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**KANURI AND BABUR/BURA PROVERBS AS TECHNIQUE OF CONFLICT
RESOLUTION AND NATIONAL INTEGRATION**

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Abstract

The provision of security and national development is paramount in every nation. However, the conflict resolution and peacemaking in the conflict zone through the means of language resources, is the subject matter of this article. In view of this, the Kanuri and Babur/Bura proverbs are selected for a critical discussion in conflict resolution. A functionalist theory of African literature, in a close reference to Kanuri and Babur proverbs teleguided the research to accounting for the analysis of the data collected. The knowledge driven from the proverbs, ranging from the form, content, message, procedure and function are liable to disseminate correct information that could result in conflict resolution, management and national integration.

Keywords: Conflict, resolution, functionalist, national integration

Introduction

Generally, proverb is a wise saying which has the natural epithet and inspired by the wisdom and cultural knowledge. In other words proverb functions as other literary genres that constitute and complement the beauty of the language. It is the life ware to send a rich message to the target audience. The use of the proverbs complements the kinetics role of weaponry, while talking to the warring parties to put down their weapons. Indeed, under the whims and scope of African literature we dissect the instrumentality of the proverbs of the two ethnically

interjected and to some extent culturally related groups, Kanuri and Babur/Bura to accomplish peace.

On several occasions, what constitutes African literature generated a lot of debates. A conference of African writers held in Makerere in 1962 devoted to the finding of meaning of "African literature" failed to reach a conclusive definition. In 1964, the celebrated novelist, Chinua Achebe, contributed to the debate on the meaning of "African literature" said:

You cannot cram African literature into a small, neat definition. I do not see African literature as one unit but as a group of associated units- in fact the sum total of all national and ethnic literature of African"

(Achebe, 1975:57)

With the use of words of wisdom in literature we can achieve the desired national development and restore peace and tranquility in our country. The African cultures endowed with lots of inspiration, intellect and a sense of hospitality. Today the African literature offers the challenge of newness and has significance for human experience beyond African continent. Thus, modern African literature has its root from historical ideology of African Nationalism; African literature can be divided into two main branches:

1. Such that modestly investigate matters such as sources and influence
2. Literary criticism which can be said to occupy itself with interpretation and evaluation.

At this juncture, it is of significant importance to provide an understanding of what literature is all about. Furthermore, literature according to Eagleton (1983) transforms language into an extraordinary expression of everyday speech into unique resonance, rhythm and texture. Meanwhile, proverb is a special literary genre, which accorded a chief popularity among African societies. Chief popularity in the sense that, it is said orally. Schooling, is not prerequisite in crafting or saying the proverb. A word of proverb could be said at will. That makes it easy to formulate, and simple to manipulate and coherently conceive within the sociocultural structure of the African setting.

Methodology of the Study

The retrospective techniques used in the data collection has proved to be empirical in nature and realistic in outcome. The nature and type of the proverbs have direct bearing with the central theme of the conflict resolution and management. The text-based data is also used to complement the analysis. In the light of this, the data is categorized into the *form*, *denotative* (literal meaning), *Connotative Meaning* and *context of usage*.

Sociolinguistic Architecture of Borno

It is difficult to capture the historical kaleidoscopic multilingual scene of the Empire with any precision Alkali (1989). The Lake Chad Basin covers most of the Northeast which has the longest recorded history in Nigerian historiography, dating back to the times of al Yaqubi in 891AD). Throughout history, there was continuous east-west and north-south migration of peoples in the states of the northeast due to partly to the continuous desiccation of the Sahara and wars of territorial expansion between indigenous states. There has been the continuous process of state formation in the region conditioned by other factors. Indeed, one of the most significant developments was the coming of Islam through the Kavar Oases in 667 A.D. when the Amir Uqba Ibn Nafi led a military expansion in the Maghrib al Aqsa came in contact with the traders and itinerant scholars of Kanem (Alkali, 1978).

The Chad Basin is a melting pot of diverse Chadic ethnic speech forms. However, the term sociolinguistic is relatively new. Borno is multilingual society with supremacy of Kanuri in respect to number of the speakers and demographic distribution. Then followed by Babur-Bura, Fulani, Shuwa Arab etc. Indeed, the sociolinguistic distribution of the languages in Borno served as a spring board for language diversity and multiplicity of the nature of the language contact in the region. As such, results in language change because of what is known as *aerial linguistics*. The major or the dominant language in that region has not been extended to the three tiers of language in communication coverage. That is Kanuri which is believed to be having upper hand and wide spread has not been extended to federal tier, it is perhaps confined to the state and local government levels. Moreover, based on the prima facie evidence, one could predict that since the dominant

language of particular area is not opportune to play a national language role. It hardly exercises the power of intelligibility among different ethnic groups in Nigeria. Subsequently, the security personnel being stocked in the area might not deliver what is expected of them simply due to language barrier and non conformity of culture and linguistic fundamentals of the people in the region.

Therefore, African proverb has cautioning effect on matters of general interest. Chris, (1990) defined proverb, as a short popular saying of unknown authorship expressing some general truth or superstition: e.g. "Too many cooks spoil the broth". Proverbs are found in most cultures and are often very ancient. Furthermore, proverb is unlike idiom or idiomatic expressions. Almajir *et al* (2016) said that "idiomatic expressions have long played an important role in many languages. The use of idioms is so widespread that an understanding of expressions is essential to successful communication, whether in listening, speaking, reading or writing".

Language is an integral part of our culture it helps each of us to define ourselves, therefore, this paper focuses at the conflict resolution mechanism from the cultural and situational context to provide an in depth analysis of the sources of conflict in the spirit of finding a lasting solution through the means of proverbs driven peace messages.

Content of African Proverbs

The content and message of African proverbs capture within the form and structure of the proverb. The meaning is transmitted within the semiotic resources of a language to the target audiences. Therefore, the study ponders over the message of peace with a view to achieving the following:

1. Proverb conveys messages of peace, hospitality and tolerance
2. It incarnates transcendental truth
3. It projects ideas, for peaceful coexistence
4. It develops, preserves and promotes the reconciliatory culture

The Form and Structure of Kanuri Babur/Bura Proverbs

Form in the context of usage refers to the linguistic elements (phonological, morphological and semantic) realization of the proverbs. Kanuri proverb is of two types; one phrase sentence proverb i.e. independent and two phrases i.e. dependent proverb. Both types

convey ideational meaning to represent the cultural knowledge and wisdom. For example, *Are ci kumobe dutiye* or 'let amend the calabash' is an independent sentence with oblique constituent. The second type complements a phrase or a sentence with a follow up phrase and a conjunction 'wono' medially *imbedded* by either the presenter or the participants as the case may be.

Sometimes it comes in form of a topic sentence, for example, the story of *Alan nguron Maiba* or 'there is no King but Allah' is a long story of a strong believer who was tested by a King because of his utterance, '*Alan nguron Maiba*'. This form of the proverb is also known as *Nyari*.

Abba (2014) confirmed that Kanuri proverb is like the other African proverbs revolve around a *connotative*, associative idea suggested by a word or phrase, *denotative*, overt and explicit meanings of the word senses, mostly accompanied by figures of speech, overly *alliterations*. *Alliteration* is used in order to give an aesthetic value to the rendition. In addition to the form and structure of the African proverbs (which Kanuri and Babur proverbs are not an exception) there are important elements such as content, message, procedure and function.

Furthermore, **form** of the proverb is the product, composition, or words that constitute the saying. **Content** is the input of the saying being presented. **Message** usually is the central statement received by the listener or the target audience. **Procedure** is the medium through which the idea, the feeling etc is conveyed. **Function**, is the effect the effects derived from the affective and emotive qualities that result in attitudinal change: teaching wisdom, morality, cooperation, peace, nationalism, language/culture and good conduct.

Conflict Resolution in the African Context

In Nigeria, conflict is mostly associated with marginalization and deprivation of the nation's natural resources. Conflict in the Northeast region is unlike that of Niger Delta region. However, conflict in Niger Delta resulted from the oil spillage as a result of exploration and distribution of the nation's wealth. According to Akinola *et al* (2008), conflicts in the Niger Delta region are principally linked to the issues of crude oil exploration; production and distribution the wealth accrue from the process. Afinola and Ojajorotu (2011), Adebajoko (2017),

also confirmed that, the crisis in "the Niger Delta area has become a hot bed of violence, insurgency, kidnapping, hostage-taking, oil pipeline sabotage, crude oil theft, gang wars,". Apart from these, there are other fundamental issues that provided basis for the agitation of the Niger Delta people. *Tell Magazine* December 8, 1995 reported that 'the Federal Environmental Protection Agency put the yearly spillage estimate at 20 million gallons of recyclable waste oil (by then) arising from the drilling of crude oil into the coastal and offshore marine environment. In other words, environment degradation, as a result of oil pollution in the region is another thorny issue of the Niger Delta conflict and this was taken alongside gas flaring which also accounts for a large percentage of the devastated ecology'. These provoked the Niger Delta people to take arm against government and the companies respectively. Inter ethnic clashes especially between Ogoni and Andoni, Ijaw and Itsekiri, Urhobo and Itsekiri and so on as a result of the struggle to control or lay claim to certain oil field or the other and collection of compensations for oil exploration accidents such as leakages or pipeline burst, and so on.

Lessons from the Proverbs

1. Teaches moral and cultural discipline
2. Encourages tolerance and peace making
3. Inculcates endurance and perseverance

Data Presentation

For procedural analysis, data of the two neighbouring languages are presented in tabular form. The analysis, accounts for denotative, connotative and the context of the usage of the data to illustrate the functionalities and effect of the messages.

Table 1: Kanuri Proverb

Form	Denotative (literal meaning)	Connotative Meaning	Context of usage & message
1) <i>Are ci kamube dutiye</i>	Let's amend the calabash	Let's iron out our differences	Let's live in peace and harmony with one another
2) <i>Kanadi kalam kuwuibe ngatcin</i>	Patience can extract the flimsy and brittle intestine of a	Encourage patience all the time	Patience takes one to a success

	chicken		
3) <i>Fane fanedā bula njim mea yaye tarjin</i>	Rumour could disperse a village of a hundred households in a blink of an eye	Falsehood always has buyer but truth has no buyer	Rumour mongering is very destructive in a populous society like ours. Therefore, people should shun away from dispelling untrue news.
4) <i>Ku bowonimiya bali yejin yaye kammama dāgaiwo</i>	Better stay with a person even when you call him today and he answers tomorrow	A tree can not make a forest. United we stand, divided we fall.	This stresses the importance of being with a fellow human, for each one is in need of the other

Table 2: Babur/Bura Proverbs

Form	Denotative (literal meaning)	Connotative Meaning	Context of usage & message
1. <i>Gyada tsukāra dawa, dadempawa</i>	Do not incite or instigate people to fight	The fire you ignited one day may engulf you	Let's not bring trouble to destruct peace in the society
2. <i>Ma tsa kabda adiwa, tsa ka simta adi</i>	To live in peace is not by force, it's a matter of choice	You cannot take your horse to the river and force it to drink. Treat people with empathy and compassion	Try and change the negative perspectives towards people with good constructive attitude that bring peaceful coexistence
3. <i>Kamanggar ta suna dakuwa</i>	Wickedness is an abomination	Wickedness does not pay	Do not allow your negative emotion to affect people around you, try and understand each other's

			emotion
4. <i>Kucheli adiwa saik paktikar. Karduku akkti bwana</i>	There is no happiness if there is no cooperation. One hand cannot lift a thatch roof	No meaningful development could be made without peace and unity	Let there be cooperation to achieve integration and coexistence
5. <i>Ndzi ndzi lapiya msira ta ndzi msir kuthi</i>	Live in peace and tranquility is better than to be a prince	No matter the title and honour of a prince is, it is worthless if there is no peace of mind in the sovereignty	To be in peace and harmony is always better than to become a prince without peaceful coexistence. We should look for what binds us together and be optimistic not think of what divides us.
6. <i>Mtika ada charbila indla thamta ni</i>	Let not a chicken dig a knife that could cause her deathblow	Let the sleeping dog lie	Conflict is like human being do not provoke it
7. <i>Ndzi didi taramta su tsa tsa msira</i>	No matter how a music can entertain, certainly silence and calmness is better	Calmness generates positive thinking as such bring development and national integration	Usually music goes with happiness and enjoyment yet quite state of being is better. So do not fan the flame

Results and Discussion

[[[At this point, the anticipated outcomes of the research and its relevance to the contemporary societies is analyzed during the discussion. The genres of African literature (proverbs in particular) is full of wisdom and inspirations, thus, their relevance is quite exploitable in all ramifications. And it can be applied in our social interactions to resolve conflicts and manage clashes among different ethnic groups in Nigeria. As a result we integrate the nation and bring about positive

sociocultural developments to chant the mantra “Unity and Progress”. Indeed, through the techniques of the proverbs we could also achieve cultural understanding and exchange of ideas that could be beneficial to all and sundry. In the light of this we discuss the proverbs across the languages: Kanuri and Babur/Bura respectively.

Proverb No. 1 in Table 1 *Are ci kumobe dutiye* or ‘let us amend the calabash’, has direct influence of semiotic resources which is figuratively rendered. The calabash is a concrete object and took up semiotic elements of abstract object. It was metaphorically used and presented as a broken calabash which perceived to be amended by the warring parties jointly. It further connotes the idea of iron out differences and resolve misunderstanding among the people amicably. It was also perceived that the fragility of the calabash if force is applied instead it escalates the situation. Proverbially, the Hausa equivalent is rendered as *Mai hakuri yakan dafa dutse*, or ‘One who exercises patience could cook a stone’. Success comes after long or short period if we contain our emotion and negative feelings towards others. Therefore, in a conflict resolution situation, the win-win situation should be the watch word and avoid *zero sum game*.

Furthermore, data no.2 in the same Table, *Kanadi kalām kuwuibe ngatcin* or ‘Patience can extract the flimsy and brittle intestine of a chicken’ encourages patience and perseverance in a tense situation. This data too, addresses the same topic that addresses patience.

In the same way sampled data no. 3 of Table 1 features similar proverb *Fane fanedā bula njim mea yaye tarjin* or ‘hearsay or rumour could displace a community of hundred households’. Consider the imagery “a hundred settlements”, the perception here that the number of the household tells the magnitude of the destruction that could be incurred by the rumour mongers. Therefore, societies should learn to avoid spreading rumour and unfounded allegations. People should shun away from dispelling untrue news.

Proverb no 4 of Table 1, *Ku bowonimiya bali yejin yaye kammama dagaiwo* or ‘Better stay with a person even when you call him today and he answers tomorrow’. This also stresses the importance being with a fellow human, for each one is in need of the other. Thus, a tree can not make a forest. United we stand and divided we fall. Of course, if we are united and speak in one voice, we achieve a success in

life. This proverb certainly is in response to those who want to break up the country. They should dare not to try it. Look at those countries Sudan and South Sudan, Ethiopia and Eritria up to now no peace is achieved. It is far more beneficial to continue to stay with fellow citizens. No matter how strong you are, economically and otherwise, you cannot develop the nation alone.

Turning to the Babur/Bura proverbs, in Table 2, each item is subjected into analysis and present its functionalities and relevance to the fighting communities. Starting with item no. 1 in Table 2 *Gyada tsukara dawa, dadempawa* or do not incite or instigate people to fight. The connotative meaning of the proverb could be rendered as “the fire you ignited, one day may consume you.” The English equivalent can be presented as ‘Let the sleeping dog lie’. Let us not bring trouble to destruct peace in the society. Avoid rekindling an old fight restarting past disagreements etc.

Proverb no.2 of Table 2, *Ma tsa kabda adiwa, tsa ka simta adi* ‘To live in peace is not by force, it is a matter of choice. A similar idiomatic expression could be connotatively rendered as “you cannot take your horse to the river and force it to drink. Therefore, treat people with empathy and compassion.

Proverb no. 3 in Table 2, says ‘*Kamanggār ta suna dakuwa*’ literally translated as ‘wickedness is an abomination.’ This takes several interpretations, every society frowns at wickedness because it is morally bad. Human race is expected to be good and kind to one another. We see even birds of the same feather flock in unison. Therefore, societies and communities should be brothers’ keepers. We should not allow our anger to over ride our emotion, let alone to be the cause of disharmony and hardship to the society.

4. *Kucheli adiwa saik paktikār. Karduku akkti bwana* or ‘There is no happiness if there is no cooperation. One hand cannot lift a thatch roof. The Hausa equivalent of this is ‘*hannu daya bata daukar jinka*’. No meaningful development could be made without peace and unity among the people. Let there be cooperation to achieve integration, coexistence, meaningful and sustainable development. "In the current circumstances, the most urgent need of the peoples of the Niger Delta is security of lives and pro-perty on land, in the creeks, and in the waterways. The government must act decisively and urgently to deal

with the various criminal gangs and militia groups, and re-establish its authority through complete military pacification of the region".

5. *Ndzi ndzi lapiya msira ta ndzi msir kuthi* or 'Live in peace and tranquility is better than to be a prince. No matter the title and honour of a prince is, it is worthless if there is no peace of mind in the sovereignty. To be in peace and harmony is always better than to become a prince with no mutual understanding and peace with the subjects. We should look for what binds us together and be optimistic not to think of what divides us. Therefore, let not a chicken dig a knife that could cause her deathblow, *'Mtika ada charbila indla thamta ni'*. Yet, the English idiomatic expression 'let the sleeping dog lie' corresponds to this. So, conflict, chaos and pandemonium are like human beings do not provoke them, certainly, you know when and how to ignite it but you do not know when to stop when it escalates.

With the no. 5 Babur/Bura proverb we provide a proverbial solution to account for the both Kanuri and Babur selected items. *'Ndzi didi taramta su tsa tsa msira*, or No matter how music can entertain, certainly peace and calmness is better. Of course, calmness generates positive thinking as such bring about development and national integration. Usually, music goes with happiness and marry making, yet quite state of being is far better. So we should not fan the flame just to achieve the selfish aggrandizements.

National Integration and Development

Scholars of the view that indigenous languages have a lot to contribute to the nation's economy if given the opportunity (Nwarunta, 2011). Cultural knowledge like proverbs is very effective and versatile aspect in social integration and national development. Language as a part of human culture goes into every sector of social endeavour and represents the psychological, cognitive and mental state of the individuals. Therefore, in recording meaningful development and national integration a conducive, atmosphere to achieve tranquility in all sense of it is required. Indeed, the use of African proverbs due diligently has been a sacrosanct for the insecurity, communal crisis that ravage bedeviling our country.

A sampled data no. 4 of Table 2 says *Kucheli adiwa saik paktikar. Karduku akkti bwana* or 'a thatch roof cannot be lifted by one man' this is an indication that a man cannot live alone he/she really

needs someone or people to live together. As such, development comes to the whole society. Indeed, without peace and harmony, no meaningful progress would be made. Collective bargain and sense of belonging is highly recommended at this critical time of the country's political and economic development. Therefore, national discipline, sense of responsibility and value should be reintroduced into the school curriculum. This hopefully creates and maintains law and order. The next section of the paper put forward some recommendations in specific terms.

"Peace is not made at the council table or treaties, but in the hearts of men"

Herbert Clark Hoover (1929-1933)

Perhaps causes of insecurity are not unconnected with social inequality, cultural, economic and political marginalization. However, aim of conflict resolution and peacemaking is to bring security and safety of the society to prevail. Negotiation is the key to beneficial discussion with criminals or bandits. Therefore, it is not sign of irresponsibility to extend the hands of reconciliation to the culprits as well as pardon them where necessary, being citizens of Nigeria. President Yar Adua did the same to the Niger Delta Armed Groups. And recently, the former Governor of Katsina State Alhaji Bello Masari has used the same mechanism for the bandits to lay down their arms. Indeed, with a view to managing and curtailing the crisis of banditry and other criminal activities, negotiation is seen as a useful alternative in that regard.

Conclusion

Folklore or community knowledge demonstrated the significant importance particularly of the genres of African literature. The use and functions of proverbs in relation to repositioning, rethinking and redirecting the psyche of the African society towards peace making is highly timely. The negligence of the African folklore made us to admire other's culture in the name of globalization. A Kanuri proverb detests adopting foreign culture *'Awo kamma ngalai ngamdu, kasannam kaanam mane* or 'Somebody's property is like a dried leave of palm tree (used for making mats, trays, etc.), you better find your own'. The article finds it useful to look inwardly to solve the insecurity problems

for example, banditry, kidnapping, cattle rustling, herder farmer clashes, Boko Haram insurgency etc.

Man is unlike other creatures, because the destiny is in his hand for he is endowed with reason, therefore, freedom of choice is left with him to make his own decision. As the right to live and freedom to make a wise choice is enshrined in the constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. Let us make constructive decisions to make Nigeria a better place for everybody to survive.

Recommendations

The peacemaker should consider the below specific recommendations:

1. The militant groups and the jobless could be empowered through language information and communication process that hopefully consolidate the gains the existing peace,
2. Community Welfare Services: As it is a civic responsibility of the society to pay tax to the government, government in turn should reciprocate this in providing the necessary social amenities to the people. In addition to that, community welfare services are specifically provided by federal and state agencies or voluntary organizations to assist towards achieving the needs of the communities,
3. Economic Incentive: Economic incentives are used to encourage compliance during hard times. People believe that '*Gift could flatten a mountain*'. This saying is popular in most of the African societies. The social theory of 'give and take' quite works in African societies. Whether the gift is in kind or cash, it has positive impact in the peace making in the society. Economic incentive is an offer made to make someone act in a particular way,
4. Overcoming inter agency Challenges: The problem of interagency, especially in the dispensations of their duties, is lack of knowing fully each agency's jurisdiction hinders the smooth operation of the agencies. One agency delves into another agency's responsibilities. In the long run, squabble ensued among the personnel. Moreover, there should be clear and concrete policy guidelines for the smooth operation of each government agency and non-governmental organizations.

Each should know its boundary and areas of operation. They should know where role of each begin and where it ends,

5. Informational campaign to help communities understand why ex-fighters or militants are being granted amnesty,
6. Community-Based Reconciliatory mechanism should be instituted

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