Historicizing the Cultural Usage of "Sorry" *"Kemaapiri"* in Conflict Management amongst Ancient Nkoro Kirika People

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Abstract

This paper focused on historicizing the cultural usage of "sorry" in conflict management amongst the ancient Nkoro Kirika people. The study opined that Nkoro Kirika people consider the usage of "sorry" as a valuable tool for conflict management. The study obtained data from both primary and secondary sources. The primary data were attained through interviews and analyzed via the descriptive method of data analysis, while the secondary data were obtained from books, journals, etc. The finding of the study revealed that the usage of "sorry" in Nkoro Kirika culture allows individuals to acknowledge their mistakes, express remorse, and seek forgiveness. It also exposed that Nkoro Kirika culture sees "sorry" as a sincere apology that helps de-escalate tensions, rebuild trust, and create an environment conducive to resolving conflicts. The study further discovered that effective components of sorry in conflict management include acknowledgment of wrongdoing, empathy and understanding, remorse and regret, commitment to change, sincerity, and authenticity.

However, the study concludes that, Nkoro Kirika's cultural interpretation and usage of "sorry" help her to resolve conflicts, restore relationships, and rebuild trust amongst her people. The work recommends that the Nkoro Kirika people should sustain the beneficiaries of the uniqueness in their cultural usage of "sorry" in managing conflict and the general public should endeavor to adopt the same sorry principles of the Nkoro Kirika people to resolving societal conflicts.

Key Words: Historicizing, Cultural, Usage, Sorry, Conflict, Management & Nkoro Kirika

Introduction

Sorry is a powerful word that plays a significant tool in diplomatic conflict management. It is often used as a diplomatic tool to acknowledge one's mistakes or shortcomings, express remorse, and seek forgiveness. The use of sorry in conflict management helps de-escalate tensions, repair relationships, and promote understanding and reconciliation. When conflicts arise, emotions run high, and individuals involved may feel hurt, angry, or frustrated. In such situations, saying sorry is the only effective diplomatic means to validate the other person's feelings and demonstrate empathy, by acknowledging one's role in the conflict and expressing regret for any harm caused, sorry acts as a bridge between the conflicting parties, opening up the possibility for dialogue and resolution. One important aspect of using sorry as a diplomatic tool in conflict management is sincerity, a genuine apology has a profound impact on the conflict resolution process. It shows that the person apologizing understands the consequences of their actions and genuinely wants to make amends. A sincere sorry helps rebuild trust and create an environment where both parties feel safe to express their concerns and work towards a mutually beneficial solution.

However, in addition to sincerity, timing also plays a crucial role in using sorry effectively in conflict management. Offering an apology promptly after realizing one's mistake demonstrates accountability and a willingness to address the issue head-on. Delaying an apology or avoiding it altogether prolongs the conflict and hinders the resolution process. Based on this that sorry should be accompanied by a commitment to change or rectify the situation. Mere words without

corresponding actions may not be sufficient to resolve conflicts effectively. Demonstrating a genuine effort to learn from past mistakes and prevent similar situations from occurring again can help rebuild trust and foster positive change. Therefore, this paper saw the need to explore the effectiveness of sorry as a powerful diplomatic tool in conflict management, acknowledging the fact that the effectiveness of the usage of sorry may vary depending on cultural norms, individual personalities, and the severity of the conflict. Some cultures place great emphasis on apologies as a means of restoring harmony, while others may view them as signs of weakness. Understanding the cultural context and individual preferences is essential in utilizing sorry effectively.

Clarification of key conceptions

Historicizing: is a critical concept in the field of history and other disciplines, it refers to a process of examining and interpreting events, ideas, and phenomena within the historical context. However, historicizing is an important aspect of historical scholarship that helps historians avoid anachronistic interpretations of the past (Blackwell, 2009).

Culture: shared beliefs, values, customs, traditions, language, and social behaviours that characterize a particular group of people. Culture also encompasses the way of life of a society or community, including its art, music, and social norms (Kroeber, & Kluckhohn 1952).

Sorry: The expression "sorry" is a simple apology that is often used to acknowledge wrongdoing or a mistake

Conflict Management: Rashim (2017) opined that conflict management refers to a process of identifying, addressing, and resolving conflicts that arise within an organization or between individuals constructively. Lewicki (2015) sustained by defining conflict management as an application of various strategies, and techniques to prevent, manage, and resolve conflict to maintain a harmonious and productive work environment.

Types of "Sorry" *"Kemaapiri"* in Nkoro Kirika Tradition

In Nkoro Kirika Kingdom, the concept of "sorry" encompasses a variety of meanings and expressions of guilt, it therefore mirrors the intricacy of feelings and relations in Nkoro Kirika. "Sorry" takes diverse forms, and purposes, especially in conflict resolution. Every Nkoro citizen understands the different types of sorry and uses them appropriately to navigate social relationships and address conflicts effectively.

"Kirikiri Tekeye" **Immediate Expression of Sorry:** This type of sorry involves expressing genuine remorse and regret for one's actions or words. It is characterized by sincerity and a desire to acknowledge the harm caused to others. Immediate Expression of sorry often includes taking responsibility for one's behavior and demonstrating empathy towards the affected party without delay, demand, or being forced to do so.

"Ikerelakam Tekeye" **Delayed Conditional Sorry:** Conditional use of "Sorry" in Nkoro Kirika is framed with qualifiers or conditions, such as "kere mam ipri ye nyenayem ibukesuone" "I'm sorry if you were offended". This usage of "Sorry" deflects accountability or minimizes the impact of the offense, but potentially undermines the sincerity in the application of sorry.

Gbila or Ragi Mini Tekeye **Bargained or Forced "Sorry":** Strategic sorry are calculated gestures aimed at managing public perception or mitigating potential consequences. They may be offered to preserve reputation, appease stakeholders, or navigate power dynamics, rather than solely driven by genuine remorse.

"Njijini Kubu Ngbolu Tekeye" **Empathetic Sorry:** Empathetic usage of "sorry" in Nkoro Kirika society is beyond acknowledging fault and extends to actively understanding and validating the emotions and experiences of the aggrieved party. This type of sorry in Nkoro Kirika emphasizes emotional connection and seeks to repair relational damage through empathy and understanding.

Effective Components of Sorry in Conflict Management

Sorry is a powerful word that can go a long way in resolving conflicts and restoring relationships. When used effectively, it can help to diffuse tension,

acknowledge wrongdoing, and express remorse. Here are some effective components of sorry in conflict management:

"Benebobie Tekeye" **Acknowledgment of Wrongdoing:** According to Folger, (2004). "The importance of apologies in the workplace" The first and most important component of sorry is acknowledging wrongdoing. This involves taking responsibility for one's actions and recognizing the harm that was caused. By acknowledging wrongdoing, the person apologizing shows that they understand the other person's perspective and are willing to take ownership of their actions.

Empathy and Understanding: Gilliland & Dunn. (2003) opined that empathy and understanding are essential components of a genuine apology. When someone apologizes, they should demonstrate that they understand how their actions affected the other person. This involves acknowledging the other person's feelings and validating their experience.

Remorse and Regret: Crawford, & Bruggemann. (2016) Remorse and regret are important components of sorry that can help to convey a genuine apology. Remorse refers to the emotional pain and regret that the person apologizing feels for their actions. Regret refers to the negative consequences of their actions. When someone expresses remorse and regret, it can help to convey that they truly understand the harm they caused and are sorry for their actions.

Commitment to Change: Davis, & Mahoney. (2017). An effective apology should also include a commitment to change. This involves acknowledging the harm that was caused and taking steps to prevent similar situations from happening in the future. By committing to change, the person apologizing shows that they are willing to learn from their mistakes and make amends.

Sincerity and Authenticity: Wormith, J. S., & Walker, J. (2019) Finally, an effective apology should be sincere and authentic. This involves being genuine and heartfelt in the apology, rather than simply going through the motions. When someone apologizes with sincerity and authenticity, it can help to rebuild trust and restore the relationship.

Nkoro Kirika Cultural Interpretation of "Sorry" *"Kemaapiri"* in Conflict Management

Ting-Toomey. & Kurogi. (1998) opined that "Sorry" is a universally recognized term that is used to express regret or remorse for one's actions or words. In conflict management, the cultural interpretation of sorry varies significantly depending on the cultural background and norms of the individuals involved. Different cultures have distinct ways of perceiving and expressing apologies, which impact the effectiveness of conflict resolution strategies. According to Patrick (2023 oral source) In Nkoro (Kirika) society sorry is considered and interpreted as follows:

Responsibility: In Nkoro (Kirika) culture, sorry is often seen as an important step in conflict management. It is generally expected that individuals take responsibility for their actions and apologize sincerely when they have caused harm or offense. In these cultures, sorry is seen as a way to acknowledge wrongdoing, express empathy, and seek forgiveness. Apologies are often accompanied by gestures such as making amends, offering compensation, or promising to change behavior in the future.

"Bori Besuo Kemaapiri" **Maintaining Harmony:** In Nkoro (Kirika) culture, the interpretation of sorry in conflict management is considered as apologies often used for the maintenance of harmony and save face rather than solely focusing on personal accountability. Apologizing is seen as a means to restore social relationships and preserve group cohesion. The emphasis is placed on collective responsibility rather than individual guilt. Apologies are more indirect and subtle, with an emphasis on non-verbal cues such as body language and tone of voice.

"Bori Ikere Tunkobiri" **Restore Balance:** In Nkoro (Kirika) culture the unique interpretations of sorry in conflict management often prioritize community harmony and interconnectedness over individualistic notions of apology. Sorry is seen as a way of restoring balance and healing relationships within the community. Indigenous apologies involve rituals, ceremonies, or symbolic gestures that go beyond mere verbal expressions of regret. The focus is on

reconciliation, forgiveness, and learning from past mistakes to prevent future conflicts.

However, it is important to note that these cultural interpretations of sorry are generalized and apply to every individual within the Nkoro Kirika cultural environment. Additionally, globalization and increased cultural exchange have led to the blending of cultural norms and practices, resulting in a more diverse understanding of apologies in conflict management in the Nkoro Kirika Kingdom.

Nkoro Kirika Cultural Usage of "Sorry" *"Kemaapiri"* in Conflict Management

Jubonye (2023 oral source) the expression "sorry" is a simple apology that is often used to acknowledge a wrongdoing or a mistake in the Nkoro Kirika Kingdom. However, the cultural application of sorry varies greatly depending on the event, situation, and status it is used. In conflict management in the Nkoro Kirika Kingdom, understanding the cultural application of sorry by the members of the society is crucial for effective use for resolving conflicts and maintenance of constructive interactions.

In Nkoro Kirika cultures, sorry is often seen as a way to express remorse by mainly the younger person to his elderly one while the other way around it is a means of taking responsibility for one's actions by the elderly person against the younger person. For example, "sorry" is a common way of apologizing for minor infractions a younger person may commit against his or her elderly one, infractions such as colliding with an elderly person or keeping an elderly person waiting without any tangible reasons. In this context, sorry is seen as the only way to acknowledge wrongdoing and show respect for the elderly person to restore peace and harmony.

However, in some situations in the Nkoro Kirika Kingdom, the use of sorry is not considered an appropriate word. For example, a younger person is not allowed to use the word "sorry" more frequently than expected, except in a more formal or polite context by allowing the elderly person to pure out all his or her anger before using it. It is considered more important for a younger one to show respect and humility than to simply say "sorry." Therefore, instead of saying "sorry," immediately, the younger person is expected to remain silent to express their

regret, before saying “sorry” privately to the elderly person. This is believed to be the most effective and appropriate mechanism for managing immediate conflict situations.

Similarly, to the elderly person, the word "sorry" is stylishly used but less frequently than it is used by the younger person. The elderly are expected to be more informal but polite in the usage of “sorry” in a situation where he or she is at fault to the younger person. In Nkoro (Kirika) it is considered respectful and humble for an elder to say “Nnasu” or “I have heard you” rather than simply saying "sorry" Therefore, instead of saying "sorry," elderly people use phrases such as "Nnasu, e jirika na awo ibukesuom” I don’t know you will be angry over that” to express their regret. And this considered the elderly ways of saying “sorry” and it therefore accepted by the younger one and as such peace is restored amongst the parties.

In a misunderstanding between husband and wife, the word "sorry" may not be used at all by the husband if he is at fault. For example, the husband may apologize or express regrets to resolve the conflict by saying “kamboha wo iye” or “It+ is as a result of misconception”. Instead of outrightly saying “sorry” the husband may use other words or phrases to express regret, such as "ye iye sie masu” or “I have made a mistake". The cultural usage of sorry in conflict management in the Nkoro Kirika Kingdom is intricate and varies greatly depending on the context, situation, and personality involved. Therefore, it is important to be aware of these differences in the usage of “sorry”. In conflict management, “sorry” individuals are expected to understand the appropriate and respectful means of saying “sorry” because the cultural value of saying “sorry” means that one must consider the situation, time, and class by Nkoro Kirika culture.

The Prospects in the Usage of “Sorry” *“Kemaa-piri”* in Nkoro (Kirika) Culture in Conflict Management

Bapakaye (2023 oral source) Nkoro Kirika people perceive their cultural usages of the concept “sorry”, or apologies, as a powerful tool in conflict management. When used effectively and appropriately through the cultural line, they believe that it can help to:

"Isi nabo Ngbonbo na sii" **Reduce tension and defuse emotions:** to average Nkoro Kirika people, the appropriate use of "sorry" in conflict situations helps to reduce tension and defuse emotions. They believe that "sorry" can only be used when the user has acknowledged his or her mistakes or wrongdoing in a situation that is capable of resulting in conflict. They also consider the cultural usage of "sorry" as an expression of remorse by individuals to diffuse anger and resentment, and as such culturally creating a more constructive and calm environment for resolving conflicts.

"Sie Ikere si, Tori ori tua" **Rebuild trust and strengthen relationships:** Nkoro Kirika people see the use of "sorry" as a tool that facilitates the rebuilding of trust and strengthens relationships that have been damaged by conflict. They believe that when elderly persons take responsibility for their actions and express remorse, through the cultural stylistic means of admitting their wrongs, it helps to reassure the younger ones that they are committed to making things right and preventing similar conflicts in the future.

"Ama Ikere nabo Kambona" **Communicate Empathy and Understanding:** in Nkoro Kirika Kingdom the cultural usage of "sorry" by a wife to the husband is considered a communicative means of showing empathy and understanding for the perspective and feelings of her husband. Also, the husband by acknowledging the impact of his actions through the cultural usage of a phrase like "kamboha wo iye" "it is a result of misconception", "ye iye sie masu" and "I have made a mistake". Show that he understands and respects the rights of the wife's point of view, this helps to build bridges and resolve conflicts in the family.

"Kubu-kuru Bere Poko Piri' **Encourage Accountability and Responsibility:** Nkoro Kirika culture also views the use of "sorry" as an encouragement of accountability and responsibility for the younger person's actions as against the elderly one. When a younger person takes responsibility for their actions and expresses remorse by saying "sorry", it helps to promote a culture of accountability and responsibility, which is an important aspect of conflict management between the mighty and the vulnerable.

***"Oteor Findi nabo Tari-Piri"* Provide a Way to Move Forward:** Nkoro Kirika's cultural usage of "sorry" also perceived the inappropriate cultural usage of "sorry" is capable of providing fertile ground for individuals to move the extra mile in a conflict situation. However, the proper cultural usage of "sorry" shows the acknowledgment of past mistakes by the individual and as such could express remorse, create a sense of closure, and move forward in a positive direction.

The Disadvantages in the Cultural Usage of "Sorry" *"Kemaapiri"* in Conflict Management in Ancient Nkoro Kirika Kingdom

Sanga (2023 oral source) Even though the Nkoro Kirika culture values the effective usage of the word "sorry" as a means of conflict management it has some negative interpretations by the people especially when external conflict situation, the average Nkoro Kirika people have some common negative interpretations and perception on the word this perceptions includes:

Insincerity: One negative usage of "sorry" *or "Kemaapiri"* in contemporary Nkoro Kirika society is that it is used insincerely and as such lacks the cultural values of genuine remorse. Secondly, it is now repeatedly used as a daily word without taking any meaningful action to rectify their behavior or make amends, based on that, making the uniqueness of this cultural value of the Nkoro Kirika people be seen as empty words, therefore losing its potency in resolving conflict in contemporary Nkoro (Kirika) society rather leading to feelings of frustration, resentment, and a breakdown in trust between individuals in the society.

Manipulation: Another negative usage of "sorry" *or "Kemaapiri"* in the contemporary Nkoro Kirika cultural environment is that it is used as a manipulative tactic to gain sympathy or avoid consequences. The younger individuals use the word "sorry" simply to appease the elderly one or to manipulate a situation in their favor not because they are remorseful. This particularly is harmful when it is discovered by the elderly.

Overuse: The overuse of the word "sorry" has also imposed negative implications on the uniqueness of "sorry" in the Nkoro Kirika cultural environment. People now constantly use the word "sorry" as an apology for every minor inconvenience or situation in Nkoro Kirika society as against the true cultural provision. This has

harmfully led to the diminishing of the cultural uniqueness, impact, and sincerity of the usage of “sorry”. Therefore it leads people to perceive “sorry” empty word and a lack of confidence or assertiveness in maintaining solid peace building, and as such creating an imbalance in relationships where one person constantly feels the need to say “sorry” unnecessarily.

It is important to note that “sorry” is negatively used in the contemporary Nkoro Kirika cultural environment without the proper adherence to the cultural usage of the word "sorry" but rather used indiscriminately without considering the different cultural situations it is expected to be used, the context, tone, bodies, it should be used for.

Conclusion

Sorry is an important cultural practice that has records of genuine efforts in rectifying conflict situations through an effective understanding of the cultural context in which it is used in Nkoro Kirika Kingdom. Nkoro Kirika's cultural practice of “sorry” in conflict management holds that appropriate usage of sorry by the people or individuals in the Nkoro Kirika society has helped to resolve conflicts, restore relationships, and rebuild trust. The cultural interpretations of sorry in conflict management were coherently built into the cultural fabric of the people. Nkoro Kirika culture emphasizes younger ones' accountability and respect through sincere apologies, that prioritize harmony and saving face, healing, and reconciliation during and after conflict. Understanding this cultural application of sorry helps individuals navigate conflicts more effectively and promotes harmonious understanding. Sorry is therefore regarded as a valuable tool in conflict management in Nkoro Kingdom since it can reduce tension and defuse emotions, rebuild trust, strengthen relationships, communicate empathy, and understanding, encourage accountability, and responsibility, and provide a way to move forward. Nkoro Kirika culture also sees sorry as a means of resolving conflicts positively and constructively. Finally, while "sorry" is generally considered a polite and empathetic word, some negative applications were considered used by the contemporary Nkoro Kirika society, especially in the area of insincere, manipulative, and excessive usage of the word sorry by the people.

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Patrick Kings	60	Retired Civil Servant	Nkoro Town	1/7/2023
Sanga Dennis	48	Self employed	Nkoro Town	21/9/2023
Bapakaye P Wilson	36	Lecturer	Port Harcourt, Residence	1/10/2023

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