

Linguistic sexism and violence in some countries' national anthems



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LINGUISTIC SEXISM AND VIOLENCE OF SOME COUNTRIES NATIONAL

ANTHEMS INTRODUCTION/ BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY Having a distinct national anthem just like a unique national flag as a form of national identity is one thing that is common to virtually every country or nation of the world. An anthem according to the Encyclopaedia Britannica is a song or a hymn expressing patriotic sentiment that is either governmentally authorized as an official national song/hymn or holding that position in popular feelings.

However, the national anthems of many nations are not just mere songs of praises but hymns of allegiance to nations sung or recited with utmost respect at important occasions or ceremonies as a sign of honour or symbol of loyalty and patriotism. They are usually carefully, emotionally, and meaningfully worded to reflect the ideologies, politics, philosophies, cultures etc of given nations.

They therefore, easily appeal to the emotion, arouse feelings or captivate the attention of patriotic citizens when sung or recited. Linguistic sexism according to Tswana (2007: 1) simply refers to the use of a gender-specific language which shows a bias towards one sex, which results in discrimination against the other sex and which is most commonly used to favour men/males over women/females.

Yusuf (2006: 12) similarly describes linguistic sexism or sexist language as the use of words or expressions that portrays a level of bias or prejudice for a particular sex or gender and which tend to discriminate against members of the affected sex or gender, directly or indirectly thereby alienating or

relegating them when/whereas they are supposed to be referents of the message or information communicated.

Feminist linguists the world over for about three decades have been embarking on serious campaign against linguistic sexism or gender biased language in all form of human communication. They advocate the use of gender-neutral words like 'chairperson', 'layperson' and 'intermediary' instead of the gender-biased words like 'chairman', 'layman' and 'middleman' to refer to a male or female coordinator, amateur and mediator respectively. Linguistic violence is a serious form of violence like social violence, domestic violence, ethnic violence, street violence, state violence, self directed violence, organised crime, violence of political terror and interstate violence identified by Blaquer(2005: 109) as well as others like religious, media, culture and economic forms of violence. Linguistic violence simply refers to the use of words or expressions that propagate violence/violent acts i. e. the use of language that can directly or indirectly incite people, harden or poison their minds against somebody or something or make them develop