

THE ROLE OF DRESSING AND PHATIC COMMUNION AS MEANS OF CULTURAL EXPRESSION IN NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

In recent times, there has been a lot of hue and cry over the eroding status of Nigerian local languages and their deteriorating values. Many scholars have made concerted efforts- especially in orthographic representations and language re-engineering-to bring them to limelight. However, little or no effort has been made towards harnessing the intrinsic aspect of language –the nonverbal expressions-to promote cultural values. This study projects phatic communion(greetings)and dressing as subtle means of cultural-cum- linguistic expressions by the major tribes in Nigeria to x-ray their communicative attributes. The Speech Act Theory of Searle which incorporates both the direct and indirect speech act was used to support the verbal and non-verbal communication in language. It was discovered that dressing and phatic communion of a speech community can positively and symbolically showcase its uniqueness and earn her social validity, acceptance and respect even on the global scene.

Keywords: Language, Phatic Communion, Dressing, Culture, and cultural expression.

1. Introduction

A lot of orthographic innovations have been put in place such as the WAZOBIA, and other language policies geared towards projecting the major languages in Nigeria, vis a vis the English language that continues to attain prominence with negative consequences on the local languages in Nigeria. On account of colonization, Nigeria in particular and Africa in general suffered drastic consequences in terms of language.

The words of Ivan van Sertima (2017: 435), captures the African situation thus:

‘No human . . . disaster can equal in dimension of destructiveness, the catalyst that shook Africa ...the threads of cultural and historical continuity were so savagely torn asunder that henceforward one would have to think of two Africas: the one before and the one after the Holocaust’.

Adebisi (2017:435) further declares ‘that the consequences of the colonial encounter between Europe and Africa was to establish thereafter the parameters for global power and the gateway to acceptable language, knowledge jurisprudence and thought’.

In our contemporary times, the world has metamorphosed into a global village with peoples of different cultures interacting with one another. Various cultures seek global recognition in order to fully project their uniqueness through material and non-material dimensions. The material aspect depicts physical properties like crafts, artefacts and symbols of a people while the non-material element of culture constitute their language, philosophy, moral values and attitudes. This study emphasizes the non-material aspect of language as part of the culture of a people which can be positively projected to solve the problem of linguistic extinction in Nigeria. Specifically, it prioritizes dressing and phatic communion (greetings) of the major languages which make them unique. The statement below depicts that language is not just about spoken and written words, or grammar. It involves everything a people do.

A language is not just words and grammar; it is a web of history that binds all the people who once spoke the language, all the things they did together, all the knowledge they imparted to their descendants. When a language dies, it's just the same as when a specie dies. You lose part of the network of life, and you lose everything it could impart. (www.krysstal.com/spoken.html).

1.1 Statement of the problem

The emergence of English language as the official language in Nigeria as a result of her colonial experience has greatly undermined the use of her local languages ,so much so that these languages are gradually facing extinction. Some language policies such as the WAZOBIA have been advanced to revamp the languages but little progress has been recorded. This study employs a different dimension to addressing the problem of linguistic extinction, by projecting the paralinguistic essence of such cultural values as greetings and dressing, inherent in major Nigerian languages and their communicative attributes.

1.2 Aim and objectives

The work aims at projecting the paralinguistic capabilities of the major Nigerian languages, with regards to their cultural values such as phatic communion and dressing. This aim is realizable through the following objectives:

- i. identifying certain cultural values of these language that are communicative;
- ii. project the uniqueness of the cultural values of each ethnic group vis a vis their communicative attributes;
- iii. assess the extent these values could be used in promoting these languages nationally and internationally.

1.3 Scope of the Study

The geographical entity, Nigeria, is characterized by a multiplicity of ethnic groups with their different languages, totaling about three hundred tribal groups. The choice of the three major languages namely **Igbo, Hausa and Yoruba** is informed by the fact that most Nigerians speak these major languages and the minor languages cannot possibly be accommodated in this research. Additionally, most of the minor languages are variants of the major languages, so the minor ones are ultimately represented in this study.

1.4 Significance of the Study

The study is significant because it employs a different dimension to addressing the problem of linguistic extinction in Nigeria, by looking inwards to identify the cultural values of the three major Nigerian languages that can serve as medium of cultural - cum-linguistic expression within and outside the country.

The work will also serve as a reference material for related linguistic and cultural studies.

Sociolinguists, language planners and policy makers and other stakeholders will find in this work, useful ideas that will complement their tasks in this regard.

Students who are interested in this area of study will find the material useful.

2. Explication of Terms

2.1 Language

Language is a means of communication amongst human beings in a society. Obanya et al(1987)view Language as a system for the expression of thoughts, feelings and social togetherness through the use of spoken sounds or conventional symbols. Linguists believe

that language is a tool for the transmission and preservation of culture, as culture clearly distinguishes man from other animals. Barber (1972) opines that language is a signaling system used by a group of people or speech community for the purpose of social communication. Basically, language is subdivided into verbal and non verbal forms. The verbal form of language deals with symbolic vocal sounds used for verbal expressions whereas the non verbal language refers to gestures, body language, facial expressions and outward signs that implicitly convey meaning. Language, no doubt, is an important aspect of communication and human life.

2.2 Paralinguistics

Paralinguistic is an aspect of linguistics that deals with the implicit verbal and non- verbal phenomenon in language.

According to Nordquist (in Definitions and Examples of Paralinguistics <https://www.thoughtco.com>),

‘Paralinguistics is the study of these[sic] vocal and sometimes non -vocal signs beyond the basic verbal message or speech, also known as vocalics’. Paralanguage includes the study of such elements as speech modulation in pitch, accent, small talks and other non vocal phenomenon as body language, gestures, facial expressions and other extra linguistic phenomenon that can elicit communication.

According to Nordquist, cultural interpretation of non verbal cues differ from one culture to another and this can cause confusion amongst people of different background.

This work therefore attempts to investigate the verbal and paralinguistic expressions inherent in the three major tribes in Nigeria vis-a-vis their communicative attributes,.

2.3 The Concept of Phatic Communion

Phatic communion refers to communication as a social function, in form of small talks and social pleasantries that do not seek to proffer any information of value. Greetings such as “hello” and “how are you?” are phatic expressions. According to AnilaPushpagiri (2002), phatic communion is a verbal and non-verbal communion that has a social function, such as to start a conversation, greet someone, or say goodbye, rather than an informative function. Phatic communion or greetings involves the non-referential use of language to share feelings or establish a mood of sociability rather than communicating information or ideas. Amongst the Igbos, shaking with both hands is a mode of phatic communion with associated greetings as *Ututuoma*(good morning), *Kedu ka I mere* (how do you do?) etc. This form of greeting is suggestive of the Igbo tribe who do not genuflect nor prostrate like the Hausas or Yorubas. The use of both hands implies deep affinity and acceptance between the persons involved. The average Igbo man exudes a dignified personality and will rather shake hands than prostrate. Each man expects to be accorded his self- respect and that explains the proverbial adage ‘Igbo enweeze’ (Igbos have no king) because every man is proud of his little enclave. However, the Igbo man also bends to receive a ‘royal pat’ from a king.

This singular attitude of the Igbos, can be seen in their tribal inclination to be independent, systematic, with an outstanding trait of business acumen, prudence, superiority and intelligence in their social and business dealings which have earned them the mark of a domineering , resilient ,versatile and successful race or tribe wherever they find themselves. Similarly, other tribes –the Yorubas and Hausas- have unique characteristics in their cultural representations that project their cultural identities, different from every other tribe.

2.4 The Concept of Dressing

Dressing refers to the totality of the coverings and adornment a person puts on for clothing and aesthetic purposes. Dressing forms part of a people's culture, hence different peoples of the world have their unique dress culture. A popular saying attributed to William Shakespeare says that the apparel maketh a man. A person's mode of dressing speaks volumes about his personality, values and beliefs, through visual communication. The Igbo say –*'Anya ka ejiamaka okacharaacha'* - meaning that it is with the eyes that one can determine a ripe corn. It then follows that the eyes are endowed with discerning capabilities to see the good, the bad and the ugly and dressing is not an exception. Roman Jakobson (1960) views dressing as a communication system, using clothing as art signs, symbols or visual language which can be interpreted as a language of communication. In other words, clothing belongs to visual communication that is established between the sender and the receiver, using visual signs and codes. Universally speaking, a decent attire accords one respect while a haggardly dressed personality is viewed with contemptuous disregard. Ultimately, a good tribal dressing code can assist in gaining recognition and global relevance and could serve as a medium of transmitting the people's values, beliefs and culture. Dressing as a means of cultural expression is an indirect speech act because it is iconic, symbolic and open to objective and subjective interpretations and equally serves as a veritable tool for image projection- who the person is, who he wants to be, where he comes from and his societal ideals. For example, the average Yoruba man loves life and enjoys it to the fullest and may even spend his last penny to host his 'owanmbe' (party). The Yoruba people of Nigeria are known for their exquisite clothing. Clothing for them, serves as an indicator of status and wealth. The men for example, are lavishly dressed in their 'Sokoto' and 'Agbada' which are exquisitely sewn to allow for their 'show of flamboyance'.

The Hausa also have their mode of dressing that is quite different from the Igbo and the Yoruba. The Hausa enjoy wearing their ‘babariga’ and ‘caftan.’ The kind of cap they put on differentiates them from the other tribes. Dressing is part of the ways of identifying one tribal group from the others. It is part of the culture of any group.

2.5 The Concept of Culture and its expression

The term culture was first used by Edward B. Taylor, an English anthropologist, in his book **Primitive Culture** in 1871. Taylor defined culture as ‘that complex whole which includes knowledge, beliefs, arts, law, custom and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society’.

Applying culture to language, Spark Christopher (2008:3-4) states that:

Culture is to human, what water is to fish- that which surrounds us and that we are only aware of when it is gone. Culture as a process undermines the idea that culture can be learned through superficial aspects like food ,costume, holidays. It is experienced through language because language is inseparable from culture. . . .

Since language is an aspect of culture, culture can be expressed through the medium of language –verbal and non- verbal communication. Cultural expression refers to the art of transmitting or conveying culture within a given society. Culture can be expressed through various means, but this study centers on the expression of culture through the use of phatic communion (greetings) and modes of dressing of the major tribes in Nigeria.

3.Theoretical Framework

The study is based on J.R.Searle’s Speech Act Theory of 1969,which is an elaborated version of J. A.Austin’s speech act theory of 1962.Searle’s speech act recognizes not just the performative character and verbal component of language,but the non-verbal aspect which he

refers to as the Indirect Act which is usually intrinsic, suggestive and implied. This study is a synergy of verbal communication (greetings) and the non-verbal communication as expressed in the dressing code of some selected (speech) communities, and to project the uniqueness of each community as distinct from others.

Searle's speech act theory of 1969 adopted Austin's idea- that in uttering a sentence, the speaker performs three acts- namely the locutionary, illocutionary and the perlocutionary acts. The locutionary act represents the act of saying something that makes sense in a language, on the literal level. The illocutionary act refers to the implied meaning of an utterance as intended by the speaker, in consideration to the context, while the perlocutionary act captures the effect of the utterance on the hearer, in terms of the force generated in his feelings.

For J.L Austin (1962:6-7), every utterance is intended to accomplish an action. Austin refers to these acts of speech as performatives with the following statement:

What are we to call a sentence or an utterance of this type? I propose to call it a performative sentence or a performative utterance, or for short, a performative. The term performance will be used in a number of cognate ways and constructions, much as the term 'imperative' is. The name derived, of course, from 'perform', the usual verb with the noun 'action', it indicates that the issuing of the utterance is the performing of the action – it is not normally thought of as just saying something.

J.R Searle's categorization of speech act differs slightly from John Austin's grouping of speech acts which recognizes speech acts as **Representatives**-(speech acts that assert a proposition to be true using verbs such as affirm, believe, conclude, report and deny); **Directives**-Speech acts that cause the hearer to take a particular action for example making a request; **Commissives**-Speech acts that commit a speaker to a future action such as making pledges and taking oaths; **Expressives**- Speech acts that express attitudes and emotions; and **Declaratives**-Speech acts that change the reality of a situation, for example pronouncements.

In addition, J.R Searle distinguished between the direct speech acts and indirect speech act. In the direct speech act, there is a direct relationship between language structure and its function at the primary or literal level of the sentence uttered. For example, the direct illocution of the utterance- Can you hand the book over to Mary; is an enquiry about the hearer's ability to hand over the book while the indirect illocution is a request that the hearer hands over the book to Mary. Contrastively, the relationship between structure and form in the indirect speech act is implied and indirect. For example, the utterance- it is cold outside- can imply a request to close the door.

Grundy(2008:80) cites Searle with regards to indirect speech acts thus: 'when form and function don't match, the illocutionary effect is conveyed as an indirect speech act'. Indirect speech act becomes a pattern in adopting politeness as a way of achieving the speaker's intention. Politeness is a speech act theory that may be said to be effective in maintaining cordial relationships by showing awareness of another person's face.

John Searle's proposition of illocutionary speech acts embraces Austin's locutionary and perlocutionary acts as well as other associated elements of speech act such as context, direction of fit, sincerity condition(psychological state of the speaker, and indirect speech acts.

Nonetheless, J.R Searle and J. Austin agree that language is not only used to inform or describe things ,it is often used to do things, to perform acts. Applying Searle's theory to the different modes of phatic communion and dressing in the Nigerian society, goes to establish the fact that these practices are expressive and also form indirect speech acts (verbal and non-verbal). An application of this theory to the Nigerian linguistic situation,is that no two languages are the same and that each language has its positive attributes that distinguishes it

from others. The unique attributes of each language must be harnessed to sustain its validity for it to maintain regional and global relevance.

4. Methodology

The work adopts a qualitative analysis of the data that describes the modes of phatic communion and dress codes of the major tribes in Nigeria. For the purpose of this study, a deliberate selection of the three major languages in Nigeria-Igbo, Hausa and Yoruba -was made for convenience since the multiplicity of languages in the Nigerian society cannot be adequately represented in the study.

5. Result

The study assesses the role of dressing and phatic communion in cultural expression in Nigeria. From the analysis of the different cultural expressions of the three major cultural groups in Nigeria, it was discovered that dressing and greetings(phatic communion) are implicit but viable means of cultural expressions of the different tribes in Nigeria which adopt paralanguage as a mode of cultural expression.

6. Discussions

6.1 Analysis of the Modes of Phatic Communion in Nigeria

This study reviews the phatic communion and dressing of the three major tribes in Nigeria, (Igbo, Yoruba and Hausa) as cultural expressions, using the Speech Act Theory of Searle(1969).

From the perspective of Phatic communion(greetings) each of these tribes has its unique way of greeting which serves as a medium of cultural expression. Greetings are speech acts in form of small talks and pleasantries which are largely performative and share the characteristic feature of speech acts.

The Igbo believe in the values of brotherhood and communal living. An average Igbo clan has the extended brotherhood system known as the 'UMUNNA'(Kindred), which is seen as a miniature of the larger community. Conflicts are first taken to the Umunna, for resolution before being escalated to higher authorities in the community, like the elders and titled men and the Igwe (monarchical head). This belief system of the Igbo is enshrined and evident in their mode of phatic communion since the average Igbo man does not merely extend 'the how are you greetings' of the developed world, but goes further to shake one another with both hands, with greetings such as:

Ndewo- Hello

Ututuoma or Ibolachi - Good morning

Ehihieoma – Good afternoon

Nnoo – Welcome.

Kedu ka I mere= How are you?; Adi mma – I am fine ; O dimma - It is fine.

A dighim mma – I am not fine.

Kedu ka ezin'ulogimere ? How is your family? Anyidi mma - We are fine.

Dalu or Imeela – Thank you.

Kachi foo - Good night;Biko – Please.

Ka emesie- Goodbye.(Greetings and manners @<https://ezinulo.com> ,retrieved 13th July 2020)

The greetings go on and on, asking after the welfare of the parties and are detailed enough to reveal when one party is in need and hands of support and solidarity are extended where necessary. The elders and titled men are accorded more respect as they are greeted while bending in obeisance until the receiver gently offers a pat on the back of the sender in approval of the greeting. Igbo are more assertive and expressive in their greetings, manifesting their mental and psychological states -evident in their attitudes and emotions- as phatic communion.

The Yorubas are less independent minded than the Igbo in their inclination to communality and brotherhood. However, the average Yoruba man places his confidence and respect on the ‘Kabiyesi’ who is like his god. His belief on the authority of the supreme head, the Kabiyesi intrinsically compels him to exude docility in his dealings with his fellow men. The Yorubas adopt a more compelling stance in their greetings. The women kneel down to greet while the men lie flat on the ground, facing downwards with their usual complimentary remark – ‘Enle’ sir/ma, especially when addressing older people (<https://nigeriainfopedia.com.ng>, retrieved 13 July 2020).

The Yorubas use such pleasantries like :

Ekaaro – Gd morning

E kaa san o- Good afternoon

E ka ale o- Good evening ,(used at night time ,after 7pm.)

Bawoni- How are you ?

O da aboo –Good bye (<https://nigeriainfopedia.com.ng>)

Some of these forms of greetings are commonly used amongst the Yorubas. The seeming docility of the Yorubas, manifest in their dealings with others ; such that it is taken for cowardice. Where an Igbo man will resort to confrontation, the Yorubaman will resort to passivity and undue diplomacy. This is because their cultural inclination does not allow for confrontation since they are used to taking orders from their authorized ruler, unlike the Igbo man who is compelled to put up a defensive stance amongst his ‘umunna’ (kindred), before going to the head of the clan. Evidently, we find the belief system of these tribes, filtering into their behavioral patterns and interaction with their fellow man, within and outside their culture. A tribe can therefore project a desirable image or otherwise to the larger society ,not just through his language but from the implicit exhibition of his cultural beliefs ,through speech acts such as small talks and pleasantries. The tradition of the Yorubas places much emphasis on greetings and this is a very significant aspect of their culture. The speech acts of

the Yorubas are essentially a mixture of expressive and directive acts, since they are used to taking orders from their superiors and the 'Kabieyisi', as against the Igbos who have a more democratic culture.

The Hausa-Fulani is a tribe that is more conservative in their cultural inclination. This is accentuated by their religion, Islam. Much of their human interactions are largely male-dominated as most of the women are kept away in Purdah ; away from the normal unrestricted human interaction. The purdah system is also a subtle representation of the Hausa culture that underestimates the capabilities of women as well as placing undue premium on their value as subjects to their husbands. However, the Hausa culture believes in realism and being practical in the handling of their affairs much to the chagrin of other tribes. For example, a man who claims to be of marriageable age is made to undergo excessive flogging with the expectation of maintaining a composed posture devoid of any emotional outburst such as crying or moaning throughout the exercise. This is a clear diversion from the Igbo tradition which values financial stability -owning of big barns of yams and cocoyams- as prerequisite for maturity and success. In our modern times, the Hausa man or woman squats to greet an elder but traditionally the woman is expected to stay afar and place her two knees on the floor to greet an elder as a mark of respect(https://polymath.org-hausa_greetings). The speech act pattern of the Hausas in phatic communion could be regarded as largely commissive and much of expressive acts in such greetings as –

Sannu – Hello.

Sannu da zuwa- Welcome

I nakwana? – How did you sleep ?; reply= la hi yalau - meaning I'm healthy.

Barka da rana –Good afternoon.

Barka da yamma - Good evening

Allah yaba mu –Good night. Lafia – very well or good ([https://polymath.org-hausa greetings](https://polymath.org-hausa-greetings))

Generally, greetings in any community can consist of an exchange of formal expressions, hugs ,handshakes and various gestures which are determined by social etiquettes as well as the relationship of the people in the context.

6.2 The Analysis of the Cultural Attires in Nigeria

Every tribe and nation has its own traditional clothes that promotes its uniqueness. This study concentrates on the major tribes of Nigeria-Igbo, Yoruba and Hausa. For the Igbos, it is believed that the Igbo clothing has ancient origins, yet the truth is that the European colonization has heavily influenced the attire of the Igbos in the present times. However, traditional clothing is an essential part of the Igbo people's rich and fascinating cultural heritage.

The traditional male attire preferred in the Igbo culture is a special top called 'Ishiagu' and trousers ;with the top adorned with assorted beads with a red cap to match, and often times, an exquisite walking stick to complement it, giving a sense of authority. This is peculiar to the title holders and monarchs amongst them. The traditional Igbo attire has a unique look that it cannot be mistaken for any other native Nigerian clothing.

The 'Ishiagu' is a top that is printed with the design of the head of the lion. The lion is known as the king of the jungle and this attire therefore symbolizes kingship and the superiority of the Igbos amongst all other tribes .This top is usually worn over a cotton wrapper or a pair of trouser with a pair of sandals. The traditional red cap worn with the native attire depicts the pain and sufferings experienced by the Igbos, during their years of

human existence, especially the tribal wars with other communities that led to the loss of lives and properties. That explains why the red cap is worn exclusively by titled men and chiefs considered to be men of integrity and custodians of the Igbo tradition. In our present times, the use of the red cap has been abused as people who have no mark of royalty wear them to look fashionable. The walking stick is a necessary part of the men's attire in the Igbo tradition to symbolize authority or power as attributed to the lion, whose head is clearly printed on the 'Ishiagu'. The walking stick goes to complement the Igbo attire and also helps the elderly amongst them to maintain their posture. The beads are not just for decoration but are meant to carry spiritual powers for protection from curses. The coral beads symbolize royalty, in addition to having spiritual powers for protections as other beads.

For the women, they clothe in blouses, over cotton wrappers tightly fitted on their waists, with their local scarfs to go with it. They also complement their attire with beads while the coral types are mostly used by royalties. The blouse can be sewn with the 'Ishiagu' or with other native blouse for women who are not royalties. The local scarf can be tied into many designs to complement their dressing, with a footwear to go with it. Ultimately, the Igbo culture exudes power, strength and versatility as the lion can always survive and excel in any environment. This cultural belief amongst the Igbo is manifested in their versatility and resilience in business and all walks of life such that you can find the Igbo dominating others with their industrious skills in most societies of the world. This expression of physical strength and tenacity is subtly expressed in their dressing.

The Yoruba tribe is not an exception. They are known for their exquisite dressing culture. Clothing for them is an indicator of status and wealth. The native attire for the Yoruba man is the 'AsoIbile' usually made from woven cloth known as Asoke. The men also wear 'Sokoto' and 'Agbada.' The 'Agbada' is a very loose robe that can be well adjusted and folded from

the shoulder and worn over the 'Sokoto'. 'Sokotos' are trousers that have loose-fitting with a drawstring used to hold them up. These forms of native attires are made to show the pride and flamboyant attitude of the Yoruba man with hands outstretched in his 'agbada' to give a sense of self confidence and affluence to earn prestige. The attire is so flamboyantly sewn with an overflowing capacity that allows the wearer to take any posing stance that he deems fit, unlike the Igbo attire that is sewn fairly fitted to the body. The Yorubas believe that they are the most enlightened and successful tribe in Nigeria, having first seen and experienced global civilization in terms of education, religion and other areas of human life. This explains why they are given to showcasing their capabilities through their dressing and truly, they record the highest number of educated people in Nigeria which they regard as prestigious. The attire goes with a matching cap, also made out of the 'Asoke and the Agbada'. For special occasions such as weddings and funerals, they wear special beautiful garbs.

For the women, they wear 'iro' and 'buba' with the 'gele' worn over it. The 'gele' is a traditional scarf which women wrap around their heads and there are many varieties of its designs. The 'buba' is a loose fitting blouse with long sleeves and a neckline that is either V-shaped or round. It usually falls a little below a woman's waist over the 'iro' which is a long wrap-around skirt. This rectangular skirt is worn by wrapping it round the waist and tucking it in at the end. Without much verbal expression, the attire of the Yoruba man/woman depicts superiority and flamboyant living, different from every other tribe because they believe that they are more exposed, educated and successful than any other tribe in Nigeria; and these cultural beliefs are implicitly communicated or expressed through their mode of dressing.

The Hausa tribe, also referred to as the Hausa-Fulani, is another tribe with a unique culture in Nigeria. Theirs is more of a practical culture that is largely realistic, though conservative innature. This is largely enforced by their religion Islam which preaches simplicity and

moderation in human life. The traditional Hausa man is hardly interested in flamboyant living but is more attuned to nature and moderate life. This explains why some of them still live in huts and make-shift homes even in this contemporary times. The Hausa men wear sleeved robes known as 'Babariga' which is considered a Muslim garment, now being worn by non Muslims. The 'Babariga' which is more of a flowing gown is worn with a traditional head piece, a round cap called a 'hula.' The Hausa-Fulani adds the Sand stick which is carried on the shoulder. The Hausa mode of dressing is influenced by their sedentary life style (though some of them are nomads) and their belief in the transient nature of life. This attitude influences their seeming lackadaisical attitude to education, social development and material acquisition and human success. They are docile and subtle in their human interaction.

The women wear colourful wrappers called 'Abaya' with matching blouses and most of them are mostly confined in the purdah system which isolates them from the outside world, as they cover most part of their faces to avoid exposure to the public. The cultural beliefs of the Hausas that promote nature and sedentary living is expressed in their dressing which has culminated in their associated societal image as primitive and backward people. However, their realism cannot be ignored, for example, a successful man is defined by his ability to bear pain and protect his family from incursion and unforeseen dangers rather than materialism.

7. Conclusion

The three main tribes in Nigeria- Igbo, Hausa and Yoruba- each has its unique cultural practices which differentiate it from one another. These cultural differences complement one another to ensure unity in diversity in the Nigerian scene and the values of each culture can be harnessed to project them within and outside Nigeria; aside from linguistic parameters.

The indispensability of dressing in Nigerian cultural expressions cannot be over emphasized as one is usually assessed and treated based on his appearance. A well-dressed personality will definitely earn more respect and dignity compared to one who is haggardly dressed. Moreover, dressing and phatic communion send clues about our mannerism, age, religious inclinations, status, individual tastes and political stance .

The modes of phatic communion and dressing which represent verbal and non verbal communication respectively, project the Igbo as a race akin to power, hardwork and versatility .The extended family system holds a strong influence in the Igbo society such that issues of social interest are first deliberated within the community circles made up of close kith and kin, before they are brought to the larger society. Banishment or estrangement from the group spells doom for the ostracized, as every form of interaction with the group is forbidden. These are societal values that can be harnessed to aid in societal development such as in the sphere of governance and conflict resolution.

In the same vein, the Yorubas are docile and exposed. Their experiences and exposure to other cultures of the world can go a long way to foment societal problems such as terrorism, crime, abuse, ecetera.

Similarly, the Hausa are more conservative and closer to nature in their beliefs. Their verbal and non verbal expressions,in form of greetings and dressing, depict their realistic attitude and this can be applied to achieve practical solutions to societal problems in the society.

By and large, this study promotes the intrinsic medium (greetings and phatic communion) by which the values, arts and culture of a tribe can be expressed, aside the use of language which scholars in the current dispensation suggest is gradually going into extinction with its associated values.

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