



# Language in Conflict Resolution in Africa: The Discourse Strategies

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**Abstract:** This study investigates the potency of language in conflict resolution in Africa in particular, and the world at large. Insights from sociolinguistics, pragmatics, discourse analysis and stylistics enrich the study. Since the Millennium Development Goals in Africa does not exclude peace and development, the dynamics of language in the resolution of conflicts is a worthy academic endeavour. One of the reasons why the international community has not been able to resolve some conflicts in Africa is its failure to effectively explore the pragmatics of language in peace-talks. The data of this study are generated from conflict resolution dialogue (adjacency pairs) between two warring communities: Azuwa and Ezinma. This study hinges on two theoretical frameworks: Roman Jakobson's Elements of Communication and Acheoah's Pragma-crafting Theory. The study concludes that effective use of language in conflict management presupposes the use of diverse discourse strategies which include imagery, special clause structure, repetition, call to action, the use of third-party, feedback, speech acts, personal pronouns, mutual contextual knowledge, among others.

**Keywords:** Conflict resolution, sociolinguistics, style, discourse strategy, pragmatics

## INTRODUCTION

There are critical questions to ask when analyzing discourse. Adebija (1999:188-189) makes these questions clear:

- i. What is the conversation or discourse about? Put differently, what is the topic?
- ii. What comments are being made about this topic?
- iii. Who are the speakers and addressees and what are their roles and relationship?
- iv. How is turn taking effected? What are the turn allocation techniques?
- v. How has the topic been linked from one speaker to another? Or how has coherence in discourse been achieved?
- vi. How is reference made to different objects, persons, things, places? Is this done backwards, within the text, or outside the text?
- vii. How is meaning decoded from the discourse? (What contributions do the contexts of discourse make to the encoding and decoding of the meaning?)
- viii. What specific and overall functions do the different utterances in the discourse perform?
- ix. How is the discourse terminated by participants?
- x. What specific function does the discourse perform in the particular social-cultural context?

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The literature shows that the term “discourse analysis” relates with other language disciplines: pragmatics, stylistics, sociolinguistics, psycholinguistics, among others. The data analyzed are instances of language use in real life situations. No matter the dimensions which a conflict takes, language has crucial roles to play in resolving it. Raymond Cohen (2000:25) rightly notes that “linguistic analysis points to four primary dimensions of conflict resolution, along which significant conceptual variations reflected in language, can be detected. These dimensions consist of assumptions about the causes and nature of conflict; expectations of the mechanics and objectives of conflict resolution; understanding of what it means for a conflict to have been settled; and preference for rituals appropriate for affirming and symbolizing the restoration of harmonious relations at the end of conflict.” There is continuous interaction between language and society. This interaction is essentially the business of sociolinguistics. The community meeting discourse analyzed in this study is a micro-representation of the larger society where discussants “do things with words” in a bid to resolve conflict of any kind. According to Brown and Yule (1983:26), “in discourse analysis as in pragmatics we are concerned with what people using language are doing and accounting for the linguistic features in the discourse as the means employed in what they are doing.” Discourse analysis is concerned with the analysis of communication events that are situated in various social contexts. The speakers employ different strategies towards effective communication; to foster coherent discourse, some of the strategies are essentially stylistic. Coulthard (1985:6) notes that “one of the major aims of discourse analysis is to discover the rules of coherent discourse and to describe the conversational structures they generate.” This study examines the various discourse strategies which make language cohere in context and facilitate conflict resolutions.

### **CONFLICT RESOLUTIONS IN AFRICA**

Conflict can be viewed from both political and social perspectives. From the social perspective, it is an expressed agitation between parties with conflicting interests. From the political point of view, conflict is among parties who struggle for power and resources. The parties in conflict may be individuals, groups or countries.

Theories which explain the causes of conflict include Human Needs Theory, Relational Theory, Political Theory and Transformative Theory. The Human Needs Theory expresses the view that without certain basic needs, human beings cannot survive. The Relational Theory posits that conflict is the product of social interactions that operate among people from different socio-cultural backgrounds. The political theory views the state as the platform where people or groups with conflicting interests clash over certain benefits. Thus, a weak state informed by poor leadership, breeds conflict among groups therein. The Transformative Theory opines that conflict is generated by perceived inequality and injustices driven by socio-cultural, religious, political and economic forces within a state. In a rapidly changing world, approaches to the settlement of conflicts are also changing.

### **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

This study is hinged on two theoretical underpinnings: Roman Jakobson’s “elements of communication” – which was further developed by Hymes (1962) and Acheoah’s Pragma-crafting Theory.

The elements of communication (cf. Hymes *ibid.*) show the discrete components of human communication: the addresser (The person who originates or sends the message); the addressee (the person to whom the message is addressed); the channel (the medium through which the message travels); the message form (the particular grammatical and lexical choices of the message); the topic (the information carried in the message); the code (the system of communicating the language or dialect e.g. British English); the setting (the social or physical context).

According to Acheoah’s (2015:23-25) Pragma-crafting Theory, communication has a discourse structure which consists of EVENT and TEXT. The former concerns the participants of discourse. Some of them make linguistic or extra-linguistic contributions to on-going discourse (interactive participants) whereas others do not (non-interactive participants). To participate interactively in a communicative event, the interactive

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participants produce linguistic, extra-linguistic (being interactive does not necessarily mean producing speech sounds; silence interacts that is, communicates messages in discourse) and psychological acts. Linguistic acts include: speech acts, segmental features, supra-segmental features, phones, exclamations and lyrical music. Extra-linguistic acts include: sociolinguistic particulars (gender, age, status, cultural background), music (non-lyrical), drumming, gestures, dance, semiotic particulars (weather; contextual object (CO), colour, dressing, location, size, shapes and body marks) and silence. Psychological acts are the discourse emotions expressed through linguistic and extra-linguistic acts. The three major categories of acts in EVENT are candidates for p-crafting. P-crafting features are the tools for interpreting the linguistic, extra-linguistic and psychological acts, although SETTING and THEME also facilitate this process of interpretation. SETTING is the physical context revealed by TEXT, and this is an optional category as some texts are not SETTING-revealing. THEME is the message(s) revealed in TEXT through topic-suggestive words and p-crafting features. On the whole, the Pragma-crafting Theory shows that indeed, 'communicative Acts' (CA) – differentiated from speech acts used in EVENT – interact with 'communicative features' (CF). Thus, linguistic, extra-linguistic and psychological acts are 'communicative acts' whereas p-crafting features are 'communicative features'.

Linguistic implicatures (LI) are meanings implied through language while behavioural implicatures (BI) are meanings implied through extra-linguistic and psychological acts. Contextual presuppositions (CP) are products of shared contextual knowledge (SCK); in a specific (micro-context) discourse, participants deduce meanings from verbal and non-verbal data limited to the participants themselves. The meanings deduce are treated as background assumptions (Bas) which direct interlocutory roles. DCs (decoders) imply that ENCs (Encoders) know that certain VEs (Verbal elements) & NVEs (non-verbal elements) are deduced as OR (object referred) in OL (the Operative Language).

### **METHODOLOGY**

Using Random Sampling Method, this study selects conversational exchanges (micro-structures) from the entire dialogue using certain parameters: topic, quality of the language and clarity of message. The Content Analysis approach also informs the selection. According to Asika, this approach is suitable for the analysis of a wide range of texts because it answers crucial communication questions: Who says what, to whom and on what occasion? On the whole, five corpora are selected in this study; each corpus is comprised of conversational turns.

### **DATA ANALYSIS**

The analyses of corpora 1-5 (see appendix) are done in this section; it is integrative, drawing insights from pragmatics, sociolinguistics, stylistics and discourse analysis as depicted in the theoretical frameworks.

#### **Corpus 1**

The speaker hinges on metaphor ("This gathering is the rainbow that has united our clan for centuries") to make his speech forceful and emotive. The use of "rainbow" rather than any other agency of nature is of thematic relevance; a rainbow appears on the sky as an object that is almost circular, thus enclosing anything that is within its range. In the context of Corpus 1, this depicts communal bond and fraternity which the elders of the two disputing communities (Azunwa and Ezinma) represent in the struggle to restore lasting peace in their communities. The speaker's choice of words is germane to the topic of discourse; he uses image-conjuring dictions ("thickened" and "fresh") to impinge on the audience's emotions, so that the audience will see the urgent need to stop terror in the warring communities. Via mutual contextual beliefs, the speaker is able to remind the audience that war is inimical to societal progress. By reminding the audience of terrorism that plagues the present world, the speaker succeeds in making the audience desire peace (perlocutionary act). The speaker's illocutionary goal (see Austin's 1962 classification of speech acts into locutionary, illocutionary and perlocutionary acts) is to shift the minds of the audience from an unacceptable social order to an acceptable, rational one.

### Corpus 2

The speaker uses proverb to lampoon man's inordinate ambition and inhumanity towards other human beings. The proverb ("The vultures must stop smiling at our foolishness") is very condensed and witty. The universality of the proverb conveys the speaker's message clearly. The proverbial saying depicts the ravages of wars in this present world where peace is almost elusive. The speaker's language is elevated (literary). For example, because of the speaker's language, (as in the sentence "I do not want their claws on those mutilated bodies") the audience could vividly imagine the horrors of war. Lee (1997) proposes the Cognitive Grammar notions of frame, profiling and radially as useful discourse analysis tools. The notion of frame varies from that used in the ethnography of communication (where the frame is key of activity being engaged in, e.g. joking) or interactional sociolinguistics (where the frame is used for the interpretation of utterances and is signaled through contextualization cues). The cognitive frame relates to the "conceptual structures invoked by individual words and the concepts they denote (p.340). Examples of such words in Corpus 2 are "vultures", "foolishness", "claws", "mutilated bodies", "pellets of flesh" and "inordinate ambition". Profiling relates to foregrounding on element within the frame, and radially describes how to refer to situations that are different yet connected by a central or prototypical meaning" (Leung *ibid.* p.11). In this corpus, the speaker uses people-inclusive pronouns ("our", "us") to involve the audience in the situation at hand; thus, in conflict discourses, the participation of the audience is skillfully invoked by a good speaker. This corpus reveals that usual collocates help communicate a speaker's message effectively. The expressions "vultures", "claws", "mutilated bodies" and "pellets of flesh" are usual collocates because they can thematically co-occur in language-use to depict the terrific nature of war.

The speaker uses "specification" as a discourse strategy. He specifically mentions the wrong doing of the Okada Clan and the Ogi Warriors. This strategy authenticates a speaker's claims in a conflict resolution discourse. It is a way of avoiding contradiction. According to Goodwin (1990:158) "... factors which escalate disputes are: recycling positions by sustained contradiction, the use of non-specific proof strategies ..." (p.165)<sup>1</sup>.

### Corpus 3

The speaker uses conditional clause to establish cause-effect phenomenon. He does this without using the usual "if" that typically initiates the conditional clause. The use of the futuristic positive clause declarative ("There will be...") and the non-futuristic negative clause declarative shows sentence variation that conveys same message. The speaker emphasizes harmony (an emphatic clause is a discourse strategy) to make his audience reason. This strategy generates audience's response; it is a direct call to action.

The speaker uses paraphrase (re-expressing same proposition via language variation); "the pillars of peace" and "the wind of harmony" convey same meaning. In addition, when the speaker says: "Our brotherhood must continue" and thereafter says: "... the precious lives of their kinsmen transcend the booties of war", he elaborates. Elaboration is a discourse strategy through which a speaker ensures that his expressions are void of ambiguity. The gravity of the evil of killing innocent people as a result of greed is the reason for the speaker's harsh tone – the speaker is pragmatically impolite. However, the speaker strikes a balance between politeness and impoliteness by commending the audience: "I commend your wisdom for holding this meeting". In our present world ridden by crisis and insurgency, "language engineering" – constructing expressions to achieve illocutionary goals – is indeed, crucial in conflict resolution. A good speaker knows when to speak with harsh or mild tone. Rees-Miller (2000) posits that Brown and Levinson's notions of power and severity of offence influence the choice of strategies in disagreements though in addition other complex factors in particular the importance of the situational context, are at work. Positive politeness may also play a role in minimizing disagreement episodes (Holtgraves 1997). Resolving conflict is not an easy task. So, the participants in any conflict resolution situation must use language skillfully if any meaningful settlement is to be achieved. Santoi Leung (*ibid.*) notes that once a dispute has begun, there may be disincentives for bringing it to a termination (p.3). Although resolution may not be reached, participants used to, on some level, collaborate in order to bring the conflict episode (if not the

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actual conflict) to an end. This collaboration may take a variety of forms. An excellent example of the variety of instances of termination is reported via Vuchinich (1990)<sup>2</sup>.

### **Corpus 4**

The speaker uses “contextual recall of antecedent” as a discourse strategy. It is used as an illocutionary act preparatory device. The strategy makes the audience undergo a quick retrospection. It puts them in sober reflection before the articulation of the speaker’s message. The speaker also uses creative repetition to articulate clausal antonym (“Your decision is their life. Your action is their death”). Through this device, the speaker subtly accuses the audience of not acting early enough – a delay, which has caused many their lives. In a conflict resolution talk, a good speaker manipulates situational variables and contextual nuances to ensure that the illocutionary force of his utterance is clear and pungent. This process may involve attacking the audience. Infante and Rancer (1996) review the literature of conflict resolution on two features of aggressive communication: argumentativeness (attacking the positions that others take on given issues); and verbal aggressiveness (attacking the self-concepts of others rather than their positions) – cited in Santoi Leung *ibid.*). Indeed, corpora 1-4 show that to some extent, the speakers use different discourse strategies to convey messages. Santoi Leung (*ibid.*) opines that rather than seeing differences in communicative style as the cause for (intentional) misunderstanding, some researchers see them as resource that interlocutors can deliberately draw upon for their own goals. An example is presented in Keim’s (1996) study of a community association meeting. They propose that speakers can use their different communication style for political action, to polarize their own position and that of others. Hence, communicative style is defined as “various features of verbal and non-verbal behavior such as phonological variation, patterns of syntactic structures, special meanings of lexical terms, formulaic speech, pragmatic rules of politeness, special ways of conflict management” (p.271).

This corpus reveals that the speaker explores feedback as another discourse strategy, to give the audience a glimmer of hope in the quest for lasting peace in the two warring communities. In many conflict resolution or settlement discourses, there is “third-party” phenomenon. For example, involving the police (as in this corpus), is synonymous with a situation whereby two warring countries engage the international community to intervene in a certain crisis/conflict/war. Thus, corpora 1-4 depict universality; that is, what operates in the larger society is depicted in the corpora. In a conflict situation, the involvement of third-party depends on the situation at hand. This view corroborates Genishi and di Paolo (1982) who posit that “the termination of a conflict talk episode is highly dependent on the context in which the episode takes place.” In classroom disputes, children may not need to resolve conflicts on their own because teacher intervention is available.” In a similar perspective, Santoi Leung (*ibid.* p.14) asserts that “the presence and role of a third party in termination of a conflict talk episode seems to be a key contextual element. However, although third parties are often present in conflict data, there is not a great deal of literature explicitly considering their role in termination. One area where third party intervention is central is within the conflict resolution field. For example, in mediation settings, the third party, or mediator, is seen as taking a neutral position in order to help the participants resolve their dispute. However, there are few studies that carry out microanalyses of the actual interactions between mediators and their interactants. One example is Greatbatch and Dingwall’s (1997) work...”

### **Corpus 5**

The speaker explores his understanding that regional communication is facilitated by mutual contextual beliefs. For example, “A7” communicates the speaker’s message effectively because the participants had embraced the social realism that produced the expression. Acheoah (2012) uses the term “geoimplicature” to explain the pragmatics of language-use within a speech community. According to Raymond Cohen (2001:26), “... communal life is possible only because members of a community possess a set of shared meanings, enabling them to make coherent sense of the world. This stock of meanings constitutes the common sense of the community and underpins all communication and organized activity.” In addition, Cohen (*ibid.* p.26) further notes that “... systems



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of symbolic meanings that demarcate communities include religion, popular culture, and nonverbal behavior.” Language is indeed, instrumental to conflict management because it encapsulates the psyche or socio-cultural beliefs of a speech community<sup>3</sup>. In Corpus 5 therefore, A7 is uttered with the communicative presumption (see Bach and Harnish’s speech act theory for illuminating perspectives on Communicative Presumption (CP) that the decoders understand the expression “A7” as “an unacceptable societal practice/vice”.

Another discourse strategy in this corpus is “contextual recall of antecedents”. Via this strategy, the speaker contends that there cannot be true resolution of the prevailing conflict unless those who had violated the traditions of the communities in the first place, are made to face the wrath of the law. The speaker is sure that since the participants are aware of the traditions, it will not be difficult for them to understand and accept his message. This implies that cultural similarities are facilitators of conflict resolution in Africa and the entire world. Cross cultural differences in the depiction of reality are hard to accept, precisely because we take the picture of the world conveyed by our native language to be self-evident and project it onto everyone else (Cohen 2001:26). Raymond Cohen (ibid.) submits further that “different languages convey different versions of reality. To grasp what people think about, for example, the term ‘reconciliation’, we must first find out what they mean by the equivalent concept in their own language...”

An additional discourse strategy in this corpus is “skillful selection of speech acts”. See Bach and Harnish (1979) and Searle (1969) for tips on speech act taxonomy. Seeking refuge in Searle and Bach and Harnish’s categorization/taxonomy of speech acts, this study opines that speech acts in Corpus 5 include Informatives, Declaratives and Dissentives. These speech acts are performed with varied clause structures; Acheoah (2014) who examines the communication of messages via clause-structure variation, is worthy of scholarly attention as far as clause-structure-driven performance of illocutionary acts is concerned.

## **DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION**

Conversations that concern conflict reveal a wide range of discourse strategies which the participants explore towards effective communication. Adegbija (1999:189) submits that “a conversation is a string of at least two turns. Each conversation typically involves speaker change. This occurs as the conversation progresses. Normally, one person speaks at a time but this is usually for a brief period. Transitions between one turn and the next with no gap and no overlap between them are common. Turn allocation techniques, which may vary from culture to culture, are used. Turn allocations are sometimes prearranged. A speech exchange often involves a single allocation of turns at a time though further turns may be negotiated as the discourse progresses. Turn taking concerns changes in the roles of speakers and addressees which occur successively, often with overlapping speech and a few periods of silence. Speaker change is often introduced by grammatical, phonological or semantic clues.” Language is the amalgam of a people’s ways of life. The relationship which Africa and Europeans had through colonialism can be explored towards ensuring that peace abounds in Africa. However, without the involvement of the Africans themselves in third-party-moderated conflict resolution discourses, the mediation of any third-party such as the European Union (EU) will not produce expected results. This is because the linguistic identities of the Africans, whose regions are plagued with crisis, have crucial roles to play in conflict resolution. Commendable efforts abound on the stride of the international community towards conflict resolution in Africa.

Contemporary research provides insights on how the international community can foster peace in Africa. For example, Acheoah Ofeh Augustine (2017) opines:

“As a way of finding lasting peace in South Sudan, the UN should sponsor a constitutional and security sector reforms. While the constitutional reform will bring about separation of powers in the three arms of government and share the excessive powers vested on the executive branch by the

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Transitional Constitution signed into law on Independence Day... security sector reform will facilitate the demilitarization of the South Sudanese society, mop out small and light weapons from the hands of ethnic militia groups. Lastly, the leaders of South Sudan must stop to exploit the ethnic cleavages among them as a basis to keep the world's youngest country in an intractable conflict. No matter the effort of the international community within the instrumentality of the UN the government and people of South Sudan have the biggest stake in the search for peace in South Sudan."

However, as far as international involvement in fostering peace in Africa is concerned, much work still has to be done. Considering the history of international assistance to Africa, language has crucial roles to play in results-oriented synergies between international bodies and war-torn Africa. Hymes (1974) opines that "the resources that are available to participants in conflict talk are those of communicative competence." In addition, Gumperz (1980) and Tanen (1990b) posit that "given that there are cultural differences in how conflict talk is conducted, it follows that arguments, in essence, miscommunication, can result from lack of skills in understanding interpretive conventions or a mismatch of communicative styles." Aligning with this view, Santoi Leung (2017) submits that "in addition to group differences, individual differences in communicative styles may also have impact on how a conflict talk progresses..." Rather than being settled, many conflicts in Africa escalate. However, it is often possible to de-escalate conflicts. Political analysts believe that the war-of-words between the North Korean leader and his US counterpart could escalate the conflict between the two regions. Greatbatch and Dingwall (1997:157-161) "demonstrate that the disputants often initiated de-escalation themselves and that these practices are generic and present in everyday conversation. Similar to findings in other studies, the participants did not generally move towards agreement when ending a conflict talk episode, but tried to exit without submitting or making concessions. For example, they would not take their turn to speak which implies a withdrawal but at the same time, deflects blame" (cited in Santoi Leung *ibid.*).

Resolving conflicts in Africa via language presupposes understanding and articulating the pragmatics of multiculturalism. Raymond Cohen (2000:25) opines that "conflict resolution is a basic activity articulated and conducted in forms that significantly vary across cultures. Differences in approach rest on contrasting understandings of the nature of conflict and society. A good way to study these differences is through a comparative analysis of language". The analysis done in this study reveals different facts about the components of discourse. Stubbs (1983:1) posits that "discourse is defined as "(1) concerned with language use beyond the boundaries of a sentence/utterance, (2) concerned with the interrelationships between language and society and (3) as concerned with the interactive or dialogic properties of everyday communication." For Stef Slembrouck (1998-2003 p.1), "the term discourse analysis is very ambiguous... Roughly speaking, it refers to attempts to study the organization of language above the sentence or above the clause, and therefore to study the larger linguistic units, such as conversational exchanges or written texts. It follows that discourse analysis is also concerned with language use in social contexts, and in particular with interaction or dialogue between speakers."

This study contends that in conflict resolution, language is a stronger weapon than the arms and ammunition which the international community uses in attempting to resolve many conflicts in Africa. Whether caused by ethno-religious or electoral factors, conflicts in Africa can be resolved via language. This study attempts an integrative, succinct and discursive overview of "conflict", "language" and "Africa". Although each society has its own peculiarities, this study hinges on the Projection Principle to conclude that a wide range of discourse strategies are instrumental in the resolution of conflicts not only in Africa, but in all human societies. These strategies include: image-conjuring dictions, illocutionary-goal-driven clause structure, thematic repetition, recalling antecedents, direct call to action, third-party phenomenon, feedback, paraphrase, elaboration, skillful selection of speech acts, people-inclusive personal pronouns, usual collocates, specification, figurative language, exploring shared knowledge and politeness.

**NOTES**

1. Other factors which escalate disputes have been noted by scholars to include the use of rhetorical questions (Brenneis 1988; Tagaki 1999) and highly face aggravating responses (Muntigl and Turnbull 1998).
2. In his analysis of American family disputes at dinnertime, he observed five main formats: submission where one participant accepts the other's position, dominant party intervention where the disputants submit to a third party, compromise where one participant offers a concession which is then accepted, stand-off in which there is no submission or compromise, and finally, withdrawal either from one verbal conflict or physically from the environment (see also Dersley and Wootton 2001) – cited in Santoi Leung (2017:13).
3. This submission corroborates Cohen (ibid. p.26) who asserts that “from the premise that language constitutes a community's shared stock of meanings, we can conclude that the study of language may provide an excellent entry point for investigating how members of a group understand and handle conflict.” In addition, Cohen (ibid.) submits that “cross-linguistic comparison reveals much about other societies and provokes thoughts about our own. It is also expedient since the resolution of intercultural conflict, already salient in multicultural societies, is likely to become increasingly significant in an interdependent world. When paradigms of conflict resolution clash, conceptual and technical contradictions have to be addressed if they are to be overcome...

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## APPENDIX

### Duke Donald, Chief, Etimi, Papa and Madama (corpora 1-5)

#### Corpus 1

Duke Donald: This gathering is the rainbow that has united our clan for centuries. A community that is united in love and purpose should not continue to waste lives. The streams of Azuwa and Ezinma are thickened by the blood of the martyrs of this age-long conflict. The smell of fresh blood all over the land must mean a lot to us. We are here to resolve this conflict. My clansmen, we must give peace a chance. The terror that plagues the present world is the reason for retrogression and fear. I do not doubt the fact that we are the answers to our problems.

#### Corpus 2

Chief: The vultures must stop smiling at our foolishness. I do not want their claws on those mutilated bodies. They clap their wings as they take pellets of flesh up the Iroko trees. The flesh of men, women and children – victims of man's inordinate ambition. Be prepared. You have to. Let us reason. Stop the killing. See a way out. Rise. Okada clan thought war was the answer. Ogi warriors thought their swords could overthrow the status-quo. After several years of reckless killing of innocent people, they embraced belated dialogue.

**Corpus 3**

Etimi: Dialogue has always been the panacea to resolving issues. The land belongs to both communities. There will be peace and harmony if we evolve sharing formula. Our brotherhood must continue. That is what our ancestors want. There are crooks who want this dispute to linger on for their selfish motives. They do not know that the precious lives of their kinsmen transcend the booties of war. There cannot be peace unless we fish out those who orchestrated the perpetuation of conflict and murder in our communities. We know them. We smell them. We hate them. We can crush them. I commend your wisdom for calling this meeting. You are the pillars of peace, the wind of harmony.

**Corpus 4**

Papa: It is unfortunate that wise ones like you could allow our people die in their thousands before this peace-meeting. Your decision is their life. Your action is their death. Anyway, it is better that you can no longer fold your hands to see dead bodies in our farmlands and streams. The police have pledged to give us all the necessary support as we come together to strike a deal for lasting peace in our communities. A few of us agreed before this meeting, to invite our sons abroad to participate in building our communities. We wrote a letter to them through the President of the Association of Azuwa People in Europe. Their reply is encouraging. Long live our communities. Long live Nigeria.

**Corpus 5**

Madama: Now I see that A7 does not have a place anymore in Azuwa. I see no reason why two communities that share same cultures and values cannot bury greed and hatred. According to our traditions, the resolution of the Council of Elders must stand. Each of the two neighboring communities knows its share of the land. Traditions do not allow either a community or a member to sell any portion of land that is for other people. This is the genesis of the crisis between Azuwa and Ezinma. Unless the culprits are made to face the wrath of the law, there cannot be true reconciliation between the two communities. Let the money be returned. Let the buyers forfeit the land. Then we can talk of togetherness, peace and community building.

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