

## **Language and Communication in Confrontation Resolving Skills at (school) Administration.**

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Language is considered to be an indispensable human endowment which is conceptualized, Peace is a desirable condition but conflicts are inevitable in any society. In view of this, language, information and communication are very essential in promoting, preventing and resolving conflict situations. Negotiation or dialogue can only take place where exchanging and sharing of information is possible. Communication, therefore, is the goal of language as mutual agreement is the goal of conflict resolution. Emphasis is placed on conflict management and resolution through language and effective communication in this article. However, when it is perceived that peace is threatened or absent, people search for it with peaceful approaches or demand for it with force thus leading to violent situations. Through language and communication we can see the heart of a people. This implies that language makes it possible to express feelings, emotions, views, ideas, opinions, perceptions as well as judgment about people, objects, places, things, information and situations. Therefore, information about conflict and conflict situations can be expressed in language. Being able to talk about feelings and concerns of parties, speaking about what parties would like to change, and discussing the nature and type of the conflict, touching on the positions, interests, needs, and fears of parties. Communication, therefore, has come to represent a key strategy of conflict prevention and resolution.

### **❖ Language**

“Language is the key to the heart of a people”. Language is therefore conceived as a purely human and non-instinctive method of communicating ideas, emotions and desires by means of a system of voluntarily produced symbols. This functional knowledge of language symbols that human experience has achieved in the way of dealing with situation can be communicated through language. This implies that language does not operate independently of culture. Looking at the definition of language from the perspective of Sapir, it is very clear that language is more than a means of communication. “Language is used for phatic communication, that is, as a special regulator; for ceremonial purposes; as an instrument of action; to keep records; to convey orders and information; to

influence people; to enable self-expression; and to embody and enable thought”. Therefore, as, the main function of language is social, in that it serves to bridge the gap between individual nervous systems. So far as each person is concerned, his or her language is almost of his contact with other persons.

### ❖ **Communication**

Communication as “all the procedures by which one mind may affect another”. This implies that communication can take place not only in oral and written media but also in music, pictorial arts, theatre and, of course, all human behaviour. The definitions above clearly indicate that communication is a process that involves the transmission of message from a sender to a receiver and which has the goal of eliciting a reaction or reactions (feedback). Communication in this context refers to the process of sharing and exchanging information between personalities, groups and potential parties in a conflict situation. This implies that despite conflict situations, individuals or parties involved can still talk. However, poor communication or the absence of communication can easily escalate conflicts between the parties or individuals in conflicts. The exchange and sharing of information can help in a great way to resolve crises and build confidence between the parties in conflicts and bring about peace. Therefore, communication is a powerful and effective non-adversarial and cheap means of preventing and resolving conflicts if only the concerned parties realize it as an ingredient of peace. The following are some skills in communication:

### ❖ **Communication verbally and non-verbally**

Negotiations can only take place when communication is made to another person that a conflict has been identified and the communicator wishes to settle it. Effective communicator is the one that can facilitate dialogue while communicating. The personality indexes and emotions play a very important role in verbal communication while other characteristics are associated with non-verbal communication. For instance, the communicator’s use of gestures will ensure active participation by complementing speech with signs, usually hands and body movements, facial expressions and occasional unique vocal sounds, constant eye contact which refers to “eye magic” as a way of sustaining and connecting interest and attention of the parties involved in conflicts. It is always very important to note that non-verbal codes are somehow culture-bound or based. This implies that mediators should be well-versed in the cultural values and

practices of the parties in conflicts as regards the use of non-verbal communication.

### ❖ **Active listening**

A good mediator displays effective listening skills. He inculcates the habit of wanting to listen to people more than engaging in talking nineteen to dozen i.e. talking too much. When a mediator becomes an active listener, he or she will be able to identify the fear, suspicion, lies, truths, interests, understanding, doubts, desires, feelings, distrust, misinterpretations, misinformation as well as other pretensions of the parties involved in the conflict situations. In this way, he or she can ask questions to clarify issues with the speaker and ensures that the other party is not in doubt or has heard the point. Mediators normally show their understanding on the matters of the two parties' perspective through comments and nonverbal reactions. In fact, mediator shows good communication skills such as listening and being able to paraphrase and summaries what they have heard without distorting the main facts or messages. We shall discuss industrial and general conflicts and applied communication in terms of dialogue and negotiation in resolving disputes or conflicts.

### ❖ **Negotiation**

Negotiation has to do with an organisation or form of carrying out a plan through some norms that are socially acceptable in achieving a predetermined goal or achieving a significant or high degree of purposeful steps taken or actions through dialogue. Negotiation is a back and- forth communication designed to reach an agreement when you and the other side have some interests That are shared and others that are opposed. The dialogue must be constructively employed in disputes or conflicts situations in order to impact positively on the peaceful resolution of conflicts. Many people believe that lack of opportunity for explanation is responsible for misunderstandings and suspicions between parties in conflicts. Effective communication, therefore, is central in negotiation which is a direct process of dialogue and discussion taking place between at least two parties who are faced with a conflict situation or a dispute.

### ❖ **Language strategies in settling disputes**

There are no sacrosanct language strategies of settling disputes the world over. Experience, cognitive abilities, unquestionable personalities, tolerance, transparency, demonstration of understanding of the disputes, coupled with effective communicative skills are what many conflict researchers consider to be foremost requirements of mediators and of conflict resolution generally. However, some language and communicative strategies are practiced during dialogue, negotiation, mediation, arbitration, adjudication etc. The mediator usually welcomes the two parties involved in disputes with warm greetings and introduces all the personalities on the mediation team. Also, the representatives on the two divides of the conflicts are recognized with keen interest. Shortly after the introduction, the business of the meeting is unfolded by addressing the problem and stating the mission of the gathering which is to resolve the conflict on ground and restore peace. The full cooperation of the two parties is therefore sought, stressing the need to promote peace and love. The common language of the parties in conflict is automatically the language of the conflict resolution but where necessary, interpreters are engaged to make everybody share and exchange information. Since language and culture are interwoven, mediators are expected to show understanding and respect to the cultural values of the affected people. Listening and speaking skills are very essential in order to follow and summarise the points made by individuals and the leaders of the two parties involved in the conflict. The following language and communication strategies are employed to disseminate information during industrial conflicts: letters, press release, speeches, bulletins, press conference, communiqué, internet communication etc.

### ❖ **Problems of language and communication in conflict resolution**

Generally speaking, many communication experts often argue that in conflict situations, it is not easy to bring the two parties involved together except the two parties have identified the need for them to be together for the sake of making peace. Many communication barriers are responsible for prolonged disputes. In this situation, information will not flow and rumours of plans of secret attacks will be gaining ground. The situation may even become worse if the two disputing parties fail to share and exchange information through all the information channels put in place by mediators or arbiters. Without any doubt, volunteers often meet with some communication setback because of

misinterpretation of the genuine intentions. The sociologist and psychologist may not bother by the behavioural dispositions of the disputants for failing to cooperate at the initial stage of the moves to settle the disputes. The answer to the display of anger and hatred could be justified by the nature of human behaviour which sometimes could be based on cultural perspectives, values and suspicion or lack of trust. Negotiation, therefore, will be hindered as a result of the perceptions and psychological impact of the outcomes from such suspected negotiations, relationships and the disputed subject-matter.

### ❖ **Recommendations**

As a result of the importance of language and communication in resolving disputes between the two parties involved in an organization as a school administration, the following recommendations are given:

- Many communication channels should be opened and utilized in settling disputes.
- Language and communication skills should be effectively used during the process of sharing and exchanging information between individuals, groups, communities and parties in conflicts or disputes at school.
- Also confidence must be reposed in the principals and teachers or non-academic staff volunteers and the parties in conflicts
- Principals and teachers in conflicts or disputes should be able to talk freely about their feelings, concerns, interests, needs, and fears.
- The cultural values of the parties involved in conflicts must be understood and respected.
- Judgments must be given by adjudicators, arbitrators and mediators in clear terms without elements of ambiguity.
- The language of leaders must package and communicate justice and peace.

### ❖ **Conclusion**

Many writers have focused on the causes, operational modalities and effects of disputes or conflicts as well as the forms of conflict settlement or resolution without at school admiration. However, they shy away from identifying the significant role of language and communication as the key factor of tracing the heart of the two parties involved in conflicts at school. This paper is of the opinion

that language and communication can be used to trace the causes and management or resolution (or both) of the prevalent violent confrontation in the school. Communication could be verbal, non-verbal or written. Therefore, this article considers communication as one of the non-adversarial methods in Western Alternative Dispute Resolution. In view of this, it should be given more attention in order to get to the root causes, information, understanding and school management or resolution of the continued eruptions of conflicts or disputes in the 21st century. Although, some principals and staff may argue that it is neither the language nor the communication forms that actually resolve disputes but the willingness of the two parties involved in a dispute to restore peace and the level of agreement reached. Such critics argue further that sanctions and armed forces or war could do the magic of restoring peace. The point is that non-adversarial methods of conflict resolution are apparently as the most acceptable scientific approach to restoring peace. Frankly speaking, the ability and willingness to accept and allow such a confrontation resolving skills, peace to reign, firstly, lies in the mind (thought); and secondly, resides in actions. Since there is a relationship between language and thought, therefore, communication is the vehicle for thought by peaceful school administration process.

If one wants a fundamental model for thinking about language, one should rather not think of it as a means for explicitly representing thoughts or experiences, our beliefs or desires. It is really just a practice, something people do that is woven seamlessly into their other activities.

**A Thought from Ludwig Wittgenstein**