships. Older men are called *aê* (grandfather); older women or female chiefs are called *aduôn* (grandmother); those who are of similar age to the speaker's mother are called *amĩ*; those who are of similar age to the speaker's biological father are called *ama*; those who are of similar age to the speaker's brother or sister are called *ayông*, *adei*, etc. This way of addressing respects and evokes intimacy. Unlike Vietnamese people, when the Ede are friendly, they use grandfather, grandmother, brother, sister, etc. When they are polite or aloof, they use mister, sir, etc. Ede communication expresses this unique way of addressing in speech, such as the following passage: "Why do you think you don't have an uncle? Y'Khing Jũ is your uncle!... But Dãm Bhu has fought against uncle Y'Khing Jũ... and his wife is H'Bia Yâo; now she belongs to Dãm Bhu" (Buôn, 2019, p. 208).

The way of addressing *aduôn* (grandmother) and *čo* (grandchild) between a child and an older woman shows intimacy and closeness in the grandchild-grandmother relationship. Although they are not related by blood, the gesture of Trống Dãl combing Aduôn Sun's hair and telling the story of the deceased uncle shows that their close relationship seems to have existed for quite a long time.

### 3.2.2. High-low status (status-based relationship)

The status-based relationship is an unequal relationship between people of different status. In this relationship, the characters have different social roles. The low-status person addresses the high-status person in a respectful manner, while the high-status person treats the low-status one with intimate nuance. According to the customs of the Ede people, even if they have a friendly relationship, they still have to show their status in communication. In a family, when there is an *aê* (grandfather) and an *aduôn* (grandmother), there is a *čn* (grandchild). When there is an *awa* (uncle) and an *aprông* (paternal uncle), there is *amuôn* (nephew/niece). When there is an *amĩ* (mother) and an *ama* (father), there is *anak* (child), etc. This status-based relationship is shown in the *Y'Khing Jũ* epic and demonstrated in daily life.

The status-based relationship in the *Y'Khing Jũ* epic is reflected in the relationship between the female chief, the heroes, and their female and male servants. Similar to other Ede epic works, the hero is called *aê*, the female leader is called *aduôn*, or a combination of *aê/aduôn* + the name of their master. Male and female servants call themselves *iskòo* (I) or *drei* (we). In particular, the heroic characters and female chiefs call themselves *kăo* (I) and call their servants *hđeh* (servant, child), *ngiêk êbao* (thousand sparrows), *hlũn* (slave, servant), *mgăt* (servant), *ktrâo klĩng* (servant here and there), etc. In terms of semantics, *kâo* corresponds to I; it is the singular personal pronoun and cannot be used for all objects that play the role of the subject in communication. If the speaker is a person who is older than the listener, it cannot be

understood as a grandpa, grandma, aunt, uncle, etc. On the other hand, if the speaker is younger than the listener, it is understood as a child, younger brother, sister, grandchild, etc. Therefore, how *kâo* is translated depends on the listeners and their status in the communication. Similar to *kâo* is *ih* or *õng* (you), the second-person singular pronoun used to address a child or grandchild. When the pair *kâo* and *ih* or *õng* is used in the relationship between a hero and his servants, or between a female chief and her servants, the pair represents a status-based relationship. Interestingly, the hero (as the boss) and his servants still call themselves *kâo* and *ih* or *õng* (neutral), respectively, and do not use other specific words to raise or lower their social status in communication.

This indicates that the ancient inhabitants had a distinction between social roles and status but did not enforce it. Therefore, the owners and their servants have a friendly and respectful relationship, utterly different from the Vietnamese. The way of addressing *kòo-hêh* shows affection (these words are also used to address small children) or *êk êbao* (one thousand sparrows). These forms are common in the *Y'Khing Jũ* epic and often appear in the *Dam San* epic and other epics of the Ede.

The high-low status is also expressed in words that indicate people with different social groups. These are the *prõng*, *tuê prõng* (high-status guest), *tuê sah mdrõng* (rich guest), *sah mdrõng*, *mdrõng* (wealthy man, rich chief), *anak sah mdrõng* (descendant of the rich), *mtao* (leader), *anak mlô* (child of the Mlô family, a wealthy family), *čô mdrõng* (grandchild of a noble family), *čô anak mdrõng* (grandchild of a rich man), *ayõng adei knhăk* (talented grandchild), *mnuih jhõng knuẽñ* (brave man), and *mnuih jhõng knuẽñ* (strong man). Guests coming to the house are classified as high-status, low-status, rich, or poor to choose the appropriate greeting. Even in fighting, it is necessary to consider the provisions of the social customs "It's over for you. If the young die, you shall repay with a female elephant. If the elderly die, you shall repay with a male elephant. If the descendants of the rich die, they will force me to pay compensation" (Buôn, 2019, pp. 384-385). It is evident from this excerpt that *hđeh* (young people), *khua* (older adults), and *čô anak sah mdrõng* (descendants of the rich) represent three different levels with different status and punishments. From this it is clear that the ancient Ede people paid attention to their social status and had different behaviors depending upon social status.

### 3.2.3. Peer-to-peer relationship

Initially, peer-to-peer relationships are reflected through friendships. With the Ede, women who have companions and in-law relationships are often addressed by the word *juk*. And *knai* is a word used to call or refer to men of two families, either cousin or brother-in-law, or in friendships between male members. *Juk* and *knai* often appear in the *Y'Khing Jũ* epic; the word *juk* is used 53 times, and the word *knai* is used 36 times. This reflects the close relationship between the mother of the hero Y'Khing Jũ and the female chief H'Bia Yâu.

In addition, the peer-to-peer relationship is also expressed among leaders and rich people (hero versus hero). In the *Y'Khing Jũ* epic, they only knew each other by the other's name, and the first time they met, Dăm Bhu and Y'Khing Jũ insisted on calling each other

*knai* Dăm Bhu and *knai* Y'Khing Jũ. This makes listeners think they have been close friends for a long time. And even when they are each other's rivals in single combat, they respect their equal status. In the unequal battle between the two opponents, we can see this clearly in their responses:

Dăm Bhu: Come here, *knai*, let's touch the male elephant's tusks and ride the female elephant to see who falls to the ground.

Y'Khing Jũ: Is that so? What shield is *knai* carrying?

Y'Khing Jũ: Stop, *knai*, stop! Fear of the deceased calling name, fear of *yang* reprimanding, fear of breaking *ché tuk*, of breaking *ché ba*. Hey, *knai*, let me go down first (Buôn, 2019, p. 385).

*Kâo* and *knai* are two words that two heroes, two wealthy chiefs, use to address each other. It's not *kâo-ông*, and it is also not *kâo-ayông*, *adei*. This way of addressing shows intimacy and equality in status, economic potential, and social relationships.

### **3.3. Attitudes of the Ede in communication as expressed through vocatives in the *K' Khing Jũ* epic**

Attitude in communication is the character's thoughts and feelings in certain situations. It is expressed through facial expressions, gestures, words, and actions. Primarily through the way we address people, we can see people's attitudes in communication. By examining the epic, it is possible to identify the attitudes of the Ede people in communication, as follows:

#### *3.3.1. Hospitality*

The hospitality of the Ede is a characteristic of their communication culture. Respect is shown in how costumes are prepared before greeting guests, which helps in beautifying oneself and respecting how other people look at you. That is cogently expressed in the work:

The guests change their clothes. They change their old loincloths and put on new ones, take off their wooden earrings and wear ivory ones, wear a loincloth wrapped three times, a floral shirt made by the Jrai, and a thick buttoned shirt of the Ede with a majestic figure like a teenager.

And the hosts:

...enhance their appearance. They change the old dresses and put on new ones, take off wooden earrings and put on ivory ones, wear floral skirts like enam flowers and dresses that are iridescent like cat-eye flowers, and they walk gracefully with a beautiful appearance everywhere they go, or, "one person goes to invite the midwife, she knows that person comes with an urgent matter, but first, they both have to dress up nicely." (Buôn, 2019, p. 321). This hospitality in

greeting guests appears in the *Y'Khing Jũ* epic and many others, such as the *Dam San* epic.

The hospitality of the Ede is reflected in the way they warmly welcome guests with good rice, sweet wine, and gongs. Even though their relationship is not close, as with relatives or friends, the Ede people still treat guests in a respectful way. "Young guests we offer small *ché*, old guests we offer larger *ché*, and noble guests we offer black *ché* with a big mouth, *ché* with eight handles carried by five people and three people supporting in the middle" (Buôn, 2019, p. 323). The hospitality of the Ede people is reflected closely and commonly in famous epics. To a certain extent, villain characters take advantage of their hosts' hospitality to steal their wives in the *Ede* epic war.

### 3.3.2. *Gratitude*

In the *Y'Khing Jũ* epic, we see the grateful attitude in relationships between the hero Y'Khing Jũ and his servants; between the female leader H'Bia Ju and the community; H'Bia Lim Luôm, his son, and Prong Mung; H'Bia Yâo and Y'Khing Jũ; Y'Khing Jũ and his brothers; H'Yung and H'Yang; mother H'bia Yâo and a talented midwife, etc.

The principle of gratitude is reflected in how they address people in a respectful and friendly manner in greetings, funerals, work, festivals, and even when their chief is defeated in war. Along with gratitude, in the sword fight between the hero Y'Khing Jũ and his enemy, and between heroes in battle, the forms of address between the two men are often very humble even though they are enemies. Appreciation and respect are shown by "heroic" behavior toward the defeated and the act of recruiting the defeated's servants to his side. Artisan Ama Ben (Buôn Akõ Dhông from Buon Ma Thuot City) said that after winning the battles to get H'Nhí back, Dãm Sãn knocked on the door of every servant to invite them to follow him. The gratitude of the hero is characteristic of the communication of the Ede people.

The gratitude of the Ede in communication is not only shown toward someone famous or talented, or only toward the winner; it is also reflected in communication with people having lower status in society. In the *Y'Khing Jũ* epic, this gratitude is shown between heroes and *mtao* (villains), with the community of the defeated, with women, and even with children, etc. In chapter 5, in the battle where Dãm Bu defeated Y Dhuê Y Nguê, gratitude is clearly illustrated, as follows:

Y Dhuê Y Nguê was shocked, and panting, knelt like the intestines of the pigs and chickens had fallen off. Dãm Bhu slashed his enemy's arm; Y Dhuê Y Nguê collapsed, crying loudly.

Dãm Bhu: Oh, Children, take a chisel to chisel his teeth. Use an awl to pry his ears. His parents forgot to teach him.

Y Dhuê Y Nguê's parents: No, we taught him, but after we taught him in the morning, he unlearned in the afternoon. His heart was dark like a banana flower.



Dăm Bhu: Oh, a thousand birds and ten thousand *ktras*, your master is dead. Will you come with us? Who herds cows, herds cows; who herds buffaloes, herds buffaloes, who rides elephants, rides elephants... Oh, Aduôn Sun, will you come with us?

Aduôn Sun: Why not! Our leader is dead (Buôn, 2019, p. 350).

After the victory, fearing that Y'Khing Jũ would kill the slaves, H'Bia Yâo advised her husband to be lenient with the slaves of the defeated. The woman's advice in this work shows power with humanity:

Please stop, my man, why do you kill children and old people without mercy? Please don't, please! It's not that I don't cook for you! Because you're like a deer in the wild, a deer in a deep valley... My strength is in my young chest and a cracking voice from a dry throat; what do you want me to do? Come on, my man! The bamboo mat is now flicked again, cow's blood is now smeared on a knife, buffalo's blood is on our thighs, sweet wine is on our feet, and bronze and iron armor are crushed beneath my feet. Husband and wife, let's be together again. Y'Khing Jũ again enjoys "*an nam uong thang*" – the time between the rainy and dry seasons when the crop has been harvested (Buôn, 2019, pp. 379, 380).

From the evidence shown, the fierceness of war always leaves loss and pain: after the opponent is killed, wives, children, and the defeated community can be killed or become slaves. This motif does not appear in the Ede and *Y'Khing Jũ* epics. After the wars, Dăm San, Xinh Nhã, Y'Khing Ju, etc., came knocking on doors from house to house repeating the phrase "your leader is dead, will you come with me?" This scene appears quite often in the epics. Thus, it can be affirmed that the Ede have always upheld the gratitude principle in communication and social relationships.

### 3.3.3. *Harmony*

Similar to other ethnic groups, the Ede are very delicate and harmonious in communication. They can always find a gentle way to solve those essential and challenging matters. In particular, harmony is always emphasized in *Y'Khing Jũ* and other epics. It is shown in everyday life through special care in the family, between guests and hosts, and between powerful chiefs and their servants. When there is conflict, harmony is always applied according to social norms. The following is a piece of evidence that author Buôn (2019, p. 383) has recorded:

Dăm Bhu entering H'Bia Yòo's room while Y'Khing Ju' was still lying drunk on an elephant's ear is a big deal. Aduôn Sun came up to mediate: "Come on, H'Bia Yâo's mother, beg Y'Khing Jũ not to kill your son without mercy. Please tell Dăm Bhu to admit his mistake, and they will become brothers!"

The harmony in communication is also reflected in neutral vocatives, such as the pronouns *kâ-õng/ih* (mentioned above) and *ñu* (it, he – third person singular). In the epic, *kòo-õng/ih-* and *ñu* are often used in communication between people and appear 102 times

in many different contexts. Words indicating kinship are very repetitive in communication, showing harmony. Instead of using *kòo-ǒng*, which seems quite aloof, the Ede people use *aduôn-ǒo*, *ayǒng-adei*, and *amai-adei*, and friends use *juk*, *knai* or *juk/knai* followed by the name, such as *knai Dăm Bhu*, *knai Y'Khing Jǔ*, etc. *Knai* is a title the heroic characters use to call each other. This word is always used by a girl's brother to call his brother-in-law or by brother-in-law to call his wife's brothers. And *juk* is a title for women in friendship or in-law relationships. This way of addressing expresses a distinct nuance in the communication of the Ede people, which is suitable for different communication contexts in such a way that is intimate, witty, and delicate.

### 3.4. Communication methods and rituals of the Ede through vocatives in the *Y'Khing Jǔ* epic

#### 3.4.1. Communication methods

- Direct communication method

Direct communication is communication between two or more people directly related to them. This is the type of communication we often encounter in everyday life. The content is mainly related to friends, parents, children, brothers and sisters, master and servant, etc.

In the *Y'Khing Jǔ* epic, in addition to being used to address women in in-law relationships, the word *jut* in the Ede language is also commonly used by women with their friends, such as in the way the characters H'Yung and H'Yang address each other in the first part of the epic. These forms of address create intimacy and an emotional bond in a friendship. Phrases like "*o jut* H'Yang," "*o jut* H'Yung," and "*o jut*" appear quite often in the work. However, the scene with H'Yang and H'Yung is only in chapter 1 of the *Y'Khing Jǔ* epic. (The word *juk* appeared 59 times: 53 times to address the other person and 6 times to address the same person). Similarly, even though they are not in in-law relationships and are just close friends or men of equal status or the same age, Ede men call each other *knai*. (The word *knai* appears 36 times in the work.) When H'Bia Yâo's uncle came to ask Y'Khing Jǔ to be his niece's husband, he called men in the groom's family *knai*: "Oh *knai* Prǒng Mung Hdăng, we come with no bad intentions; we want to dig and dig, so when children ask, we say we want to borrow Y'Khing Jǔ" (Buôn, 2019, p. 335). This is an extraordinary way of addressing friends or brothers-in-law and vice versa.

In addition, *kâo-ih-ǒng* is frequently used in the work. The translation of *kâo-ih-ǒng* into Vietnamese must depend on the roles of the speakers in communication. Usually, they call themselves *kâo* (I) or *drei* (we), which sound very neutral and can be used by all speakers. These are similar to pronouns I and we in English, but very different from Vietnamese as they vary in tones, such as aloof, intimacy, loving, etc. Also, when talking to another person and mentioning a third person, the vocatives show an obvious nuance: loving and respectful, casual and intimate, or higher and lower. The child respectfully addresses his parents as *kâo-ama/amǎ*. Sons and daughters call parents-in-law differently,

as – *ama/amĩ* + wife's name. The word *amĩ* appears 91 times, and the word *ama* appears only 24 times. The difference indicates that the role of the wife and mother in the family is central. Parents address their children as *kào-õng*, but this form of address is rarely used in epics. They call their precious daughter *kào-bũ*, *ra*, *na*, or *nê* and their son *ơ pồ*, *nồ*, *nin*, *kei*, *dam*, or *kin*. These forms of address show the uniqueness and diversity of vocatives in the relationship between fathers and children and between mothers and children. Siblings in the family call each other *kào-amai* (sister), *ayõng* (brother), *adei* (younger brother), or call each other by name or a combination of *amai*, *ayõng*, or *adei* + proper name. Husband and wife use *kào-ayõng/õng*, *kào-adei/õng*, or *kào-ayõng/adei* + proper name. Especially, when talking about their spouse in the third person, the Ede show a very high level of possessiveness: *ung kào/pồ rông* (my husband), *mỗ kòò/pồ khã êsei* (my wife), or *mỗ ung* (your wife), *mỗ drei* (our wives), etc. Pairs of words, such as *Aê* (grandfather) – *čo* (grandchild), *aduôn/duôn* (grandmother) – *čo* (grandchild), *awa* (uncle) – *amuôn* (nephew, niece), *amiêt* (uncle) – *amuôn* (nephew, niece), etc., are used to address family members and people nearby. Most of the words that refer to kinship are used in communication with people, creating intimacy in social relationships.

- Communication through intermediaries

Most of the conversations of this type in the epic are related to Aduôn Sun, Aduôn Si, and Aê Diê. The supporting characters function to support the hero and the female chief.

In the epic, Aduôn Sun and Aduôn Si are role models that represent the voice of the gods. According to Ede legend, Aduôn Sun is a white-haired, tolerant woman who rules the boundary between heaven and earth. She is the one who raises unfortunate children. God Aê Du Aê Diê, wanting to name his son H'Yang and daughter H'Yung, had to ask Aduôn Sun and Aduôn Si for guidance. When Dăm Bhu invaded the village of Y'duê Y'nguê, he had to cross the river and also ask Aduôn Sun and Aduôn Si for advice. When H'Bia Yâo wanted to return to the old village, she also had to ask permission of Aduôn Sun, etc. The characters of Aduôn Sun and Aduôn Si appear in the *Y'Khing Jũ* epic and other epics such as the *Mdrõng Dam* epic, the *Y'Kdăm Săn* epic, etc. An impressive scene in the *Mdrõng Dam* epic is an example

Oh Aduôn Sun, Aduôn Si with white hair and double chin, who is the owner of all this? Who burned the *êjung* rope and the *mnieng* tree at the village gate? Who is the one whose fame, full of wild roars, reaches the gods and spreads over the mountain from east to west? (Buôn, 2019, p. 274).

Aduôn Sun plays a vital role as a spiritual support for the chiefs and the Ede community in the epic.

Thus, in communication, the Ede people have an intermediary character, the character for the utterances. It is the voice of the gods and the rich involved in resolving conflicts in the ethnic community. Maybe so. When a hero kills the wealthy leader and possesses the rich man's wealth, he calls on the villagers to follow them and respectfully

invite Aduôn Sun. Thereby, it shows the essential role of this woman in the lives of the ancient Ede people.

Indirect communication is also shown through the *dăm dei*, which is how the female character's brothers communicate. They can be the uncle, brother, or younger brother of the female character. In practice, the title for all members of the mother's lineage is *dăm dei* (*êdam adei*). The male family members have an essential role in the domestic and external affairs of the mother's family, even if they are married and reside with the wife's family. In the *Y'Khing Jũ* epic, the *dăm dei* ask a husband for their niece, invite the midwife for their nieces, resolve conflicts on behalf of the family, etc. When Y'Khing Ju's mother gave birth, her uncle Pro Mung Hdăng traveled a long way to find the midwife H'Bia Lim Luôm for her; when H'Bia Yâo wanted to marry Y'Khing Jũ, she asked her uncle to come and asked Y'Khing Jũ to be her husband; and just as H'Bia Yâo refuses to reconnect as husband and wife with Y'Khing Jũ, we again see the role of *dăm dei* in the theme of matriarchal marriage. Similarly, in the *Dam San* epic, the female chief H'Ñi's *dăm dei* marries Dam San for H'Ñi, *dăm dei* invites Dam San to his future wife's house, and they offer wine and support alongside Chief Dam San in the conquests. It can be said that the *dăm dei* in the *Y'Khing Jũ* epic, in particular, and the *Ede* epic, in general, reflect the role of men in Ede society; they are indispensable matches for powerful women in the traditional matriarchal society.

### 3.4.2. Communication rituals

A communication ritual is a set of behavioral rules based on the standards of different cultures or countries. The communication ritual for modern people is greeting, shaking hands, introducing themselves, giving business cards, etc. In contrast, the communication etiquette of the ancient Ede people was expressed through quite a particular form of language and affection.

- Paying attention to greetings

When people come to someone's house, they just "touch the stairs to go up" to the living room. The host is not in a hurry and slowly welcomes the guests. In the epic, we have the image of the hosts who "change the old dresses and put on new ones, take off wooden earrings and put on ivory ones, and wear floral skirts like *enam* flowers and dresses that are iridescent like cat-eye flowers" (Buôn, 2019, p. 321). The host-guest connection is made naturally by greeting guests in the living room. Welcoming is not made by constantly eating, drinking, and striking gongs. Different guests receive different greetings. "To young guests we offer small *ché*, to old guests we offer larger *ché*, and to noble guests we offer black *ché* with a big mouth. *Ché* has eight ears carried by five people with three people supporting in the middle" (Buôn, 2019, p. 323). Even though the midwife came in a hurry, H'Yang's mother always honored these principles:

Oh my servants! Get water from the pot so that she can wash her hands, a *kbê* to wash her feet, a copper bowl to wash her face, and a pot of water to wash her

mouth! Servants, spread mats on the house floor, white mats below and flower mats on top (Buôn, 2019, pp. 325-326).

And then the sound of gongs will be struck during the greeting.

Communication etiquette in the *Y'Khing Jũ* epic has many similarities and differences with modern practice. The difference in traditional etiquette is to greet the guests by welcoming the guest into the house. But in addition to the verbal greeting, a handshake between the host and the male guest is a new feature in the communication of the Ede people.

- Getting straight to the point

In the *Y'Khing Jũ* epic, mentioning individuals and the community directly is often used when needing someone's assistance in the fields, in the stream, during a visit to the village, and even when asking questions about the crying child, etc. This process is often straightforward; they get straight to the point that needs to be acknowledged or answered based on what they know. It is not lengthy and does not depend too much on the roles and positions of the subjects in communication, even when a god comes down to earth:

Oh Aduôn Sun, Aduôn Si having curly hair! Combs are on your heads, and rice water bottles are around you. Whose child is crying incessantly? Whose baby is crying all the time, disturbing our sleep?

Aduôn Sun: Oh! The midwife doesn't know what to name the baby of H'Yung!  
Aê Du Aê Die: Go, you, go! Please call the little girl H'Bia Yáo. Aduôn Sun went to H'Yung's house with her back bent (Buôn, 2019, p. 330).

- Diversity in vocatives

First, we consider the diversity of the vocative system. Similar to Vietnamese, the Ede language uses many nouns indicating kinship. In addition, the Ede use proper names or alternative words to show intimacy, such as *juk/knai*, or nouns to classify. H'Yang and H'Yung are close friends; it is natural for them to call each other *juk*. But H'Yang's mother and the midwife H'Bia Lim Luôm met for the first time. Yet, they still consider each other *juk*, calling each other *juk* quite intimately. There was also a time when H'Yang's mother called H'Bia Lim Luôm "*ih*" to show respect because she did an essential job in ancient society. As for H'Yang, he called himself *kâo* (grandchild) and called the midwife *aduôn* (grandmother), creating intimacy. Midwife H'Bia Lim Luôm always called H'Yang *õng* (in this case, it means grandchild), not *čô* (grandchild). This form of address evokes intimacy and comfort when communicating. In the conversation, the third person is mentioned: kinship noun + personal pronoun *amĩ kâo* – showing possessiveness; arang – person pronoun, noun to classify *buê êtuh* (hundred midwives), *buê êbao* (thousand midwives) also enriches the vocatives.

- Gratitude

When emotions dominate communication, different communication etiquette will be used. Within the family, family affection always creates intimacy in communication etiquette. When examining communication rituals in the *Y'Khing Jũ* epic at the family level, we see the Ede people express their appreciation for their loved ones directly, without hiding. Buôn (2019, p. 321) cited: "The midwife H'Bia Lim Luôm said to her father: Oh, Father! The guests must have been tired of waiting for you. If you don't come out, let me! Let me go out to greet our guests" or as the hero Y'Khing Jũ said to his wife: "My lady, what's wrong with you? Why did you stop the gongs? Why are you yelling so loudly?" (Buôn, 2019, p. 356). Or, as Dăm Bhu said to his brother: "Oh! Why are you so terrible! Become a coward and hide behind your woman. You shall die in a deep valley because of your cowardness" (Buôn, 2019, p. 340). Even though a daughter talks to her father (lower level), the husband talks to his wife (as equals), the brother talks to his younger brother (higher level), etc., we can see that the Ede people pour their hearts out without understatement or avoidance.

Emotional relationships among powerful and influential people will govern the communication ritual. In the *Ede* and *Y'Khing Jũ* epics, the way family members treat each other is heartfelt, while the communication with the chiefs is somewhat more polite. They are humble, but that humility is temporary and leveraged to increase prestige. The dialogue between Y'Dhuê Y'nguê and hero Dăm Bhu in the battle for the beautiful female chief not only shows humility and respect in communication, but also makes listeners think that they are not each other's enemies:

Dăm Bhu: Oh, Brother! Go down, oh Brother!

Y'Dhuê Y'nguê: Why do I have to go down? I'm busy holding our wife's breast.

Dăm Bhu: Go down, Brother, go down!

Y'Dhuê Y'nguê: Why do I have to go down? I'm busy holding our wife's breast in the room with two dividers and three walls.

Dăm Bhu: So you will not go down! Do you want me to cut off your string, your ropes for gongs, and disturb your "*an nam uong thang*"?

... Y'Dhuê Y'nguê: Don't you do it! Don't you know? My reputation reaches the gods and spreads across mountains. I'm the strongest among all! Don't you do it (Buôn, 2019, p. 348).

In the above dialogue, it can be seen that the addressing between the two chiefs on the fragile line between good and evil, life and death, or before the battle takes place, does not seem to differ from daily communication. This addressing appears quite commonly in the dialogues during wars in the *Ede* epic. Contrary to the condescending, somewhat formal way of speaking with people of the same position or with other chiefs in the epic world, intimacy and closeness are characteristic in communication between

bosses and their *dĩng buǎl* (servants). In the *Y'Khing Jũ* epic, when talking to his male and female servants, Y'Khing Jũ is always respectful and polite: "Oh Children! Stop the gongs!...my servants! Why are you crying, crying for happiness or sadness?" (Buôn, 2019, p. 349).

Calling servants *hdeh* (children), *keebao*, *ktào klĩng*, *dĩng buǎl* (thousands of sparrows, ten thousand birds, servants) gives us a sense of love and respect. The chiefs did not consider their servants slaves to oppress and exploit. They thought of their servants as small beings needing guidance and protection. In return, Y'Khing Jũ's servants also respect and love their master. They call their master *ayǒng* Y'Khing Jũ (brother) or *ih* (someone with high status, a respected person); they call the hostess *amai* H'Bia Yào (sister) and call themselves *drei* (us). This shows a democratic spirit, with equality between the rich and their servants. From this feature, it can be said that in communication, democratic spirit and respect for others are always valued by the Ede. This characteristic appears in the relationship between heroes and their servants and in the fiercest battles between the chiefs in the epic world.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

From the evidence provided above, it can be seen that the communication culture of the Ede is closely reflected in the *Y'Khing Jũ* epic. Their communication culture emphasizes hospitality, respect, humility, and harmony. Whether communicating directly or indirectly, sincerity, frankness, and sophistication are evident in the communication of the Ede people in the epic. Relationships in communication indicate openness, but still ensure the principles and democratic features of traditional culture. The principles in relationships, methods, and etiquette in communication are reflected through many vocatives in the work, creating a unique feature in the communication culture of the Ede people, contributing to affirming the literary and cultural value of the epic, and serving as a reference in teaching and researching on the language, culture, and behavior of the Ede people, in particular, and the Central Highlands, in general.

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