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## The Concept Of Dialogue Among Civilizations

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<b>Abstract :</b>	Dialogue is “a communicative process in which people with different perspectives seek understanding.” To be in dialogue means that participants are not only engaging each other in light of their different views, but they are also striving to achieve a degree of mutual understanding. Based on the above definition, civilizational dialogue has been considered as a means to call people of different backgrounds, cultures, and civilizations toward mutual respect, humanity, and goodness and abstain them from discrimination, transgression, and evil deeds. But what exactly does the word ‘dialogue’ mean? What are the main types of dialogue? What is the process of dialogue? These questions will be answered in this paper using the descriptive method in order to achieve a proper understanding of the concept. The research discovered that dialogue is a way for people with different perspectives to work together and to understand each other, and it plays a very significant role in a multicultural society to maintain unity, as people struggle together toward a mutual objective.
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### A. Introduction

*Dialogue* is an inevitable exercise in human’s life, that is to say ‘*dialogue*’ is human life and vice versa, this is because, human were created in pairs for them to be conversing among each other, the word ‘converse’ appeared above is *dialogue*, since its definition has to do with conversation between at least two people, with the above illustrations we can admit that the word {*dialogue*} had been in existence before the creation of human being.

The word *dialogue* means different things to different professionals which generates differences in its usage, for example it is considered in a playwright as, character talk, emotion advanced story line or lifeblood of a story. Crayne (2008 & 2012) indicated that "as a writer, we can use *dialogue* for purposes beyond character talks", he further explained that, it can show emotion, advance story line, provision of valuable clues to personalities as well as a life hood of a story. But in relation to conflict resolution and the bodies or organizations set up purposely for conflict resolution in the entire world such as the united nation (UN) and the likes, the word '*dialogue*' has a clear distinguish meaning beyond its attribute to playwright. The purpose of this paper is to examine the word '*dialogue*' in its real sense in order to know how immense and powerful the exercise is in generating peace and harmony into the society in particular and entire world in general.

In this paper, the presenter starts from the genesis { etymology of the concept "*dialogue*" } by flashing back to the period and contributions of the great Greek philosophers, moving to the definition, types, functions, Importance as well as different methods of *dialogue* were fully examined.

## **B. Concept and Origin of Dialogue**

Etymologically, the word *dialogue* got its root from the two Greek words 'dia' which means through, and 'logos' which means 'most frequently' but only roughly translated in English as 'the meaning'. Ballreich, (2006) opined that the word 'logos' is to means 'understanding' while the word 'dia' is to means 'through', he later rounded it up by putting it together as the "light of understanding", but when the word 'logos' closely examine, there emerged various translation where the Greek still revealed that 'logos' has a deep spiritual root. In this while the concept of 'logos' could be found in most of the great Greek works in describing opinion, a Jewish philosopher known as Plato of Alexandria, is of opinion that the word 'logos' means 'the divine', meaning that the word 'logos' is "the highest idea of god that human being can attain, higher than a way of thinking, more precious than anything that is merely though" for the above illustration by Philo, the first reference to the word 'logos' is 'spirit' by the Greek philosophical concept, not only that, in an Heraclitus concept, in around 500 years (B.C), the word 'logos' was interpreted in many ways such as 'logical', meaning and 'reasoning', more so, a German philosopher popularly known as martin Heidegger, was of opinion that "what can logic do if we never begin to pay heed to logos and follow its initial unfolding ?", to buttress this, the Heraclitus support that the "initial unfolding' mentioned by Heidegger is responsible for the harmonic order of the universe, as a cosmic law which declare that "one is all and everything is one'.(Alex,2008)

Dialogue: its definition

The word '*dialogue*' is a conversation between two people, (pieczara,n.d) in his literal definition also contributed that, '*dialogue*' is a powerful tool for progress ' but in a broader sense, '*dialogue*' turns on a new and deeper, meaning when attributed to groups accessing to a larger pool of common idea through a distinct and mutual understanding between two parties, this can be seen in the

work of de Laval, (2006), where he defines *dialogue* as the “mutual exchange of experience, ideas and opinions between two or more parties (conversation)”, he further explained that, *dialogue* is blessed with two or multi-way communication process which has been presumed the opportunity to share experience on many occasions in enhancing reasoning faculties, not only that he puts further that, *dialogue* contains an element of direct contact as well as simultaneity be it through physical or technical aids to achieve genuine participation among the group involved. More so, the word '*dialogue*' is formally an abbreviation of three letter words such, **O**, **A** and **C**. where letter '**O**' stands for the **O**pening stage, the '**A**' letter represent the **A**rgumentation stage and letter '**C**' indicates the **C**losing or **C**oncluding stage, (Gordon & Walton,2009) by implication , the early stage of *dialogue* is endowed with three different stages indicated above. In the early stage of *dialogue* 'Opening' all the participants agreed to participate, because the parties have their individual goal(s) while the *dialogue* has to do with collective goal(s). the opening stage is where the plan of *dialogue* is framed and moved, passing through the argumentation stage and later moved towards the closing stage, at the closing stage, the outcome of the *dialogue* is determined whether successful or otherwise. Walton, (1988).

In another opinion, Ballreich, (n.d.), assert that “*dialogue* is the learning arena in which conversation can shake each other up, so that the light of consciousness and deliberation awakens”. Not only had that, pieczara, (n.d), opined that “*dialogue* should not be taken for granted, for it makes progress by itself, and its powerful tool”. In lieu of this, *dialogue* is seen as an engagement into an understandable communication between individuals or groups of different ideas, interest as well as opinions aiming at settling the matter(s) concerning them, in order to acquire a common goal(s) and exchange of views among them, this is because in *dialogue*, there present the spirit flow of thought between the participant which normally leads to collective thinking which can easily fosters or facilitates common understanding and common meaning, *Dialogue* also enables individuals or group to acknowledge and appreciate their participation in the course.

For further understanding on what '*dialogue*' connotes, Gammon and Burch, 2003, defined '*dialogue*' as “a process of communication in which two or more participants engaged in an open exploration of issues and relationships on an equitable basis “, they opined further by putting it as “the exchange of ideas, opinions, beliefs and feelings between the participant (speakers and audience), it is a way of listening to others with respect and being able to express one’s own views with confidence”. this definition gave us additional background on clear knowledge of the word '*dialogue*' by analyzing it as a means of cross-intersection of ideas, opinions, and feelings at the detriment of none, the definitions also emphasize that *dialogue* is meant for every participant to express their views for the successful outcome not for a party to dominate the whole session without entertaining others opinion. In short, their definition let it clear that '*dialogue* is not silence, chaos nor monopoly of system, that is, for a person or faction to monopolize the whole stages. (Gammon, & Burch, 2003).

## Types of Dialogue

The basic types of *dialogue* previously recognized are six (6) which can be seen in the argumentation literature of Walton & Krabbe, (1995), as follows; (1)-inquiry, (2)-negotiation, (3)-information seeking, (4)-deliberation, (5)-eristic, (6)-persuasion and discovery dialogues respectively.

Nevertheless, there was a list of the properties added by McBurney & parsons, (2001), the type added is the normative models.

### (1)-Inquiry Dialogue

This is normally apply at the opining stage of *dialogue* by determining or drawing conclusion only from the information that can be certainly considered as true or false, in order to guide against future re-opening of the issue (inquiry) after it has been sealed.

The major characteristics of this *dialogue* is the property of cumulateness, where the cumulative indicates that if a statement has been confirmed and accepted as truth at any point in the argumentation stage of inquiry, the premise must remain status quo until the closing stage is reached, this represents only one end of a spectrum where a high standard of proof is appropriated. But in a situation where there is diversity of opinion and greater uncertainty, the idea of cumulateness always proved abortive, the only instrument to apply is cooperativeness Walton, (1988).

Inquiry *dialogue* can be carried out in two different ways, that is, scientific and public inquiries. The scientific inquiry also known as the 'demonstration' which requires that the proof only from the statements (premises) that are either axiomatic or that can be proved by method of inference which is generally acceptable to the standard in particular branch of knowledge, while the public way of inquiry relies on the expatriate testimony of scientific consultant.

### (2)-Negotiation seeking Dialogue:

This has to do with the 'Deal making' where both parties enter into a kind of agreement or bargaining over some issues or interest by conceding some things for other things. Each party needs to map out the most wants or important of the issue at stake. This respect is guided by professional mediators.

### (3)-Deliberation Dialogue:

This is considered as a collaborative method, where both parties involved jointly power or steer action to achieve a common goal on a problem solving agreement proposal on the problem combating them, among the cogent characteristic here is that, the proposal used for the parties may not be applicable for an individual participant or candidate. More so the participant must be eagerly to have a share of preferences as well as information with the co-participants. (McBurny et, al.2007), this types of *dialogue* is blessed with eight categories or stages such as: open, inform, propose, consider, revise, recommend, confirm as well as close. (Walton, et. Al, 2010).

#### (4)-Eristic Dialogue:

This is a *dialogue* that is almost centers and purely based on adversarial, that is, opponent. In this case, searching for the truth of an issue has to do with logical reasoning and attention procedure which is always subservient to winning out over the other group. Quarrelling and enmity are good example of this.

#### (5)-Discovery Dialogue:

This is somehow different and broader than any other types and recognized as distinct type of *Dialogue*, in this type of *dialogue*, the question is considered as truth and determined during the course of the *dialogue*, under this, the participants started by discussing the purpose(s) but embarking on using data items during the later stage, data item like inference mechanism and consequences to present argument to each other. Test and criteria are other tools used, while importance, cost benefits etc. are the criteria using for comparing data or consequence with another while test is the procedure using to ascertain the truth or falsity of some proportions.

There are ten stages of *dialogue* as identified by (McBurney &Parsons, 2001) such as open *dialogue*, discuss purpose, share knowledge, discuss mechanism, infer consequences, discuss Acriteria, assess consequences, discuss test, and propose conclusion etc., the names given to the stages aid the reader the opportunity of identifying the occurrence of each stage.

#### (6)-Persuasive Method:

This method has to do with adversarial on the side of both parties where their goal is to have an upper hand over the other party by applying defeating arguments or cast it in doubt. By this, each party embark on a commitment set, a party must even have to present chain of argument to prove it thesis or case by using only commitments premises of other party. Critical discussion is a similar method to persuading method. (Van Eemeren & Grootendorst, 1992), according to prakken, (2006), persuasive dialogue has become a technical term of argumentation technology in the artificial intelligence and there available of model (formal) representing the species of *dialogue*.

#### Functions of Dialogue

There are many functions of *dialogue*. the following are some of them:

- ◀ *Dialogue* is an instrument of global governance to achieve common values.
- ◀ it's a means of solving the problem of negative globalization and modernization.
- ◀ it's also an instrument to maintain and acquire dividend of democracy.
- ◀ it is an instrument of solving problems of society which have unrest and confused identity. (Malaysia, Mali and Nigeria as example)
- ◀ it is useful in building and fostering stability in the society. (Shibly, & Mason, 2004)

◀ *Dialogue* enables individuals or group to acknowledge and appreciate their participation in the course.

### Importance of Dialogue

The essence of *Dialogue* cannot be handled with a levity hand for it gives room for discussion and interpreting other's perceptions, opinions, ideas, etc. into the process of new information to make sense for the entire world, in a change process, *dialogue* in particular, people are ready to unveil their expression and it is mandatory for an organizer to utilize their opinion in a constructive way and also ensure right processing of information(s). The importance is to be seen as follows:

In the first instance, it is certain that everybody cannot be part of decision making or process, but if they are considered or consulted in the question of 'how', they are ready and more prone to embrace it, because people naturally support what they create.

In the same vein, the major motive of every human life is sense of belongings, where they feel significantly, competency as well-liked, *dialogue* is a means of inviting them into the process of change by listen to them is a respectful way, allowing them to speak out their feelings and what they believe it needs to be done. By doing this, it is a means of fulfilling very important human needs and increasing the prospects for success.

There is a kind of appreciating everybody's experience and knowledge in a change process (dialogue), where the right questions will be asked appropriately and adequately attended to.

More so, creation of a common platform and understanding is also among the great importance of dialogue, where the reaction of the audience to message are easily determine, also making sure that there is common understanding for the current situation by facilitating dialogue process. (Kontaka, n.d.)

### ***Method of Dialogue***

At this juncture, it is worth mentioning several methods or options that can be applied for public consultations, these methods can be applied individually as well as group applications respectively. it can be applied at the different stages of *dialogue* that is, from the beginning in terms of feasibility studies and preliminary level to design the plan through the formal assumption of the designed plan as well as project implementation. The compilation of the methods can be seen as listed by De Lava, (2006) thus; work group, Seminars, study circle/seminar, open house, charrete, planning book and walk-through evaluation methods.

In the same vein, Parker & Duigan, (2005), also identified the different mainstream of *dialogue* process in their work titled: *Dialogue methods: A Typology of community Dialogue process*, thus; consensus, conference, deliberative polling, citizen's jury, standing panel, charette, reference panel qualitative discussion and public hearing. In this while, De Lava's compilations are further explained thus;

**Work Group Method:**

This is a situation whereby the community members or groups volunteer themselves to participate in particular project as teamwork, this is method is somehow similar to that of working in a **reference group** which is specifically based on 'appointment' but the only disparity between them is the word 'volunteer', because workgroup method contains people of like minds that are willing to work together as a team, this type of *dialogue* has been reordered tested in 1996 in order to meet few times for discussions with the Swedish Road Administration in carrying out a road project at the Norrtälje Bypass. But there is no specific time lag for its implementation; it may last for a month or more, even for several years. Typical example of this could be found in the southern part of Nigeria especially among the real farmers, where most of their community projects were done through communal efforts in the olden days.

**Seminar Method:**

This is considered as the easiest way of generating conditions for *dialogue*, since it has to do with couple of meeting with invited delegate where a specific issue has to be discussed. In this method, preparation always determined the successful or otherwise outcome of the exercise. At a seminar or constructive meeting, it is advisable not to have too many participants for every one of them to have an opportunity of adequate contribution to the purpose of gathering, because dialogue could only be achieved when people have the opportunity to contribute in the discussion. In this while, the invited participants have the privilege of returning back to their different stakeholders for group discussions and enlightenment on the issues discussed at the seminar for proper and well defined feedback against next sitting. Only one month is required to give enough time for the preparations. Example of this could easily be found in our day- to-day organizational set up, where delegate(s) are selected to attend seminars on new inventories and many more.

**Planning Book Method:**

Planning book method as the name implied is the kind of *dialogue* method which has to do with use of books, the books are already produced with combination of questionnaires and information materials, and this method takes a year. Moreover, the method is based on contacting the most concerned through the use of questionnaires. The group draws up problems and possible solutions. This type of method normally resulted into a good and advance public *dialogue*, the group can be expanded during implementation while the questions at issues are developed and processed during the *dialogue*. This method is popularly known as **knowledge enhancing** and it serves as a standby materials and sources of information for the study circle method. Researchers are the best machineries of achieving the provision of the planning book.

**Study circle method:**

This has to do with planning books carry out within a group of people studying the same subject on a few occasions. The time lag for this is normally being one meeting in a week for at least 5-10 weeks respectively. (De Laval, 2006). Furthermore, it can be seen as a meeting with the members of the society or

community, stake holder or representatives to discuss an issue(s) concerning the progress of their environment, it can also be used as a process of information gathering and collection of views and also fosters debates. It has to do with the provision of good opportunities to deliberate with each other. The participants do not usually have decision making authority. It is also known as qualitative discussion groups, workshop and focus groups (Parker, & Duigman, 2005).

#### ***Open House Method:***

This is a method where the location of the *dialogue* is manned with the exhibition and availability of the analysis materials, the experts and other responsible and famous personalities in the society are invited purposely for answering questions from the public as well as discussing their ideas and suggestions on the issues, in this method, the opening hours of discussions must suit the participants available time, for it to be materialistic and productive by having the right personalities in attendance at a conducive location.

The method needs to be combined with general meeting to be precise, in order to have a productive outcome, it is expected to last for at least a couple of weeks, preferable longer, preparation time is one week. In short, it is considered as the most simple in terms of implementation but does not require much preparation for background materials and other information available. It has also been tested and trusted in Sweden by the Swedish Road Administration. The method is also known as **drop-in method**

#### ***Charette Method:***

This is considered as the current method of *dialogue* in the United States of America (USA), there are several names given to it by the English people, England in particular, names such as planning weekend as well as action plan are the most useful names as far as England is concerned. The method is a workshop where members of the public engaged with experts to design solution(s) on brainstorming issues and proffer possible solutions, it is seen as an immense opportunity for the participants to share experience with each other where they usually have some decision making authority. (Parker, & Duignan, 2006).

In addition, it is a bit development on the idea of open house method, the planner design draft plan through *dialogue* with the members of the public. In contrast to the Sweden planning model, this method only last averagely between six to eight 6-8 working days of existence, after several months' excessive preparation to get all the necessary information such as documents, data plan as well as maps for detailed analysis. The major advantages of this method is its positive consultation and *dialogue* with every concerned participants, the progress can also be made through stimulating very candidate to engage in creative effort and discussion. This method always takes about one week while the preparation and finishing aspect lasted for at least half a year. (De Laval, 2006).

#### ***Walk-through Evaluation Method:***

This method as the name implies, has to do with invitation of public such as local residents, planners, administrators, road users and others walking together in the same environment, their walking is not just ordinary walking but walking with evaluation of societal needs, that is, to unveil what is considered as



good, bad or lacking for the community, every one of them will go about an agreed spots or quarters of a given community by noting down their experience, then come together to share their experience regarding their findings in the course of their walking-evaluation exercise. The comments compiled during their gathering provide good input. In furtherance, it is an avenue or good climate for more consultation exercise. Not only that, it requires a couple of weeks for its preparation, three hours to implement and takes about a week for the documentation. It is used at both the opening of a planning project and for assessment of the result at the final stage. The method is popularly known for its fast and easily indication on positive and problematic issues in a given environment, continuation of further consultation. It is a quick and simple method of obtaining viewpoints, experience and *dialogue*; it is suitable to combine with other methods of dialogue as well as publication consultant. The typical examples of this are the survey while carrying out their professional exercise (Land Survey).

#### ***Process of dialogue and its evaluation***

Before *dialogue* can take place, there are some proper things to put in place, because if any of it is not adequately or properly catered for, the probability of getting poor result at the end of the *dialogue* is one. Now, let us look at a model of effective *dialogue* by Alex Burch, (2001), he developed an hierarchical method of needs which has to be satisfied before engaging into *dialogue*, the needs such as physical, intellectual as well as emotional or social acceptance are considered as the major ingredient of *dialogue*.

#### ***Physical Aspect:***

The participants' physical comfort is very essential, because in order to achieve anything in life we must be emotionally and physically alright, this could be found in a popular and widely saying thus "*health is wealth*".

#### ***Emotional Acceptance:***

There must be a comfort in terms of emotional aspect of the participants, where their sense of belonging needs to be fully recognized, that is, the participants feel free to express their feelings and to be judged accordingly (freedom of expression).

#### ***Intellectual Aspect:***

In this aspect, every participant feels that they have something to contribute, it is a must for them to contribute since there is an assurance of valuing the opinion, and serves as a means of knowledge acquisition. Since there is no specific place for knowledge acquisition, it could be sought anywhere.

#### ***Evaluation:***

As the name implies, is the act of assessing the success of *dialogue*, this assessment can be carried out by applying one or two of the following methods:

▲ Detailed observation, has to do with focusing on the reactions and behavior of the audience during and after dialogue.

▲ Qualitative interviews also have to be carried out through in-depth interviews with the member (s) of the audience after the event. They may be selected either at the event or as part of a pre-invented focus group.

▲ Qualitative interviews with the speaker after the event.

▲ survey method, which is usually carried out on audience members after the event through an electronic mailing system (email).

Proper application of the method benefits the researcher or coordinator when seeking evidence for or against a dialogue exercise (Burch, 2001).

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