

## FOSTERING PEACE LINGUISTICS FOR NATIONAL PEACE AND SECURITY IN NIGERIA

**Julianah A. Akindele<sup>1</sup>**

**Richard D. Akano<sup>1</sup>**

**Victor Fabunmi<sup>1</sup>**

**Oladele Adejobi<sup>2</sup>**

*Osun State University, Ikire Campus, Nigeria<sup>1</sup>*

*Lagos State University<sup>2</sup>*

### **Abstract**

*A few studies on Peace Linguistics (PL) in relation to social relationships exist, but studies on PL in the context of national (in)security in Nigeria are scarce. This study explores how PL can be a veritable means to ameliorate insecurity challenges, especially regarding language use in certain social domains of human relations. Structured questionnaires were distributed to 200 randomly sampled respondents. Responses show that out of the overall frequency of 2000 expected outcomes, 468 (23.4%) picked SA, A had 723 (36.15%), 565 (28.25%) for D, and SD at 244 (12.2%) in the use of abusive language in the home, among parents, siblings, among friends/peers, schools, market setting, soccer viewing centres, and preponderantly among commercial bus drivers and other road users. A huge chunk of responses affirm that females deploy conflict-fomenting and abusive language in different contexts of conversations than males do at a total frequency of 267 (13.35) for SA, 717 for A, 664 for D and 352 (33.2%) for SD out of the overall expected total of 2000. The study, therefore, proposes the need to achieve peace through language, especially in a time of rising insecurity in Nigeria. This can be achieved by building positive social structures through peace-oriented linguistic education at an early age of a Nigerian child and building positive media and social communication platforms.*

**Keywords:** Mis-interactions and interpretations; social relationships; national peace and security; peace-oriented linguistic education; peace linguistics

### **Introduction**

Peace is a concept of societal friendship and harmony without hostility and violence. However, it is an experience that is scarce in almost all the societies of the world. What is rife in most communities can be represented in several lexical items, viz: violence, brutality, savagery, barbarity, hostility, cruelty, aggression and, in the Nigerian parlance, ethnic cleansing, internecine wars, terrorism, banditry, ritual killing and so forth. Hence, the attainment of peace in most world societies has become somewhat elusive and uncertain. Nonetheless, the world still tries its best to restore peace in most societies. Most governmental agencies, NGOs and other stakeholders in community management have left no stone

unturned in a bid to ensure peace in their respective societies. Resources and strategies are being deployed daily to make peace attainable the world over. Suffice to say that the attainment of peace in any national life is subject to diverse approaches, including the use of language. For instance, in the opinion of Eyisi (n.d), the English language is strategic to national development for if individuals have attained quality education through thorough instructions in the English language, then they will in turn be gainfully employed, live a good quality of life which in the overall will lead to a good quality of life of the nation. The same opinion is shared by Ogunsiji (2018) as he points out that language is a binding agent and as such the English language can be relied upon in the unification of a pluralistic society like Nigeria. Therefore, this paper explores the English language as a veritable tool that Nigeria can exploit for lasting national peace and security.

### **The Nigerian Quest for a Sustainable Global Peace**

Nigeria is a nation that has been plagued by persistent insecurities for more than two decades now. The issue of insecurity in Nigeria has been going from one security challenge to another ever since the return to democratic rule in 1999. Okeke (2012) establishes that the current political dispensation in the country is characterised by different shades of crisis, which consequently culminate in numerous unresolved national conflicts. Also, the nation experienced genocide in the name of civil war between 1967 and 1970, a war caused by ethnic chauvinism and tribal intolerance. Ogundepo and Oduola (2006:19) aver that:

Today, Nigeria is experiencing a build-up to a foreseeable (though preventable) crisis of a gigantic dimension. Book haram is decimating the Nigerian population; Niger Delta militants are destroying oil installations, applying oil economy, Biafra apologists threaten secession, and Arewa Youths are bracing for the challenge.

These indices and factors of insecurity contribute to the country's development, peace, unity, and progress. Given these backgrounds, therefore, this study focuses on the use of language to induce crisis and how language is effectively deployed to prevent or stem the tide of security challenges in Nigeria to maintain global peace.

### **Aim and Objectives**

The sole aim of this paper is to foreground language as capable of a double-edged function. In other words, this study is an attempt to bring to the fore the ambivalent potential of language as a tool that can be used, on the one hand, to foment crises and, on the other hand, as the same tool that can also be used to deter crisis. This aim is however achievable through some objectives which include:

1. to examine the social context where abusive language is predominantly used and
2. to ascertain whether the use of abusive language is used more by the male sex or the female sex.

### **Language, Communication and Security: A Tripodal Stool**

In examining how language and communication incite crises and simultaneously act as means of engendering national security, there is a need to situate the terms language, communication, and security in the proper perspectives. Therefore, language has been viewed from several perspectives by various scholars. For instance, Ogunsola and Babatunde (2017) described language as a tool for national security. They are of the opinion that language is a system of communication that enables human beings to cooperate and live in harmony among themselves. In a similar manner, Mc. Laughlin (2006) defines language as a system of arbitrary verbal symbols that speakers put in order, according to a conventional code, to communicate ideas and feelings to influence the behaviour of others. Also, Okeke (2012) describes language as a compendium of words, phrases, clauses, and sentences which a user chooses from and string together systematically to express meanings that are appropriate in a particular context. Essien (1998) sees language as a system of structured arbitrary words and symbols by means of which human beings make meaning and communicate with each other in each community. Ogundepo, Alabi and Okedigba (2008) refer to language as the means through which members of a social group exchange ideas, information, and the like; a means of self-expression, a powerful instrument of social interaction and the most potent means of sending and receiving information. From the definitions above, what is common to all is language being used as the instrument of communication. This is because communication is the essence of a language and without a language, communication cannot adequately and effectively take place. This perhaps may be why Ogundepo (2011) concludes that it is through language that any meaningful attempt can be made to communicate.

Communication is another very important factor in any human society. It is a means through which relationships are initiated, formed, maintained, and concluded. As a concept, communication has been defined by different scholars. In Adejumo's (2004) opinion, communication is a process of passing a message across to another person from a source. It is a transference of a message from a sender to the receiver through a channel. Eyres (1983) submits that communication is not just about giving and receiving understandable information but also about transferring a message to another party so that it can be understood and acted upon. Furthermore, Trenholms and Jensen (1995) define communication as a process whereby humans collectively create and regulate social reality. It is a vehicle for social cooperation, co-existence and understanding between two parties which cannot hold unless the two parties engage in creative meaning. As

posited by Soola and Ayoade (2000), communication is both an indispensable and an unavoidable human activity. Moreover, even a deliberate refusal to communicate, for example, communicates something to someone somewhere (Oguundepo & Okedigba, 2013).

Language and communication are inseparable. They are mutually interdependent. Accordingly, Okeke (2012, p. 15) notes that:

Knowing a language is not simply knowing how to encode and transmit a message to a second party, who then decodes it to understand what we intended to say... It also embodies our ability to use language accurately, appropriately, and flexibly to be communicative competent.

This, therefore, means language user needs more than mastery of the rules of language, grammatical correctness etc. to communicate effectively. It must include knowledge of what to say, how to say it, and when to say it. Security can be seen as a form of development (Okeke, 2012).

Prior to Okeke's position, Sobola and Sotoyinbo (2011) described security as a potential liberation and safety from physical, political, economic, socio-economic, or psychological danger or attack. They posit further that security means the protection or safety of people against all kinds of molestation/persecutions/inhumanities emanating from external/military attacks, economic want, poverty, illiteracy, diseases, ill health, political humiliation, or suppression, social exploitation, and criminal acts. A nation is secure when citizens are free from threats to life and property, enjoy socio-economic well-being and live in peace and tranquility. What is more, Jega (2007) sees security as a situation in which citizens can be liberated, live in harmony and safety, participate fully in the process of governance, enjoy the protection of fundamental human rights, have access to resources and necessity of life and inhabit in an environment which is conducive to their health and well-being. Given the views on security sustained herein, it may not be out of place to assert in this paper that Nigeria is perpetually grappling with security challenges as all the indices of security as represented in the above definitions are yet to be obtainable in the country. What is glaringly obtainable in Nigeria is several manifestations of insecurities across all the states, ranging from inter and intra-cultural clashes, cult group attacks and counterattacks, ethnic distrust, political crises, secession agitations, religious intolerance and bigotry, youth restlessness, etc.

### **Language and Security: A Global and a Local Context**

Language as a distinct and invaluable human heritage is the most veritable means through which human beings cooperate among themselves in a given community. Human beings use it to express themselves and manipulate objects in the environment. Human beings use language to share information for group identity, socialisation, social grooming, social stratification, and entertainment, etc. Language brings people together for interactive purposes and serves as a cooperative tool. Cook and Newson (2007) identify language as human heritage; it is in our genes. However, just like other inherited attributes of humans, it does not

rule out variations between individuals as some may be more linguistically or communicatively competent than others. According to Okeke (2012), “what we do with language can have positive or negative consequences.” This means that to maintain continuity and achieve peace and success in language use, people should carefully and strategically figure out, constantly what to say, how to say what and how to understand what others say in the process of interaction with one another. A harmless expression can ignite violence of an unimaginable magnitude if not well managed. This may be explicated with the religious riot in Nigeria in 2002. Ogundepo and Okedigba (2013) report the incident as it happened during the 2002 edition of the Miss World Beauty Pageant held in Nigeria. There was general resentment and opposition from the Nigerian Muslim community. Isioma Daniel, a fashion writer with the *This Day* Newspaper is said to have remarked that:

The Muslims thought it was immoral to bring 92 women to Nigeria and ask them to revel in vanity. What would Mohammed think? Honestly, [he] would probably have chosen a wife from them.

The pundit found the statement funny and sarcastic. However, the same words threw the nation into a chaotic situation that left not less than 200 persons dead, more than a thousand people injured, and yet another hapless population of over 11,000 people rendered homeless. Despite the retraction of the story as well as torrents of apologies from the Newspaper publishing house, its offices in Kaduna were touched and a *fatwa* (death sentence) was issued against Isioma Daniel by the then deputy governor of Zamfara State, Mamuda Aliyu Shinkafi. In a broadcast of 26th November 2002, the former governor is quoted to have said:

Like Salman Rushdie, the blood of Isioma Daniel can be shed. It is binding on all Muslims, whereas they are to consider the killing of the writer as a religious duty (BBC New, 2002).

Similarly, the post-election remarks of the then presidential aspirant (and now the president of the Federal Republic of Nigeria) President Muhammad Buhari in 2011, immediately after the declaration of the presidential elections, resulted in favour of the late President Umaru Musa Yar’ Adua, was believed to have incited the violence that led to the loss of several lives where lots of innocent people died including some Youths Corps members serving in the NYSC scheme at that time. Chovwen’s (2006) study reveals that communication ranked first out of the nineteen variables identified as ‘conflict inducing’ in the forty-one sampled organizations. Chovwen’s findings thus align with Meyer’s (1999) submission on the position that conflict arises out of ineffective communication.

As language and communication can trigger violence and insecurity, it is also the most potent force that can be used to douse tension and bring about peace and tranquility. No society is free of conflicts, no matter how developed and advanced.

Every nation has its peculiar features of insecurity, which can only be effectively curtailed through appropriate language communication. It should be noted that language and communication are good, potent tools for mobilizing people for good or evil and conscious efforts should always be made to use language for good. In the submission of Ogundepo, Alabi and Okedigba (2008), ineffective communication is a major cause of conflicts in most organisations; if people lack adequate information, good intentions might be misinterpreted, thus predisposing people concerned to avoidable conflicts.

### **Conceptual Framework: Peace Linguistics**

Peace Linguistics is an aspect of applied linguistics that intersects linguistics and peace studies. Conflict is a commonplace in human relations. What humans have always attempted to do to maintain peace is to devise means for conflict management. One of the ways conflict is sparked, escalated and sustained is through language use. It is often said that ‘war of guns is preceded by war of words.’ Peace Linguistics, however, is an approach that advocates peaceful communication and the use of language for harmonious coexistence. Peace Linguistics concerns how language and peace can be integrated and applied in varied contexts of human communicative interactions. It is an attempt to harmonise the theoretical foundations of language with that of peace education. It seeks to account for the linguistic structures capable of enhancing or jeopardizing a peace process (Usman, 2020). In recent times it appears that the role played by language in conflict prevention, resolution and management is gradually and speedily being deemphasised and, as such, sparsely explored, unlike what obtains in such other fields of liberal arts as journalism, political science, and sociology. Consequent upon this realisation, therefore, the idea of Peace Linguistics is pushed to the front burners so that it may serve as a viable response and, equally, a seemingly better option to achieving sustainable peace through the disciplines.

An important step towards the birth of Peace Linguistics took place when with the publication of an entry by Crystal (1999) in which we are told that that way of doing Linguistics is “an approach which emerged in the 1990s among many linguists and language teachers in which linguistic principles, methods, findings, and applications were seen as a means of promoting peace and human rights at a global level. Since that applied linguist’s pioneering definition, the concept of Peace Linguistics has been extended (Gomes de Matos, 2014). More recently, this author defined Peace Linguistics in terms of what peace linguists are expected to do by prioritising the humanising nature of language use and being aware of the other side of communicative reality: dehumanizing uses of languages (Gomes de Matos, 2012).

In proposing Applied Peace Linguistics, there is a dual challenge involved: On the one hand, appliers are challenged to identify states of agreement, harmony,

communicative dignity, and communicative peace, and also identify states of disagreement and disharmony such as communicative conflict, discord, contention, and dissension (Gomes de Matos, 2014). Similarly, Coleman's (2012:61-62) propositions of the principles and practices for conflict resolution touch on two aspects of procedures for conflict resolution of all twenty-three procedures: dialogue (enhancement of empathy, compassion and understanding) and reconciliation (based on apology, forgiveness, and new trust). In consonance with the foregoing, Gomes de Matos (2008:31) puts forward some principles for peaceful language users:

**Principle 1**

Be a peaceful language bridge person between/among persons, groups, communities. How? By:

Viewing and treating conflicts and controversies constructively; convincing others cooperatively, rather than competitively or coercively, and contributing to a culture of compassion.

**Principle 2**

Dignify your daily dialogue. How? By:

Addressing other persons with respectful language and optimistic vocabulary; disagreeing through empathetic language, that is, by placing oneself in the other's shoes; and, by using 'positivizers' (adjectives and verbs which can enhance positive qualities/traits in people)

**Principle 3**

Honour humanism and foster humanization. How? By:

Avoiding/preventing verbal harm and humiliation; applying justice and peace to your communicative acts; and, by rephrasing potentially dehumanizing messages, texts, etc.

**Principle 4**

Act as a peace patriot at all times. How? By:

Perceiving persons as peace partners; promoting a passion for peace, especially in aggressive, hostile contexts; and, by monitoring your communication for their ethical, moral, social values.

**Methodology**

This study employs a quantitative design approach. This approach focuses on numbers or sample sizes and then concentrates on the quantity of responses to gain insights into the studied phenomenon. The research data for this study was gathered through the Likert Scale questionnaire template, which contains structured questions inspired by the research objectives. A total of 200 questionnaires were administered electronically through Google Form. The target

audience/population that responded to the questionnaires are teenagers and young adults from two universities in southwest Nigeria. Specifically, one hundred (100) students of the Faculty of Arts and Humanities, Lagos State University, Ojo, and (100) students from the College of Humanities and Culture of the Osun State University, Ikire Campus, Osogbo. For this study, however, teenagers and young adults are classified as respondents between 16 and 25 years. Feedback and responses were represented in tables and charts to give statistical analysis.

**Findings**

**Table 1: Statistics showing the use of abusive/curse words in social contexts**

	Questions	No. of Respondents	Strongly Agree	%	Agree	%	Disagree	%	Strongly Disagree	%
1	Most times, abusive/curse words trigger conflict between my parents.	200	43	21.6	73	36.5	55	27.5	29	14.4
2	Whenever I do something wrong, my parents direct abusive/curse words/insults at me.	200	6	3.1	33	16.4	88	44.1	73	36.4
3	My siblings use abusive/curse words during conversations.	200	5	2.2	27	13.7	91	45.7	77	38.4
4	Most of my neighbours fondly use curse/abusive words/threats when talking to people.	200	46	23.2	82	40.9	58	29.1	14	6.8
5.	Most times, abusive/curse words trigger conflict among my friends.	200	63	31.5	103	51.4	30	14.9	4	2.2
6	Most petty traders in the neighbourhood use abusive words at hard-bargaining customers.	200	65	32.4	91	45.4	38	19	6	3.2
7	Most commercial bus drivers direct abusive words and gestures at fellow road users.	200	114	56.7	78	39.2	8	4.1	0	0
8	Most viewers at a football match use abusive words.	200	75	37.9	103	51.4	20	9.8	2	0.9
9	Most of my teachers direct abusive/curse words at students	200	19	9.3	39	19.6	119	59.3	23	11.7
10	Most of my colleagues in school are fond of abusive/curse words during conversations	200	32	16.1	94	46.9	58	28.9	16	8.1
<b>Total</b>		<b>2000</b>	<b>468</b>	<b>23.4</b>	<b>723</b>	<b>36.15</b>	<b>565</b>	<b>28.25</b>	<b>244</b>	<b>12.2</b>

Table 1 shows the overall frequency of 2000 expected outcome of respondents, 468 (23.4%) picked SA, A had 723 (36.15%), D, 565 (28.25%) and SD at 244 (12.2%) for the home, neighbourhood, peer group, school, market setting, and soccer viewing centres as social domains considered in this study. On whether abusive/curse words trigger conflict between parents, 43 responses (21.6%) strongly agree and another 73 (36.5%) agree with this position. Meanwhile, 55

respondents (27.5%) disagree, while 29 (14.4%) strongly disagree. From these positions, it is evident that most respondents take the position that a major source of conflict among parents is the use of abusive/curse words. The position that parents use abusive/curse words at errant children seems to be strongly opposed, as only six (6) respondents (3.1%) strongly agree, while 33 respondents (16.4%) of the study population agree with this position. These positions seem marginal compared to the 88 respondents (44.1%) who disagree and another 73 (36.4%) of the total respondents who strongly disagree. Among siblings, the use of abusive/curse words appears to be largely non-existent as only 5 respondents, accounting for a meagre 2.2% of respondents, strongly agree with this position, whereas another 27 respondents, 13.7% agree. On the other hand, a whooping majority, totalling 91 respondents (45.7%), disagree with this position, while 77 respondents (38.4%) strongly disagree.

In terms of co-habitation and tenement living arrangements, responses as to whether most neighbours use abusive/swear words and threats when talking to one another show 46 respondents (23.2%) as strongly agree where 82 respondents, representing 40.9% agree; 58 respondents (29.1%) disagree whereas 14 respondents (6.8%) of total study population strongly disagree with the position that neighbours use discordant tones with one another. Furthermore, many respondents agree that abusive/curse words trigger conflict among peers and friends since; 63 respondents strongly agree, while 103 agree. These two positions account for 31.5% and another 51.4% respectively. The remaining 30 respondents (14.9%) and another four 4 respondents (2.2%) disagree and strongly disagree, respectively. The analysis also reveals preponderant use of abusive/curse words in petty trade and marketing in the neighbourhood with the strongly agree and agree affirmative responses of 65 respondents (32.4%) and 91 respondents (45.4%), respectively.

Furthermore, 114 respondents (56.7%) with the “strongly agree” position and 78 respondents (39.2%) with the “agree” position show that abusive/curse words are more often used among commercial bus drivers and other road users. Also, soccer viewing centres are a common social domain where abusive/curse words are deployed. To this effect, 75 respondents (37.9%) take the strongly agree position, and 103 (51.4%) take the agree. Schools are also another social context of abusive/curse word usage. Responses show that students use abusive/curse words more than students do. This position is made explicit by the 119 disagree (59.3%) and 23 agree (11.7%) responses that refute teachers’ use of abusive/curse words when addressing students. Likewise, an over average 126 responses (94 agree, 32 strongly agree) affirm that most students are fond of using abusive/curse words even in the school setting.

**Table 2: Statistics Juxtaposition of the Use of Abusive/Curse Words Based on Gender**

	Questions	No. of Respondents	Strongly Agree	%	Agree	%	Disagree	%	Strongly Disagree	%
1	Females use abusive/curse words and insults more often than males do.	200	46	23	95	47.3	54	27	5	2.7
2.	Most of my male friends use curse/abusive words and threats during conversations more often than the females.	200	19	9.3	82	40.9	71	35.8	28	14
3	Most times, during conflict, my mother uses more abusive/curse words than my father does.	200	43	21.6	73	36.5	55	27.5	29	14.4
4	Whenever I do something wrong, my father directs abusive, curse words/insults at me more than my mother does.	200	6	3.1	33	16.4	88	44.1	73	36.4
5	My female siblings use abusive/curse words more often than my male siblings do.	200	5	2.2	27	13.7	91	45.7	77	38.4
6	Whenever they engage in casual conversations, my mother uses kind/polite words more than my father does.	200	15	7.7	65	32.3	67	33.6	53	26.4
7	My female friends use abusive words more than my male friends do when appreciating me.	200	6	3.2	49	24.3	95	47.7	50	24.8
8	In casual conversations, most of my female friends use abusive words more often than my male friends do.	200	59	29.6	89	44.4	34	17.1	18	8.8
9	Female students often use negative/swear words more than male students when expressing excitement.	200	30	15	110	55.1	50	24.8	10	5.1
10	Female teachers talk more politely and respectfully to students than male teachers do.	200	38	19.2	94	47.2	59	29.4	9	4.2
	<b>Total</b>		<b>267</b>	<b>13.35</b>	<b>717</b>	<b>35.85</b>	<b>664</b>	<b>33.2</b>	<b>352</b>	<b>17.65</b>

Table 2 above summarises responses on the use of abusive/curse words based on gender at a total frequency of 267 (13.35) for SA, 717 for A, 664 for D and 352 (33.2%) for SD out of the overall expected total of 2000. Most respondents believe females use more abusive/curse words than their male counterparts in all domains. Responses show that mothers use abusive/curse words more than

fathers during conversations and when reprimanding their children, which is evident in the 43 Strongly (21.5%) Agree and 73 Agree (36.5%) responses. Within the school setting, 38 Strongly Agree (19.2%) and 94 Agree (47.2%) affirm respondents' view that female teachers talk less politely than male teachers do when addressing their students. Also, female friends deploy abusive/curse words less often, unlike males in casual conversations and when expressing excitement. This view is expressed with 59 Strongly Agree (29.5%) and 89 Agree (44.5%) positions, superseding 34 Disagree (17%) and 18 Strongly Disagree (9%) positions. However, contrary to this narrative and based on the 99 Disagree (49.5%) and 87 Strongly Disagree (43.5%) statistics garnered from the responses, female siblings use abusive/curse words less often than male siblings during conversations.

## **Discussion**

The essence of this study is to evaluate the extent to which abusive language and curse words thrive in human interactions across different spheres of social relations and relationship building. To achieve this, the two proposed objectives are to examine the social contexts where abusive language is predominantly used and ascertain whether the use of abusive language is used more by the male sex or the female sex. This section, therefore, contains analysis as well as discussions of findings.

Responses in the questionnaire show that abusive language between couples or parents tends to spark and/or foment crisis. This is also like mostly informal interactions in the neighbourhoods. Most respondents attest to abusive language as one of those factors that initiates, sustains, and escalates conflict among age groups or peers. This aligns with the general epistemic notion that abusive language causes friction in interaction and poses threat to negotiation and consensus. In line with the first research objective (the social domains of abusive language usage), it was discovered that many respondents affirmed that their parents use abusive language less frequently. In the case of tenement settings/dwellings, however, our study reveals that most neighbourhood dwellers and landlords use subjective, derogatory expressions, especially during conflicts. Further responses revealed that abusive languages are more frequently used during haggling or bargaining on prices in market/sales transactions, conversations among commercial bus drivers and road users, and at soccer viewing centres. Our inquiries probe further into the use of abusive language in schools, an important and more strategic domain through which the re-engineering of language use for peaceful co-existence can be jumpstarted. Responses, however, show that teachers are deliberate in emphasizing courtesy in students' disposition toward others and life's situations, while a little population of the respondents claim their teachers hurl abusive language at them. It was also

discovered that, despite the emphasis on peace-promoting language use, students readily use abusive language during interactions, especially in informal settings.

Glaringly, responses also show that abusive language dominates in the interactions of petty traders, newspaper/vendor stands, soccer viewing centres and, most predominantly, in the interactions among commercial vehicle drivers/operators, who are always quick at hurling swear/taboo words/expressions and curses at their colleagues and fellow motorists or road users. This discovery aptly and perhaps appropriately dovetails with Ken-Maduako's (2016) position on the features of motor park discourse where the use of abusive language takes centre stage, leading to a question that may likely provoke further research into how the 'principle of communicative politeness' can be 'smuggled' into and/or entrenched in motor park conversations or discourses.

The second objective in this exercise appeals to the sentiments of respondents on sex/gender and this is to ascertain whether abusive language is used more often by the male sex or by the female sex. In the responses available (68% of which came from female respondents) the female gender could still be adjudged as having the highest frequency use of abusive language, curse words and insults. In essence, females tend to be less polite and more vulgar in many discourse settings. This finding, however, contravenes Lakoff's (1975) position, in 'Language and Woman's Place', that females are more polite and less colloquial than males, a position that is however subject to the linguistic, communicative, and contextual or cultural background in which speakers are nurtured. Nevertheless, findings in this study show that females are much more users of abusive language than their male counterparts.

### **Conclusion and Recommendations**

Furthermore, as observed in the responses, abusive language deepens crisis and complicates solutions. This proposition is sustained especially because many of the respondents agree with the position that abusive language is capable of sabotaging internal and societal peace. Equally, from the responses, it could be inferred that parents and teachers are bent on encouraging politeness and peace-oriented word choices in all communicative events. Finally, a general observation from this survey is the strong signifier that abusive language use will continually trigger and aggravate friction in human relations, which will usher in menace, suspicion, and individual/communal insecurity. In this light, the approach of Peace Linguistics is advocated as a veritable approach for de-emphasizing conflict-oriented language use and refocusing language (and the power of discourse) for peaceful social interaction. Through Peace Linguistics, therefore, it may be strongly positioned that societal security and peaceful co-existence can be fostered.

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