Hellen Gesare-Omangi

[Helen.gesare@uonbi.ac.ke](mailto:Helen.gesare@uonbi.ac.ke) [hgomangi@gmail.com](mailto:hgomangi@gmail.com)

Mobile-phone: 0722445569; Lecturer (UoN) and PhD student (Moi University)

Library and Information Science Department, University of Nairobi

**African indigenous languages and accommodation in peace-building: The case of Kenya’s Borabu- Sotik Border Local Peace Committees’ PB dialogues**

**Presented in MMUST IMLAD conference: 19 Feb 2020-21st Feb, 2020**

ABSTRACT

A review of Language and PB literature shows that, as carriers of meanings and connotations, indigenous languages are central to effective community-based communication in contexts such as interethnic peace-building which has become indispensible due to the now rampant debilitating ethno-political-conflict. However, mother-languages have not only been relegated in language-policy planning (due to the demand for information technology-advancement related globalizing lingua franca), but their centrality in community-based communications has not been properly showcased in research. Therefore, this study, within the framework of Communication-Accommodation-Theory, tries to examine their role in the Borabu-Sotik Local-Peace-Committees’ peace-building dialogues; whose discourse demands accommodation and the understanding of the communities’ indigenous-knowledge, folklore, history and cultural norms & diversity. It was guided by the research-question: How and why were indigenous-languages used in the Borabu-Sotik Local-Peace-Committees’ interethnic peace-building dialogues, (if at all they were) and what is its effect on peace-building? Due to the nature of this question, the issue addressed and my epistemological-assumption that peace-building-communication is contextually relative; I used the qualitative exploratory case-study design in the interpretivism research-paradigm. I thus utilized various purposive non-probability sampling techniques to collect (through interviews, observations and FGDs) and analyze data inferentially and thematically. The findings showed that the BS PB-dialogues were replete with verbal-approximation strategies to Ekegusii and to the Kipsigis languages from Kiswahili (the peace-building default-language). Convergence to out-group indigenous-languages which showcased multilingualism, optimal speech-patterns, affiliation and good-will created intergroup rapport, co-operation & harmonious-relational outcomes. Over-convergence was however counterproductively perceived as unwarranted-allegiance. Divergence to the in-groups’ indigenous-languages evoked: ethno-linguistic distinctiveness, disassociation and non-accommodation. But it was evaluated less negatively when attributed to clarification, self-disclosure and reference to taboo/ untranslatable-concepts. The study concluded that the Borabu-Sotik inter-ethnic peace-building dialogues were imbued with divergence to indigenous Languages, that served various regulatory, heuristic and instrumental PB cognitive and affective functions, like: expressing cultural-values; creating interethnic-solidarity; mitigating conflict-effects and enemy-images. Research on how these languages can be formalized and strengthened for such communication-contexts in Kenya and in other ethno-political conflict-embroiled regions is necessary.

***Key words:*** *Indigenous Languages, Ekegusii, Kipsigis, Communication Accommodation Theory & Strategies, Approximation, Convergence, Divergence, Borabu & Sotik border Local Peace Committees, Peace Building intergroup Dialogues.*

**Article 2: Title: Empowering victims for effective bottom-up peace-building (PB): The case of Local Peace-Committees (LPCs) in Borabu and Sotik sub-Counties of Kenya**

**Abstract**

Research has shown that PB in intercommunity conflict is more effective if the victims are empowered. However, ways of empowering victims is contextual and it constitutes a vacuum in peace & conflict studies. Moreover, though LPCs represent the victims-driven PB globally, in Kenya they are not legislatively supported as their mandate-giving policy is yet to be adopted and their empowerment remains invisible in CM-studies. Therefore this study examined how the LPCs (as drivers of peace in the conflict protracted BS-region) were conceptualized and empowered for peace-building. The purpose of this examination was to showcase the empowerment of the not so clearly documented victims-driven bottom-up Peace-Building initiatives that supplemented state-centric PB-mechanisms. The study was guided by the RQ: How were the BS-LPCs conceptualized and empowered for **peace-building? Within Lederach’s CTT** of peace-building, I engaged an instrumental case-study in the qualitative interpretivist methodology. I used interviews, document-analysis & FGDs to generate data from purposive non-probability sampled participants. I analyzed the data thematically and presented it narratively while adhering to human-based research ethical-principles, e.g., autonomy and confidentiality. The findings showed that the BS-LPCs’wereGovernment PB-structures through the National Accord & Reconciliation Act of 2008 with 15 members at administrative levels nominated by the community, CSOs and Provincial-Administration in public-meetings. The National-Steering-Committee was their oversight authority. Their national mandate included: a**ddressing the 2008-PEV and the BS-region protracted-conflict; facilitating PB-stakeholders’ linkages; institutionalizing peace-dialogues and promoting participatory-PB, conflict-monitoring, reconciliation & co-existence. To fulfill this mandate, they were empowered with legitimacy; consensual-authority; CSOs’ techno-administrative support, CM knowledge & skills and insider-partials**. I concluded that the BS-LPCs were well empowered for PB as their legitimacylegitimatedtheir **campaigns and resolutions and their insider-partials augmented-deliberations promoted effective and democratic PB.** This study creates a deeper understanding of the BS-LPCs’ conceptualization and empowerment thus contributing to scholarly literature on victim empowerment in PB. I thus recommend that the BS LPCs and other community-based PB-initiatives should continue to be supported by stakeholders as the region is still volatile and since the victims’ empowerment I critical to effective PB.

*The key words: Conflict-Management, Victims e****mpowerment, bottom-up peace-building, LPCs***

**Article 3 title: Embracing government agencies’ support in community-based peace building: The case of Local Peace-Committees in Borabu and Sotik sub-Counties of Kenya**

**Abstract**

Most Local Peace Committees (LPCs), established by the National Accord & Reconciliation Act of 2008 to manage conflict in the intercommunity-conflict embroiled Kenyan districts (including Borabu & Sotik-BS), were constituted of psycho-socially counseled resilient violent-conflict victims. A review of conflict-management literature showed that although the BS-LPCs were supported by various government agencies in the protracted conflict embroiled BS-region’s peace-building, the kind of support the agencies accorded them and how they adopted it had not been examined for documentation, strengthening of the LPCs and other similar victims’ efforts. Therefore this study (within a conceptual framework derived from Lederach’s elicit model of community Peace-building and CAT theory) guided by the RQ: what kind of support did government agencies accord the BS LPCs and how did they adopt it for peace? Empirically explored the agencies’ support to the BS LPCs and how it was maximized for peace-building. The purpose of this study was to create a deeper understanding of the BS-LPCs-government collaborative PB strategies. Due to the issue addressed, I used the qualitative-exploratory case-study design and purposive non-probability sampling to collect data from 30 interviewees, 4 FGDs and documents. I analyzed it inferentially and thematically and then presented the findings narratively with participant voices. I adhered to the qualitative & human-based research ethical principles such as: autonomy, protection from harm, anonymity and conﬁdentiality. The result showed that the government-agencies’ support included anchorage in the provincial administration and in the National Steering Committee (NSC) as their coordinators and political oversight authority. It also showed that the BS-LPCs **embraced this support by collaborating in strategizing & building peace; mainstreaming PB into development projects and networking for monitoring & reporting conflict.** I concluded that the effective PB in the region resulted from the victims (LPCs) resiliently spear-heading their own peace-building and from embracing the government agencies’ support. This study therefore informs CM-stakeholders’ and policy-makers’ endeavors in the BS region and other intercommunity-conflict embroiled regions and it contributes to CM and Victomology discourse & practice by highlighting how victims (as architects of their own peace) embraced government agencies’ **support.** I recommend that victims should be made aware of support systems at their disposal and should be trained and encouraged to embrace them by policy makers and PB stakeholders.

***Key words: Community Peace-Building, victims-driven Local Peace Committees, Borabu-Sotik Border, Effective Conflict Management and Peace Building.***