THE IMPACT OF LANGUAGE IN CONFLICT MANAGEMENT AND PEACE BUILDING

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ABSTRACT: *Conflict is inevitable and part of the society. A conflict can be encountered in the home, between a husband and his wife, between parents and their children. Conflicts can also be between friends, colleagues, a teacher and his students, and even between religious leaders, politicians, traders, just mention it. Conflict is not entirely negative. The society needs conflict to advance as conflicts enable people know their rights, duties and short comings. The manner a conflict is handled is very important. Language at this juncture, plays an indispensable role in managing conflicts on one hand, and on the other hand, escalating a conflict. In other words, the paper explores language as an instrument capable of deescalating or escalating a conflict.*

KEYWORDS: Language, Conflict Management, Peace Building, People's Lives

INTRODUCTION

Language is important in people's lives. It is with language that people communicate their ideas (Crystal, 1987:10). The ideas people communicate to one another cover, among other things, ways of doing things that are cultural beliefs which bind members of the society together.

'A language', refers to the speech form of a given community of people (Fowler, 1974). The meaning of 'language' is in contradistinction to 'dialect' in that any speech form described as 'a language' is mutually unintelligible with any other speech form in the world. The second perspective defines 'language' as a system of communication for giving, receiving, and even hiding information. This perception of language covers what Chomsky sees as 'a set of very specific universal principles which are intrinsic properties of the human mind and part of species genetic endowment' (Downes, 1984:20).

It is this second definition that is relevant to our work in that language here plays a significant role in people's daily life. This role is partly social, and partly psychological. The social deals with culture and the psychological with human behaviour and human interactions. From all these definitions, there is no doubt that language plays a significant role in people's daily existence. Conflict is a term derived from a Latin word, 'confligere' which means 'strike together' (Aniga, 2004). Conflicts can occur in the home, office, on the street, and even in the religious houses.

A conflict can be caused, according to Albert (2001:4-5) by these four factors, competition for inadequate resources, contradicting value system, psychological needs of groups and individuals, and manipulation of information. All these causes are relevant to our topic as community conflicts are based on clashes of interests amongst the people. There are, however, different types of conflict. They include, intra-personal conflict which deals with a person's problems with say, how to manage his time, finance, who to marry and what course to study. The second type is inter-personal, conflicts between friends, colleagues and family members. The third is intra-group conflict, about conflicts within a group, fourth, inter-group conflict, to do with conflicts between two groups. The fifth and sixth are intra-national and international conflicts respectively. The former deals with a national conflict while on the other hand, the latter deals with conflicts between two or more nations. Albert (2001:6-8) outlines four conflict handling styles: avoidance, confrontation, third party, and Joint Problem Solving (JPS). The first and second are negative handling styles because they tend to escalate a conflict. The third and the fourth handling styles tend to be positive and they help in de-escalating a conflict that has got to a violent stage.

Finally, there are six stages in conflict (Ihejirika, 2001:9). They include: the formative stage, the escalation stage, the violent stage, the de-escalation stage, the improvement stage and the transformation stage. The stage one centers on early warning signs which include visible antagonisms and behaviour leading to two that entails inflammatory public statements (Ihejirika, 2001). Weapons are freely used as law and order are virtually disrupted in stage three which is the climax. Stage four is ceasefire to enable external force to intervene. Stage five brings about dialogue while the sixth centers on sustaining peace. Conflict management implies a process of engaging the conflict actors and stakeholders to understand their differences (IDASA, 2004:28). In this context, conflict management comprises negotiation and mediation. Negotiation is a type of conflict management process where the parties in conflict educate each other about their needs and interests; with the intention of finding a solution that will be beneficial to the two parties (Moore 1996:8). Usually, negotiation is a voluntary bargaining. Negotiation, therefore, aims at establishing contact between the parties, identifying topics to be addressed and; determining how discussions will be conducted and also seeking to influence each party to obtain satisfaction to enable them reach final approval for agreement and implementation (Albert 2001: 72-03).

However, a negotiation can break down, according to Albert (2001:79) and Lincoln (1995:222-3) when one of the parties only tries to acquire information from the opposing disputant for embarking on litigation or arbitration, thereby violating procedural agreements and engaging in lying. Mediation, on the other hand, is the intervention in a negotiation or conflict of an acceptable third party who has limited or no authority or decision making power but assists the parties involved in voluntarily reaching a mutually acceptable settlement of issues in dispute (Moore 1996:15).

Albert (2001:86) outlines three types of mediation, as follows: (1) social network mediators who are individuals that are invited to intervene because of their closeness to the disputants; (2) authoritative mediators, based on their position of authority, i.e.

because they are respected and recognized; and (3) Independent mediators, who, as the name implies, are neutral mediators whose impartiality since they do not know any of the disputants is expected to be much more professional. Generally, negotiation and mediation are related. Mediators do help in the negotiation process when there is a deadlock. Irrespective of the type of mediators mentioned above, they all virtually aim at one goal: to help disputants find a solution to their disagreement (Albert 2001:91).

CONCEPTUAL DISCOURSE

The term conflict is derived etymologically from the Latin verb confligere ('to clash, engage in a fight'). It refers to a confrontation between individuals or a group resulting from opposite or incompatible ends or means Alex Schmidt (2001.1). He added that, conflict as an antagonistic situation or adversarial process between at least two individual or collective actors over means or ends such as resources, power, status, values, goals, relations or interest. To him, the range of outcomes includes victory, defeat, domination, surrender, neutralization, conversion, coercion, injury, or destruction and elimination of the opposite party or, alternatively, the solution, settlement or transformation of the conflict issue.

Conflict management refers to the long-term management of intractable conflicts. It is the label for the variety of ways by which people handle grievances—standing up for what they consider to be right and against what they consider to be wrong. Those ways include such diverse phenomena as gossip, ridicule, lynching, terrorism, warfare, feuding, genocide, law, mediation, and avoidance. Ryan, (1990).Which forms of conflict management will be used in any given situation can be somewhat predicted and explained by the social structure—or social geometry of the case. It can be referred to as interference in an on-going conflict process in such a way as to contain and if possible to reduce the level of violence and destruction and also to prevent the vertical escalation towards the use of weapons of mass destruction and to prevent the horizontal expansion into other threaten. Conflict management can also be referred to as the act of transforming the potential or actual violent clash into a less damaging form of interaction or the act of searching for temporary solutions that can prevent re-escalation and move the conflicting parties towards either a settlement of conflict or at least a termination of the killing, e.g through a ceasefire (Lund, 1997:3-2).

Conflict management involved two objectives: The short-term objectives and the long-term objectives. In the short run, the most realistic goal is conflict settlement in the sense of reducing or containing the escalation of crisis and war. Only when this has been achieved can we begin to work at a more fundamental solution of the conflict. This is likely to be a much more drawn-out process. Crisis intervention may be a matter of days and weeks. Conflict resolution is more likely to be achieved in months, years or decades of patient and incremental prodding (Kleiboer, 1998:72). Literally, we do misuse conflict management with crisis management. Crisis management entails the use of force or otherwise, it refers to the coordinated and timely application of political, economic,

military or police measures taken in response to a situation threatening peace, with the aim of defusing the tense situation, prevailing escalation, or achieving a peaceful crisis management in terms of coercive-cooperation bargaining, in an attempt to prevent violence conflict from occurring. The problem facing the world is "crisis manager" to find a balance between being tough and being tender, between using coercion and offering concessions, between aggression and accommodation. Too much accommodation can lead to surrender and to 'peace at any price'. For the diplomat, the essence of crisis management is to know when to give ground or when to stand firm. The balance between coercion and accommodation will differ over time" (Evans & Newnham 1992:60).

Peace building involves putting structures in place for removing the roots of conflict. Albert (2001:132) sums it up, thus:

> *Peace building is aimed at putting in place the social, economic, political and environmental mechanism necessary for making lasting peace possible. It is not a question of constructing make-shift or temporary shelter…*

Peacebuilding can be pre-conflict or post conflict. The former tries to prevent a conflict from breaking out. The latter is reactive and includes reconstruction of social infrastructure, the rehabilitation of displaced persons and reconciliation or mutual cooperation (IDASA 2004:30). Akinterinwa (2003:147) writes that 'peacebuilding is essentially non-coercive and comprises all efforts necessary to make the environment conducive for peace to reign'.

Because it does not employ coercive means of intervention it gives the parties in conflict the option to sit down and discuss a means of embracing peace. Even though peacebuilding is probably the best strategy aimed at securing peace in the world, Akinterinwa(2003:146) laments that this technique "has not been well taken care of in international relations…."

On the role language plays in conflict management, it can be said that language is responsible for a good number of conflicts erroneously blamed on religious and ideological differences around the world. Despite the fact that language can cause or mitigate conflict because of its positive and negative powers (Aniga, 2004:82), people, unfortunately, hardly think about it but take it for granted (Shell, 2002:11). When people are sensitive about their language, language tends to be a positive tool in life. Adeyanju (2006:46) described it as a medium of 'mass mobilization and socio – political engineering'. However, the reverse is the case when people are careless about their language about how they express themselves. The destructive power of language can be avoided when the language user understands the cultural and the linguistic sensitivities of the person being addressed. The more reason why language plays a significant role in conflict management and peace building hinges on the fact that language is part and parcel of culture, and culture in itself is a means in which people communicate,

perpetuate, and develop their knowledge and attitudes towards life (Taylor, 1991:91). In support of Taylor, Benedict (1971:31) opines that culture plays a role in language because culture is like an individual with consistent pattern of action. Since no society functions without culture, and culture is symbiotic with language, it is evident that language must have a place in the management of conflicts and peacebuilding which are cultural and peculiar to a given society like the Igbo people this research centres on.

It becomes even more difficult when one cannot communicate effectively in a language whose registers are not well mastered by the user. The English language in Nigeria's judiciary, that is, in the law courts, is a good example for most people because the language in use there is not clear to many people. Even the interpreters may not express accurately in English the real meaning of non-English speakers to the magistrate for various reasons. In such a case, conflict will be difficult to manage. But when the language in use is well understood by the two parties in conflict, it is easier for the conflict to be managed or resolved.

THE CONCEPT OF THOUGHT AND REALITY IN LANGUAGE

Boas (1964:17) lucidly addresses the issue of 'language and thought' in a manner a common man understands. He looks at English language and the India people's language and thought:

> *The ease with which in our modern European languages we express wide abstract ideas by a single term, and the facility with which wide generalisations are cast into the frame of a simple sentence, have been claimed to be one of the fundamental conditions of the clearness of our concepts, the logical force of our thought, and the precision with which we eliminate in our thoughts. Apparently this view has much in its favour. When we compare modern English with some of those Indian languages which are most concrete in their formative expression, the contrast is striking.*

Whenever a fact, something or someone considered to be truth is not thought to be true again, two ideas are being exhibited, conflict has crept in. Based on this background, Crystal (1987: 1) looks at the reason why we use language and quickly arrives at a common answer, to communicate our ideas. Emotional expressions and social interactions are some of these functions language helps to convey. Emotional function of language deals with anger, frustration and excitement which could be positive or negative. While the social function of language has to do with day to day social communication, Crystal (1987:23) says that these 'sentences of this kind are usually automatically produced, and stereotyped in structure.'

The fact however is thought in a given language may not equal or have the equivalence in a second unintelligible language, for example, between English language and Igbo. This results to different perception in reality because the thinking processes in the two

languages is more than speaking and writing, especially of one's mother tongue in a way that we hardly notice its complexities, (Burling, 1992:7) in view of the dynamics of language - shaping it to the cultural reality of the origin of the language.

Personal traits, which are a psychological identity of individuals, must be mentioned as a vital aspect capable of determining thought and reality. Crystal (1987:23) defines this area of complex language:

> *This complex field deals with the characteristics that enable us to distinguish between people and to make predictions about their behavior-characteristics generally classified as personal traits and types. Traits are styles as behavior that an individual displays, whatever the stimulus, in many different circumstances. Types involve the identification of a salient feature that is then used as a label for the whole personality.*

These personality traits and types are classified between 'Introverted' and 'Extraverted' group.

Introverted

Phlegmatic

Passive, careful, thoughtful,

Peaceful, controlled, reliable,

Even-tempered

Extraverted

Sanguine

leadership, carefree,

living, easy-going

responsive, talkative,

Sociable, outgoing

Melancholic

quiet, unsociable, reserved,

Pessimistic, sober, rigid,

anxious, moody

Choleric

touchy, restless,

aggressive, excitable,

changeable, impulsive,

optimistic, active.

Based on the above illustration devised by a British psychologist, Hans Eyserick (according to Crystal: 1987:23), the phlegmatics and the sanguine are stable while the melancholics and the cholerics are unstable. Because these personality traits see the world from different perspectives, there is no gain saying the fact that they constitute different thoughts and have varied realities to life. Let us briefly deal with control of

reality. Crystal (1987:12) writes that' An Igboman invokes the spirit powers in his ancestral prayers, using a formulaic curse ...' that was done in the Northern part of Nigeria. The lgbo are from south-eastern part of Nigeria. To the Igbo, the invocation of the spirits means so much to their culture. But to their hosts, the northerners; it may simply be a child's play. They may not appreciate the act and they may see it as being occultic. Such instances of incompatibilities of two languages' thought and reality systems often lead to language conflict which degenerates into religious, racial or political conflicts. Language and thought are symbiotic because according to Crystal (1987), language might be dependent upon thought, or thought might be dependent upon language as it were. To see language and thought as interdependent, one should be ready to recognise the fact that language is a regular part of the process of thinking and that recognising that everybody has to think in order to understand language. Failure to think in the direction of given languages becomes a sure way to cultural conflict as reality to "A" differs from reality in the thought of "B", for the fact that they do not think in the same direction. The implication of the above analogy can further be explained in this manner. The thought and reality of an Igbo man are based on his cultural worldview. In other hand, the way he views things mentally and spiritually differs from the way a Chinese with different worldview and mental and religious mentality sees the same thing.

Everything now boils to the fact that there will be a clash or clashes in understanding and interpreting a theory or a mere symbolism or concepts. So Language and thought being interdependent may be seen from the perspective that language and culture are interdependent. Thought here can stand for culture as "thought" is the total means of how one thinks, feels and adapts to a given thing.

SAPIR-WORLF HYPOTHESIS

This popular, yet controversial hypothesis centre on the serious study of language as the basis for thinking and reality. It combines two principles. The first is known as linguistic determinism. It simply states that language determines the way we think. On the other hand, the second principle leads us to believe that the distinctions encoded in one language are not found in any other language. This is called linguistic relativity.

Hoijer (1968-262), reasoning on the hypothesis, says that some English terms like 'father', 'mother', 'brother', 'sister' and 'cousin' do not have the same precise meaning in the vocabulary of people who do not share the English system of kinship. This linguistic relativity is further commented upon by Ogunbodede (1981:156) who states that the Yoruba terms of *baba* (father) *iya* (mother), *egbon* (big brother), *aburo* (younger brother) are not strictly used for blood relations. Calling an older person *baba* or *iya* could just be a sign of respect to an elderly man or woman. The essence of the above comparison goes a long way in supporting the view that the perception of the world is predicated on the labeling of words in a language (Nanda, 1984-116). This is why the English man and the Yoruba people do not see 'father' exactly the same way. Like the Yoruba, the Igbo people do not have the same view of kinship terminology with the

English people, but similar with the Yoruba people. For instance, *Nna* (father) can be used in referring to one's biological father or simply a friend *Nne* (mother) can be a biological mother, an epithet for an elderly woman or even a younger woman.

Vygotsky (1962:1) sees the present discourse from this angle:

> *The study of thought and language is one of the areas of psychology in which a clear understanding of interventional relation is particularly important. As long as we do not understand the interrelation of thought and word, we cannot answer or even correctly pose, any of the more specific questions in this area.*

What this Russian psychologist implies is that language is a mental exercise. Vygotsky (1962:1) posits that for an effective use of words to evoke a sequence of thoughts in a sequential manner, it requires language (Crystal, 1987:13). In other words, thought and language are psychologically based.

This researcher agrees with the hypothesis of linguistic determinism and linguistic relativity. This is because, language and culture determine the worldview of a people so that they tend to think and speak alike. For instance, the Igbo language affects the way the Igbo people think and speak. On the relativity of languages, I strongly believe in what Sapir said that no two languages see things in the same light. I should highlight my support of relativity of language with Greenberg (1971:156) assertion that, language is the prerequisite for the accumulation and transmission of other cultural traits… language is not only a necessary condition for culture, it is itself part of culture.

What I am trying to deduce from Greenberg (1971:156) is the fact that since no cultures are completely the same, the same way should concepts not be seen in the same way in two languages. That is to say that the picture or image in one understands a concept determines the meaning. The word or vocabularies of languages are very potent in the thinking of every language speaker. Iwara (1997:147) cites Sapir's own words (1929: 209) thus:

> *It is quite an illusion to imagine that one adjusts to reality essentially without the use of language and that language is merely an accidental means of solving specific problems of communication or reflection. The fact of the matter is that 'the real' is to a large extent unconsciously built up on the language habits of the group. No two languages are ever sufficiently similar to be considered as representing the same social reality.*

In this connection, we should keep in mind the often repeated but seldom consistently observed distinction between language and speech. Speech comprises the community

whereas language is an abstract system of identifiable elements and the rules of their combination, which is exemplified in this behaviour and which is disconered by an analysis of the behaviour. It then follows logically that language is the basis for analyzing behaviour of a group; one's behaviour is synonymous with thought and reality of the world. And since no two languages are channeled towards the same thinking patterns, language becomes conflicts inevitable and it is difficult to neglect the role of language in the creation and subsequent management of conflicts in society. Alston (1988: 60) argues that the notion of language as a system of symbols will be misleading if we suppose that each of the symbols that enters into the system is independent of its involvement in the system, so that it could be just the same symbol if it were in no system at all. Such misleading notion confirms Sapir's remarks that no two languages are sufficiently similar to be considered as representing the same social reality.

Language, therefore, is a phenomenon considering the multiplicity in use of the term. There are such recognized varieties of language as: child language, religious language, military language, political language, legalese, and body language even these ones have sub-varieties. This accounts for Downes comments (1984) that language is "... a range of diverse phenomenon which is only partially related to each other." A certain linguist from Norway, Ivar Aesen, having the intention of creating a Norwegian identity made up a new language he called, "Landsmal", Zonar writes that Aesen made it up in the sense of creating a synthesis of a variety of Norwegian dialects, which he considered the relics of the old authentic Norwegian Language. The irony was that Aesen could not formulate a language that represents the thinking and reality of the Norwegians, giving support that no two languages or dialects are same. But Ivar Aesen created almost a completely new language ... not similar to any of the dialects on the basis of which he made his language (Zohar, 1986). Even though Aesen's language was not reflexive of his people's standard as a nation, he, however, was extremely successful in recruiting a small nucleus of the intelligentsia. The language later transformed to a political issue in Norwegian politics, especially after 1905 when Norway separated itself, almost violently, from Sweden. Till today, Aesen's handiwork has been but rather a matter for political conflict. Many hundreds of hours and pages have been dedicated to the case of the rivalry between the languages. The state has created all sorts of committees to decide what kind of language should be used (Zohar, 1986). The aforementioned account is an eloquent testimony of the potentiality of conflict in the oars of language because of the attachment of thought and reality reposed in language as a tool to communication. The Norwegian account which began a long time ago supports the fact that there was a relationship between language and conflict. That relationship is undeniable and it will continue to be of interest to philosophers, psychologists, and, of course, linguists. Linguistic determinism and linguistic relativity have been the crux of the present discourse in this segment of our work. Evaluating language policy and its role to development, Egbokhare (2004: 12) exalts language to a level of indispensability to man. He sees language as priceless even in the face of the modern ICT era - 'In fact, languages do not of themselves come in contact but people do. People are the carriers of culture and language. When people meet languages and cultures come into contact, shift. But in a situation where the people do nothing to maintain and revitalise their languages. For instance, in Africa, it will result to

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high drop out rates, and half-baked products emerging from the system. A system where the mother tongue, which of course has inbuilt cultural values is neglected for foreign languages whose cultural values, are nebulous to the local learner and conflictual. Egbokhare (2004:16) comments:

> *There is in fact a close connection between so called falling standard of education in Nigeria today and the issue of mother tongue education. Perhaps, the problem of low school enrolment and retention in Northern Nigeria is also related to it. Were Hausa to be used as medium of Instruction, we would most likely see a reversal of this trend.*

We do not believe that mother tongues (in Nigeria to be specific) are in anyway inferior to English, the lingua franca adopted by Nigerians for communication. We agree with Bamgbose (1992) and Egbokhare (2004) that something fast has to be done to maintain and modernise our mother tongues so that we can appreciate our world and our values. Towards this goal, it is worth mentioning that recently, the former president of Nigeria (1979-1983), Alhaji Shehu Shagari, during the book launch of his biography, completely written in Hausa and entitled, *Tarihia Shehu Shagari,* made a statement that should be seen as a challenge to linguists. He says:

> *I wish to reiterate of a book in Hausa language or in any other Nigerian language at this time is a significant landmark to remind all of our responsibility to preserve our history. Let us resolve to henceforth encourage our people, especially the intelligentsias, to vigorously promote writing and reading in vernacular rather than in English, which with all its positive commendable qualities is unfortunately eating deep our own civilization.*

LANGUAGE AND CONFLICT

Language has a strong role in conflict management from the perspective that it has the history of man as being a tool to igniting and escalating a conflict on the one hand, and on the other pacifying or checking the destructiveness of conflict. In fact, language could be bad or good depends on how is used. Language is a powerful indicator of any conflict, when a dominant language displaces, other tongues, then the subordinate groups changes.

The power of language in conflict is so influencing that it even controls the actions of the user. A listener or reader is held to complete attentiveness when appropriate words-diction are used in appropriate ties. Language has the power to entertain, to instruct, to reach, to satirize, to reconstruct and even to destroy. A reader smile when he has read something that interests his person. The same reader may begin to cry when an account

reveals of genocide and the numbers that perished or dies. Aniga,(2011:3)explains further what language entails;

Language and conflict are synonymous for the very reasons that language is an integral part of culture and by so doing a vehicle of interaction, intercommunication, and a practical tool for state administration in both modern and ancient times. By adopting a certain language, a particular group in a society declares what identity it wants to show of itself and to the rest of the world. In the light of the foregoing, there is no gain saying the fact that language being a vehicle of symbolic value becomes a source of conflict because during interactions, two persons and groups usually disagree or clash. Language is good or bad depending on how it is used; its usage can promote conflict or the opposite side. When it is the former, conflict are avoided while the opposite is the case when foul and abusive language is used against another. Culture also plays or determines whether or not language is appropriate. Mr. A may use language that may not offensive in his culture to B who frowns at it. Language one uses in resolving issues matters a lot. Mild language facilitates speedy resolution while the opposite escalate it.

LANGUAGE AND CULTURE

Benedict (1971:31) believes that culture, like an individual, is more or less a consistent pattern of thought and action. Since language and culture are indeed interwoven, as each affects the other, it becomes logical that since culture influences language, the latter has a vital role to play in conflict management, as the people involved are involved in culture and tradition. When two people are from different cultures, they see language and reality in different perspectives and this plays a role too, because the actors in the conflict should be made to realise this by the conflict managers in order not to misunderstand the thought of the other. The thinking, feeling, and acting of a set of people are embedded in their culture (Haris:1983). Rosaldo (1989) states that culture makes the human experience look significant: It refers broadly to the forms through which people make sense of their lives.

What Rosaldo seems to be suggesting boils down to the popular saying that culture is the identity of a people. There is no doubt that people express their beliefs and their values through language. Hall (1976) posits that without culture which the researcher equates with language, no survival is possible. The implication of Hall's claim is the fact that everything (including language) is influenced by the culture of the people before it is seen as a reality.

In the view of Taylor (1991:91), culture is a historically transmitted pattern of meaning, embodied in symbolic forms, by means of which people communicate, perpetuate, and develop their knowledge about attitudes towards life. Keyword lies in communication. Without communication, knowledge cannot be spread. Conflicts may continue to flourish argued Vayrynen (2001) because enough efforts have not been made to really appreciate that some conflicts in our world today are culturally based. He argues that culture offers a grammar for acting in and reinterpreting the world.

This researcher believes that language conflict is the bane of world conflict in the light that when one does not understand the other's language, he concludes their personalities and values vary. This is evident between the races of the world: the Arabs, the Jews, the Asians, the Europeans, the African, and the Americans.

Language and culture rub off on each other. They are crucial to proper interpretation of a discourse or decoding of a message. Lack of knowledge about cultural traits in a language prohibits full comprehension of the message being passed across. In other words, no meaningful discussion of language can be fully achieved in absolute neglect of culture. Language and culture as a means of conveying thought (including in conflict management and peacebuilding) situations, is capable of having psychological impact on things people communicate about (Tomasello, 2003). Even expression of emotion in the face, body and mode of speech shows that bodily expression (language) of emotions varies across activities (Wierzbicka, 1999).

This goes without saying that conflict managers should be watchful in the course of their duties as 'little' things like the body movement and the state of the actors' faces could indicate whether talks are being negative or positive. The mental imagery experiment varies from one culture to the other. This implies, according to Kovcsess (2002) that no two cultures may view things the same way. Language plays a role too in emotionality of man and human physiology. Because they are a part of an integrated system which determines one's behaviour at a particular situation (Kovcses, 2003).

Furthermore, Kovcses (2005) posits that it is possible for metaphorical thoughts to be relevant to an understanding of culture and society. Supporting this claim, David (2006) suggests that human emotions like love, fear, anger, envy and shame are not constant but are dependent on the cultural background. For instance, expressions of emotions in Greek are at variance with that of other parts of the world.

Aristotle further corroborates this by stating that 'it is not pain that is frightening us rather those things that portend it, for example, a poisonous snake or a poised spear. The tract of a snake in the sound, or a rattling sound, is frightening in turn because they indicate that a snake is nearby. Fear involves knowledge and inference'.

The implication of the above statement is that one expresses his sentiment as a result of how his culture views particular things. This sentiment can be measured in that owing to one's perception of a phenomenon, one becomes subtle or aggressive when discussing it. All this hinges on language and the roles it does play in the course of building peace.

CONCLUSION

From the foregoing, it is evident why language should not be taken for granted. Doing so mars a conflict management outcome as foul language (body language inclusive) leads to violence. Every violence produces both physical and emotional regrets. But being conscious of one's language – social and psychological creates peace and stability.

Language therefore wears too togas, that of violence and that of tranquility. No doubt, the former is much more experienced in our world. The latter, language of tranquility which translates to peace should be explored. It is time all and sundry began to avoid or abhor expressions such as 'You are an idiot', and took to 'Thank you' and 'I am sorry, please'.

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