

LANGUAGE, USE COMMUNICATION AND TERRORISM IN NIGERIA: A CRITICAL DISCOURSE

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ABSTRACT: *It is a fact that no other issue has occupied the centre stage of global discourses in recent times more than terrorism and its attendant counter. It is also a fact that the dominant strategy adopted against terrorism so far, and in the recent times is military action. Surprisingly however, just as terrorism has caused severe destruction to lives and property, just as it has dangerously threatened global peace and security, it is an observable fact that the adoption of military action against terrorism has always led to almost equal level of devastation within the affected territories. Thus, the search for an alternative strategy that can address the scourge, with minimal devastative consequences has become very necessary. The aim of this paper is to examine how effective use of language and other communication tools could be harnessed in this regard. The paper holds that terrorism is a product of loss of trust, mutual suspicion, betrayal, deceit among other factors. It is a reactionary mechanism for settling scores. The paper therefore, asserts that effective use of language holds great panacea towards engendering mutual trust and peaceful co-existence, and by extension, also, holds the potential to forestalling terrorism. The paper has adopted as its theoretical background, Critical Discourse Analyses. It is a relevant linguistic framework that seeks to analyse how language captures the power play in human co-existence. Furthermore, the paper has been segmented into internally related sub-headings for clarity and orderly presentation. The paper in its conclusion does not rule out the need for military action as option to counter terrorism. It however submits that there is need to look beyond military action for further solution, especially from the point of view of avoiding terrorism instead of fighting terrorism.*

KEYWORDS: Language, Communication, Terrorism, Nigeria, Critical Discourse

INTRODUCTION

Terrorism especially from its negative perception has remained in the fore of major global discourses in recent times. Not that terrorism is a new phenomenon, because it is as old as human

politics, but rather, because of the dimension it has taken in the recent times. Because of its seeming threat to global peace and security, it has remained a major subject in major discourses. This is especially since the historical attack on the World Trade Centre in the United States of America on September 11, 2001 by the Al- Qaeda group. From this day, it seems hard to witness a day pass without a story of terrorist action in one nation or the other. From Pakistan to Iraq, Somalia to Egypt, Kenya, Syria, Mali, and many other nations, terrorism has persisted. In all these cases, terrorism takes different forms and has produced different magnitudes of destructions.

Nigeria is not spared of this nagging social menace. From the *armed struggle* of hostage taking by the Niger Delta youths over the management and control of their oil wealth, a struggle which at a point was hijacked by social miscreants, to the incessant kidnapping that has engulfed the other parts of the country especially the South East, terrorism has persisted. The most challenging of all has been the activities of the Boko Haram insurgents. Boko Haram is an Islamic religious sect in the northern part, most noticeably in the north eastern part of the country, whose activities have wasted the lives of thousands of people. Their major attacks include the Oct 1, 2010 attack on the Eagles Square, the attack on the United Nations Building in Abuja, the attack on the Police Head Quarters in Abuja, the Christmas Day attack on the St. Theresa's Catholic Church in Suleja, the attack on a church in a military barracks in Kaduna, the attack on the University of Jos Catholic Chaplaincy, the attack on the Emir of Borno and the Emir of Kano, the attack and gruesome murder of student in unity colleges and colleges of education in Borno and Adamawa States, the incessant attack on villagers along the borders between Nigeria and Cameroon, and so many others of such deadly attacks. Many lives, both Nigerians and non-Nigerians, as well as invaluable property have been lost in these attacks. Economic, social and religious activities in the affected areas have almost been grounded. Other parts of the country who though have not experienced any such attack live under threat and fear.

Thus researchers from diverse disciplines and persuasions have shown various degrees of interest on terrorism, and their interests have been on proffering possible solutions to this global menace, whose attendant consequences on human peaceful coexistence remain debilitating. The present research is one of such efforts. Its major thrust is to seek, and to establish a link between language, communication and terrorism, with particular reference to Nigeria.

Critical Discourse.

Discourse according to Foucault in Olateju refers to "...the general domain of all statements, sometimes as an individualisable group of statements, and sometimes as a regulated practice that accounts for a number of statements" (9). Candin also in Olateju explains that, "...discourse is a means of talking and writing about and acting upon words, a means which both construct and is constructed by a set of social practices within these worlds and in-so doing, both reproduce and construct afresh, particular social-discursive practices, constrained or encouraged by more macro movements in the over arching social formation" (10). Bloor and Bloor describe it as "symbolic human interaction in its many forms, whether directly through spoken or written language or via gesture, pictures, diagrams, films, or music"(2). Critical discourse on its part is a part of critical linguistic analysis that focuses on discourse. According to Bloor and Bloor, critical discourse of text considers "broader issues such as social context of discourse, the role of discourse in social

practices, and the function of specific texts”(2). Furthermore, they contend that the aims and objectives of linguistics differ because “linguists are concerned with how language or discourse ‘works’ and their interest is in language for its own sake. Critical discourse analysts, on the other hand, are interested in the way in which language and discourse are used to achieve social goals and in the part of this use plays in social maintenance and change”(2). From the above scholarly explanations, critical discourse refers to the study of language use as a means of social cohesion and change. The social domain of language that is of interest to this paper is the connection between language and terrorism, an inter-play that constantly threatens social cohesion with significant centrifugal force.

Language.

Language is among the human natural phenomena that have attracted extensive consideration from scholars. However one recurring feature in most scholarly views is that language is a means of communication. No doubt language is important to man in social survival as water and food are to man for biological and chemical sustenance. McLaughlin has defined language, for instance, as “the system of arbitrary verbal symbols (and non-verbal means) that speakers put in order, according to a conventional code to communicate ideas and feelings or to influence the behaviour of others” (19). It is the means that is readily available to human beings in the communication of ideas and feelings. Language is one of the features that distinguish human social life from other animal creatures. According to Fromkin et al, “the possession of language, perhaps more than any other attribute, distinguishes humans from other animal. To understand our humanity, one must understand the nature of language that makes us human” (3). Thus, language is very important because it enables one to speak and be understood by others who are intelligible in the same language. The functions of language in human social life are enormous. It is a binding force, a unifying and cohesive mechanism. In fact, there is society because there is language. Remove language and society will disintegrate and collapse.

The efficacy of language lies in its meaning potentials. Halliday in Webster, has submitted that language is “meaning potential: a system and process of choice which typically goes on below the threshold of attention, but can be attended to and reflected on under certain circumstances—most typically, though not exclusively associated with the evolution of writing” (404). Language expressively manifests as compendium of words, phrases, clauses and sentences, but are chosen by users, and stringed together systematically, to express meanings that are appropriate in a particular context. Essentially, language use is interpreted against the background of its context. Borrowing from Finegan, “people use language principally as a tool to do things: request a favour, make a promise, report a piece of news, give directions, offer a greeting, seek information, extend an invitation, request help and do hundreds of other things...” (302).

What one does with language could produce positive or negative consequences. Therefore, knowing the use of language is not simply a matter of knowing how to structure words into phrases and sentences to encode messages and transmit them to a second party, who then decodes them in order to understand what is intended. Similarly, language use does not simply involve encoding and decoding of messages or just attaining grammatical competence where every sentence would have a fixed interpretation irrespective of its context of use. It also embodies our ability to use language accurately, appropriately and flexibly to reflect context and message. It involves the ability to make language perform the intended need of the user within

the given context. Every situation expects peculiar mode of language use, just as every occasion expects a fitting dress mode. A mode of language use that is at odds with its context is likely to be counter productive, igniting misunderstanding, confusion and sometimes reprehension.

Communication

Communication as a word is derived from the Latin word *communicare* which means to share (Jain et al. 135). Its interpretation receives various interpretations depending on field or discipline. For instance, Cherry, a psychologist describes it as “the discriminatory response of an organism to stimulus. (It includes the) relationship set up by the transmission of stimuli and the evocation of responses”(qtd in Anyachonkeya 344). Such definition as this restricts communication to the mental or psychological process of stimulus – response relationship, how the internal mind responds to an external stimulus. But to a linguist like Crystal, communication extends to a process of “transmission and reception of information (a message) between a source and a receiver using a signaling system: in linguistic contexts, source and receiver are interpreted in human terms, the system involved is a language, and the notion of response to (or acknowledgement of) the message becomes of crucial importance”(qtd in Ndimele 123). Thus, to a linguist, communication is a process of social interaction that has the potential of bringing people together, the essence of which is to share knowledge. Again, this is not the end of it all, as the definition of communication could be expanded to incorporate an interaction process that involves sharing information, experience and culture.

Culture is necessary in communication because man is never different from the culture that shapes his identity and perception. Communication as a mental response to stimulus or social interaction is incidental on culture. Objects, concepts, ideas and images communicate differently according to people’s culture, and this is transferred through generations as part of learning and socialization. Notably, communication is not limited to the verbal language use. Other non-verbal forms like proxemics (use of space), kinesics (body movement), dress pattern and other manners of personal appearance, tone, pauses etc. are all forms of communicating messages. Incidentally, people often ignore the non-verbal aspect of communication, concentrating only on the words of speech and writing. Leech’s remark that speakers often “mean more than they say” must be taken seriously (qtd in Mey 69). Often times, the emotional aspect of communication comes from the non-verbal. What may bring quarrel between interlocutors could be how a thing is said, and not what is said. The *how* is the non-verbal and may be the tone used, the facial construction of the speaker, the posture of the speaker, the emotional consideration of the social or economic space between the interlocutors and so on. Thus, both the verbal and the no-verbal aspects of communication are important in any interlocution.

Terrorism.

Terrorism is one of the concepts that have received varying interpretations characterized by sentiments, interests and ideology. As such, what constitutes terrorism has been relatively difficult to be generally agreed upon by scholars and political players. To some people, terrorism is closely linked to liberation struggle. Under this guise, it is seen as a genuine mode of seeking redress and redemption from oppression. For instance, to the actors in the Palestinian struggle in the Middle East, the Niger Delta struggle in Nigeria, the Boko Haram activities in the Northern part of Nigeria and the Jihadist movement in Mali, their activities are all justifiable struggles by

act and conscience. However, to the governments of Israel, Nigeria and Mali respectively, to the victims of their actions and activities, the struggles are acts of terrorism. Thus, in every situation that holds terrorism, there are two sides of a conflict, and each side interprets the actions from how they affect it. This may have guided Imobighe and Eguavon in stating that,

although there is a tendency in contemporary world to mystify terrorist as an awesome instrument of response to perceived grievances, apparently because of its increasing potency and destructive nature as well as its international linkages, acts that we refer to as terrorism today have historically remained part of the management tools for addressing violent conflicts.”(8).

The politics of terrorism involves different forms of violence, from the physical to the psychological. Although it is often seen by the involved *terrorist(s)* as a mode of expression or demonstration of feeling and perception, the violence aspect cannot be swept under the carpet. It is a product of social and, or ideological contradictions requiring public demonstration, support or otherwise. It is an action or movement motivated by objectives, where such objectives could be rooted in religion, governance, economy, inheritance etc. It is a phenomenon that grows out of conflict and discord, an action against a discomfiting status quo. In all these cases, the possibility of resistance cannot be ruled out. The American Revolution of 1776 for instance was a politically motivated violence directed at a people (Tory sympathizers) and property (stamp houses) that triggered off revolutionary uprising (Thobaben, 76). To the American history, the revolution remains a patronizing and acceptable violence and not terrorism. This is despite the fact that the strategies and activities associated with the revolution as well as their consequences were not very far from those of the present-day *terrorists*. But there were attacks, resistance, killings and destructions.

Another major sin of terrorism, whether as liberation struggle or criminally intended attack, is the attack on and destruction (intentionally or unintentionally) of innocent people and their property. Based on this, most scholars believe that the destructive tendency of terrorism takes it away from any form of justification. Thus the grouse of Late Osama Bin Laden and his Al-Qaeda network against the U.S.A and other western countries that they have attacked, or that of Late Yusuf and his Boko Haram network against Nigeria and the Nigerian people can never be justified vis-à-vis the extent of human destruction and property damage resulting from their activities. No matter their grievances, their strategic approach and the attendant consequences of their actions negate every sense of common judgment about humanity. Also, whatever that may have aggravated such reactionary approach ought to be condemned and avoided as well.

Terrorism and counter terrorism: a functional perspective

This paper does not aim to argue that every form of violence or every form of killing or destruction of property constitutes terrorism. It proposes that terrorism is a type

of organised violence motivated by instinct to protect and propagate ideological interest, be it political, religious or economic. What this implies is that every terrorist attack seeks to uproot an unfavourable system. The justification or otherwise of such violence depends on the stand point of who is concerned about it. Again a system cannot fold its arms to receive organised attack and

or be uprooted. There must be reaction aimed containing and or countering the attack. It is a known fact that the popular mode of countering terrorism up to date is militarized counter. This involves the use of military might and instruments of violence, bombardment of perceived terrorist base, arrest, torture, imprisonment or possibly killing the perceived terrorist(s), disruption of terrorist network by seeming superior network, imposition of sanctions etc. However, as stated earlier, part of the sins of terrorism is the attack on innocent people. But experiences have also shown that militarized counter to terrorist activities often results to the same sin. In an attempt to counter terrorism, innocent people lose their lives, security officers on the counter mission also lose their lives or are maimed, people are displaced and dispossessed of their property, hunger and sicknesses of different names and mortality impacts set in. Even where such terrorists are subdued, there is usually no guarantee that they would not regroup and re-strategize. Rehabilitation of displaced persons often suffer from political maneuvers and celebrated rhetoric from political leaders who exploit such as another window for embezzlement and diversion of public fund. No doubt therefore, there is the need for alternative approaches. According to Imobighe and Eguavoen, it is:

unrealistic to think that after allowing adversarial relationship to escalate into violence, we can then impose rules to determine the instruments to be used or the targets to be selected. A more rewarding approach is to work towards the elimination of violence in conflictual relationship in order to put a freeze on war and terrorism. (10).

Also, the Organisation of African Union, O.A.U (now African Union, A.U) recognized this in their Lusaka manifesto, cited in Imobighe and Eguavoen, which states that:

if peaceful progress to emancipation were possible, or if circumstances were to make it possible in the future, we would urge our brothers in the resistance movements to use peaceful methods of struggle even at the cost of some compromise on the timing of change (21).

What these imply is that violence, both as liberation struggle, terrorism and or counter terrorism has not helped matters globally. This paper therefore makes bold to say that one rewarding approach to managing terrorism is the effective use of language.

Language and terrorism: a critical discourse appraisal.

This section examines the relationship between language and terrorism. The thrust is to examine how language constitutes in both terrorism and counter terrorism. The approach adopted is Critical Discourse Analysis, CDA. The major concern of CDA is to explore “the ways language is used to persuade and manipulate both individuals and social groups” (Bloor and Bloor, 1). It is developed out of Functional Linguistics which stresses the importance of context in the interpretation of language. Functional Linguistics refuses to see language as a collection of bald words and sentences, but as symbols of communication manipulated by users to achieve social goals.

CDA in application is a multi-disciplinary practice, because it pays attention to various disciplines, not limited to linguistics. The idea is that language is used in every discipline, and in each discipline, language is used to capture the structures, injustices, suffering and prejudices of the people. Therefore the objective of CDA is to analyze social contradictions that arise out of injudicious use of language, and how such contradictions reflect in the use of language by the affected group. Put in another form, CDA is interested in language as an instrument of social control.

CDA is relevant in drawing a link between language and terrorism. This is because what exists in terrorism is a manifestation of power play and ideological contradictions. Bloor and Bloor aptly capture this in their expression that “one man’s terrorist is another man’s freedom fighter” (129). Relating this to language use, they state that, “freedom fighters are people on our side and terrorists are the enemy.”(130). This expression captures the kind of language proxemics used to manipulate the psychology of terrorism. The use of the possessive *our side* in contrast with *the enemy* reflects the politics of closeness and farness associated with power politics that sometimes result to attack and counter attack. Jain et al. have argued that such social discrimination are often used by “self proclaimed intellectuals and corrupt men (who) condemn those who do not tread their favoured paths. They form groups to bulldoze others with the terror of numbers. Our language then becomes a vehicle of this form of terrorism”(140). Let us examine some instances language and communication link with terrorism.

Power and language use.

One notable product of power play is social inequality. It is one phenomenon which permeates the various strata of social relations in the society: politics, economy, religion, marriage, professional career etc. In these social situations, inequality is intrinsically contained in their operations. A good case is the professional. In military profession for instance, respect for rank is not by choice but by force. This applies to several other professions. Contrarily, there are some situations where inequality is not an intrinsic part. A good case is inequality in economic wealth. That one is economically rich does not correspondingly attract forceful respect from the society. While some people, out of choice may choose to respect a rich man in their society, others may choose otherwise, and no entrenched sanction follows this. Politics belongs to the middle course. The constitution of any nation may clearly specify the form of respect attached to any political position as part of its paraphernalia. At the same time, the constitution would clearly state the checks on the possible excesses of the political office. Thus abuse negates the expectations, and therefore begets loss of the expected respect.

Therefore, it is easy for the ruled to interpret repressive force from the conduct of their rulers. This also could exist in the use of language and or other modes of communication by the rulers. For instance, when the language of a political leader suggests imposition of will, arrogation of power or playing the god-role, its pragmatic import on the ruled is as repressive as the physical action. A political leader and sitting head of state in Nigeria was once quoted as saying in a political rally that an election was a “do or die”. Also, an ex-head of state in the same country was once quoted as saying that he would make the country ungovernable in the event his opponent wins an election. To these political leaders, these were just part of the usual bravado and rhetorical cant associated with rally speeches in the country. But the statements were enough

threats to advise the opposition to arrange for both constitutional and unconstitutional strategies for the already declared war. The felicity conditions of the statements include that the speakers have the power to realize their “threats”. The communicative influence on the listeners cannot be empty threat, joke or mere bravado. Thus, the reaction to such statements may not be verbal response, but physical preparation. Certain expressions presuppose moral bondage on the user. Jain et al., therefore advise that ones “social language must never be so arranged as to emotionally trap others”(139).

In the same manner, unnecessary display of affluence by a ruler in the midst of the economically impoverished ruled is a non-verbal mode of wishing the ruled suffering. In a state of hardship, the affluent becomes the source of the peoples’ economic woes, a social enemy. Encounter with low class people, for instance, street traders, commercial riders of motorcycles, and tricycles artisans along the street in Nigeria tells of the misgivings that arise from socio-economic gap. Driving expensive car makes the owner ritualistic, roguish, criminal, and so on. These are uncomplimentary expressions that the low class uses to describe any show of affluence. The source of the wealth is inconsequential. The moral truth of the expression does not matter as its logical truth which is, that the person is enjoying what collectively belongs to all. The source of the prejudice is obvious. There is the general notion that any one associated with affluence in the country should be directly or indirectly linked to the government. The government officials in the country are seen as corrupt, hence affluent living in the country non-verbally communicates corruption. And a corrupt person is a social enemy.

Both verbal and non-verbal modes of communication exert influences on people. As such a leader ought to be conscious of his language use, as well as his social conduct. Certain conducts of political leaders communicate violence to the psyche of the ruled, hence could engender reactions that may take different forms, violent and non-violent.

Again, political leaders should understand that their positions attract certain felicity conditions that guarantee their opinions to be respected and obeyed. As such, the same utterance coming from a political leader and a non-political leader can never have the same perlocutionary effects. The fear and suspicion arising from the connection of some statements by highly placed people and Boko Haram sponsorship stems from the background that, such people are highly placed in the society who enjoy appreciable level of unquestionable followership. Their followers believe that they have access to the truth about the true state of affairs in the country. Again, they are capable of having access to instruments of violence. This may be fallacy though, but it exists as part of the temperament of the people. Political leaders should therefore realize that their utterances are interpreted beyond their ordinary persons. Their social positions exert considerable contextual tenor influence on their utterances and other social behaviours. After all, some other individuals may have made greater threats, but theirs went not unnoticed.

Prejudice

Prejudice is an integral part of social life. Every human being has prejudices that pitch him or her as an individual, or a member of a group against the others. In language, prejudice may be implicated in the use of the pronoun pairs: *I* and *me*; *we* and *us*; *they* and *them*. These pronouns

pragmatically implicate inclusion and exclusion, social closeness and farness, friendship and enmity respectively.

Nigeria as a nation has several features that portend social gap: cultural, language, religious differences, geography etc. These are natural gifts to the country which could be harnessed both positively and negatively. The country's former National Anthem tried to close this gap in some of its phrases:

*Nigeria we hail thee
our own dear native land
though tribe and tongue may differ
in brotherhood we stand*

In a similar manner, the current Anthem captures this in the phrases:

*...to serve our father land
...the labour of our heroes past
(emphasis ours)*

Note the proxemic import of the pronoun *we* and the plural possessive *our* in ensuring togetherness, social inclusion and closeness. Within the context of the Anthems, the lyrics often overshadow the messages. But the use of the inclusive *we*, instead of allowing individuals to use *I* is important. After all, the corresponding pledge that accompanies the Anthem uses the pronoun *I*.

I pledge to Nigeria my country...

The individualizing and inclusive imports of the pronouns are pragmatically important. Contrarily, in most political discourses, even in most religious discourses in Nigeria today, the recurrent pronouns are *they* and *them* instead of *we* and *us*. Even where the pronouns *we* and *us*, or the possessive *our* may have been used, the import in such contexts shifts from the macro-inclusiveness to micro-inclusiveness. They carry a restricted social boundary of ethnicity, political party or group, religious group and other such micro-social groups that exclude others. Unfortunately, such is usually not rhetorical, as the proxemic import manifests not only linguistically but also psychologically, especially in the creation of opportunities for socio-economic survival. Thus Nigeria is one nation where prejudice in language use transcends the ordinary linguistic to a practical reflection of the internal mindset of the user.

While this paper admits that it is difficult to expunge these lexical items and their uses from the English language lexicon, the paper makes bold to say that a change of attitude towards their uses is required. There ought to be a change from the stereotyped micro-social *they* and *them* to a macro-social *we* and *us*, a change from *their* to *our*. This will help in creating psychological inclusiveness and closeness, social proximity that discourages violent opposition that often result to organized attacks on perceived enemies. Social gaps have the potential of creating enemies within, hence should be discouraged.

Face threatening technique.

Face threatening technique developed from Erving Goffman's study on face work. According to Goffman, "there are occasions that give rise to face-saving, face-losing and face-threatening

activities. In discussions, it is the duty of interactants to strive to protect both their own face and also that of the others.” (Bloor and Bloor,102).

Those that occupy positions of authority ought to understand that language is a source of both face-saving and face-threatening activities. There are occasions that bring deliberate and malicious face-losing. Such are cases of aggressive confrontation, open abuse and direct attack, less critically blunt statements etc. Yes, there are sanctioned occasions of ritual insults like in political debates, political rallies, discussions on sensitive national issues etc. Such are socially sanctioned occasions for linguistic face-games. However, on such occasions, the interactants ought to recognize the presence of innocent and ignorant audience who may lack the linguistic competence that could enable them look through the masked real malice of the game. Such audience always stops at the transparent value of the game. And this is a dangerous linguistic situation that creates ambiguities. This brings about a gap between audience interpretation and the real intention of the interactants, a kind of dramatic irony that often results to subsequent excuses of media representations and misconstruing. It is important to note that the gap between the misrepresentation and the correction or rejoinder is enough for conclusions that may not be easily changed.

Researches often point at lack of proper education as a major cause of terrorism because most paraded terrorists fall within the uneducated or not-so-well educated, who so unfortunately depend on the real players for the interpretation of what constitutes just or unjust fight. Majority of these paraded terrorists are victims of linguistic face-games played by those behind the curtain who exploit their ignorance. In Nigeria, the *almajiri* tradition in the north (where children are thrown into and neglected on the streets as beggars) of the country have been fingered as the major sources of terrorist recruitment. Therefore the face-saving and face threatening aspect of language ought to be managed properly and sincerely by political actors to avoid the audience falling into gullies of rhetoric manipulation.

CONCLUSION.

So far, this paper has sought to assert that language use and communication are tools for achieving various intents and purposes. As such there is a link between language and terrorism when language is used to perpetrate violence. This is especially between the rulers and the ruled. In this regard, terrorism as a form of violence could be a physical reaction to a psychological violence occasioned by language use. The paper also concludes that such linguistic violence extends to the non-verbal mode of communication. The attitude and conduct of political leaders also constitute in communication. Thus it is illogical to institute a policy of austerity in a country while the activities of a few exhibit uncontrollable affluence. The result will not be far from organized violence against this few, which often extends to the innocent.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Language use and other modes of communication depend so greatly on faithfulness. Grice in his Cooperative Maxims of Quality and Quantity opens the dangers inherent in misrepresentation of fact, distortion of reality and extravagant claims respectively. These are possible sources of risk

of suspicion and escalation of temperament. By extension, they are possible sources of hostility. Though verbal and or non-verbal, their impacts often generate physical action of hostility and violence. Language use is like a spark stone, capable of igniting action, both negative and positive. Therefore those that occupy positions of authority and trust should be mindful of their use of language, their attitude and conducts, considering the felicity conditions associated with their positions.

It is the opinion of this paper that language of solidarity helps in closing the gap of suspicion. The use of language to establish and maintain solidarity is recommended as a tool for mutual co-existence, for face-saving rather than face-threat, for social inclusiveness rather than exclusiveness. Where there is a reduction in the risk of suspicion, there is bound to be a concomitant reduction in the possibility of negative temperament which serves as a potential for terrorism.

Sincere dialogue and mutual trust are proposed in place of show of military might in the fight against terrorism. A perceived *terrorist* is only pursuing a course which is in contrast with the programme and design of someone that has branded him a *terrorist*. Instead of a fight for superiority, the *terrorist* could be allowed to explain his course, its reasons and need. Through dialogue, an understanding could be reached by both parties. A situation where innocent people suffer out of clash of interests and organized forces of violence to implement and propagate such interests is not the best for humanity. Language does many things for man. It is capable of creating violence, it is also capable of quelling violence.

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