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Attitude change through understanding (cognition) of the influence of the persuasive language of liturgy

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The aim of this article is to argue that the use of language in liturgy during worship services should be meaningful to contribute to persuasion in the lives of the participants in liturgy. Language is a prominent medium to convey meaning. In fact, the essence of liturgy that has to lead to the liturgy of life is in itself a meaningful act. The question regarding the meaning of worship services that people often raise is another reason why research on the influence of liturgy is crucial. This investigation is anchored in research on the importance of cognition in persuasive language use to promote attitude change. The research gathers insights from the fields of language philosophy and cognitive psychology. It is clear that the meaning of words in language can never be separated from people's understanding of the meaning of language. Communication and communion are not opposites. In the normative phase of this investigation, perspectives from Romans 12 are offered. The renewal of the mind that leads to discernment of God's will must also lead to a new cognition (understanding or *phronesis*) of each believer's place within the Body of Christ. The insights gained from language philosophy, cognitive psychology and the normative grounding make it evident that people always try to make sense of what they are experiencing and of what they are observing. The attempt to understand necessitates further reflection on the importance of cognition. Finally, practical theological perspectives are offered to indicate that cognition is important to create a meaningful liturgy. This cognition is anchored in God's presence during worship services and, therefore, it requires meaningful words from liturgists.

Introduction

Attitudes are formed because they are useful in helping people to master their environment and also to express themselves (Smith & Mackie 2007:231). Attitudes are functional in helping persons to understand life. This article emphasises only one building block or ingredient of an attitude, namely the cognitive aspect. In addressing this issue of the role of persuasive language in liturgy as mechanism to contribute towards the change of the attitudes of participants in worship services, the role of affective information (feelings) and behavioural information are obviously in the mind of the researcher without further reflection on it. The reason for the emphasis on the cognitive aspect is that cognitive processes affect every aspect of human life and also the way people act. People's reactions in life are based on what they believe this world is like (Smith & Mackie 2007:6). Saliers (1994:139–140) also raises the issue that liturgy contains many languages and customs that form a crucible of experience. There is a reciprocal relationship between the understanding of the liturgist and the understanding of participants actively present in liturgy (the one cannot be without the other). Liturgists are decisive bearers of the liturgical action and are therefore responsible for effective communication (Deeg 2015:15). Hence, their language use should contribute towards the cognisance and expectation in participants' hearts that God is actually communicating with them. Language should be utilised in such a manner that participants are enabled to have a new perspective on the relationship between them and the living God (Moore-Keish 2008:29). It has to do with understanding (cognition) about the essence of liturgy and also about the liturgy of life. In the process of understanding, it is also important to recognise the concept of application. Browning (1996:39–40) points out that understanding is a conversation shaped throughout by practical concerns about application that emerges from the current situation. Liturgy and the application of its message have much in common, because liturgy should enable people to understand not only the worship service but also life itself.

Words have power to shape our perceptions of reality and also of reality itself (Moeller 1998:93). The language that believers use in worship services is never small talk, because in liturgical language it is about the gospel itself. Vedder (2003:119) indicates that thought without language becomes nearly impossible. If people understand language and words, it will promote understanding. During worship services, participants in liturgy are communicating a distinct

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language in both a verbal and a non-verbal manner (Torevell 2007:135). Immink (2011:18) puts the essence of liturgy in context by indicating that God is speaking to his people in liturgy, but believers are also speaking to Him and to one another. Schleiermacher, for instance, highlighted the fact that thought (cognition) and words are interdependent (Vedder 2003:48). By participating in the act of liturgy (as communal or a common kind of language), each believer is participating, bearing in mind that they are also part of the Body of Christ (Forrester *et al.* 2004:3). Without communion, communication will be a mere formal act. In fact, Paul Ricoeur, for instance, raised the issue that people are achieving self-understanding by using language and language is otherwise also assisting people to discover reality (Vedder 2003:150). Cilliers (2004:40) offers an answer on why language use in liturgy should contribute towards better understanding; he highlights the aspect that people are participating during worship services to become conscious of the presence of the mystery of God (*mysterium tremendum).*

Liturgy is both God's work and human work (Cilliers 2004:42). People have a responsibility towards liturgy and that should also reckon with the cognitive side (understanding) of liturgy. Barnard (2015:7) indicates that worship has several implicit and explicit learning (cognitive) moments that should be recognised, especially the creative imaginative reflection on how life should be regarded. Although liturgy could never be a mere intellectual experience, it has to be remembered that liturgy without cognisance of cognition will experience difficulties. It should, moreover, be taken into consideration that modern cognitive science, in contrast to critical voices raised over the years, has expanded to include new domains like research into emotion and research into thinking processes (Peterson 2003:29; Louw & Louw 2007:23; Woolfolk 2007:39). Contemporary cognitive science also takes the architecture of the brain much more seriously (Watts 2002:79; Woolfolk 2007:42; Bergh & Theron 2008:373; Kruger 2015:14; Prétot 2015:14). Fiske (2004:123) is correct in highlighting that cognition also includes the process through which people think about and try to make sense of other people, of themselves and of their social situation. The language of liturgy has to help people to understand the sense of worship and of life.

Kubicki (2006:77) deals with the essence of language and indicates that gestures, language and actions are physical, visible and public expressions through which human beings understand and manifest their inner lives. People also use language to deepen their relationship with God. Language opens possibilities of liturgical formation because it creates a space for imagination and new possibilities (Strawn & Brown 2013:8–9). Tubbs and Moss (2008:524) pay attention to the role of persuasive messages where the primary intention is not mere information, but change. This article indicates that the act of expressing language in liturgy is the most urgent act of the congregation and is persuasive in itself. Worshipping and participating in liturgy means that participants are involved in something of ultimate importance. They are actually celebrating the love and grace of the present God (Forrester *et al.* 2007:14).

The research problem for this article could be stated in the following manner: *Is it possible that participants' cognition of the persuasive language of liturgy could contribute to attitude change?* In this article the methodological insights of Dingemans (1996:62) are utilised. Three phases in the investigation can be distinguished, namely:

- Analysis of the practical theological situation that deals with the need for cognition in language.
- Normative viewpoints on cognition and the language of liturgy that leads to attitude change.
- Perspectives regarding a changing praxis in which a better understanding (cognition) of liturgical language leads to attitude change.

The research examines theoretical concepts in a qualitative-deductive manner. The literature study is eclectic in that material from the fields of language philosophy and cognitive psychology is analysed and interpreted, after which it is ordered to fit into the contours of this research. Phase one investigates examples or reflections on the topic of the language of liturgy. The second phase considers meta-theoretical perspectives on cognition, attitudes and the functioning of language within the fields of language philosophy and social psychology. The third phase utilises normative perspectives from the book of Romans, after which the last phase offers practical theological perspectives on the role of the understanding (cognition) of the language of liturgy.

Analysing the praxis of attitude change through understanding (cognition) of the influence of the persuasive language of liturgy

A descriptive study on the importance of the concept of understanding (cognition) in liturgy

The literature study includes only recent contributions of authors within the field of liturgics (the last four years). The reason for this is to indicate that the fingerprints of research on cognition are becoming a bigger focus within liturgics, although the concept of cognition is not yet entirely familiar. The following aspects have become evident:

- Prétot (2015:4) underlines the importance of knowledge (cognition). According to him the deepest roots of interest in liturgy should reckon with knowledge about liturgy, the knowing how to be, the knowing how to do in the liturgy of life and also the knowing how to live or act in the liturgy of the streets. He also remarks that churches through the ages experienced difficulty in transmitting its practices. He emphasises the importance of the role of the language of faith and possibilities regarding the discourse concerning God.
- Routhier (2015:9) is concerned about the fact that practical theologians are well equipped to read texts to understand

them, but they are not so much equipped to read practices. Liturgists are also ill equipped to understand the religious activity in the making.

- Barnard (2015:4) is interested in the fact that people do not stick to one social form of worshipping because of the fact that new forms of worship arise. In this process it becomes important that intergenerational learning must take place. In order to do this, older people have to be open to the stories of younger people who are looking for a meaningful life.
- Sabak (2015:240) indicates that liturgical language deals fundamentally with communication between the divine and the human and reveals much about people's faithful understanding (cognition) of liturgy. He is also convinced of the fact that no liturgical language could safeguard a truth unless that truth is understood. Understanding of liturgical language also fosters the relationship between God and his people.
- Immink (2014:24) argues that the worship service is a performative act. In this process language plays a very important role. Liturgical language is more than a mere linguistic event. Language not only conveys information, but also sets things in participants' lives in motion. Liturgical language is the manner in which believers communicate that they are touched by worship. Therefore, language has to make it possible for people to understand one another and to create a space that makes it possible to be together.
- Mitchell (2011:19) highlights the fact that all human experience is first perceived through the five senses. The mind senses what is happening in a human context by means of reports from the eyes, ears, nose, tongue and touch. Every human experience is in interaction with a specific person, place or event. Abstract ideas may flit through the rational mind, but well-remembered experiences always begin with sense-reported data. Human experience is therefore not recalled in words and sentences, but in images or pictures. That underlines the importance that liturgical language must help hearers with clarity in word pictures to help them understand the essence of liturgy.

From the discussion above it is evident that researchers have named the periphery of the importance of understanding (cognition) in the act of liturgy. However, the concept of cognition and how attitude changes through cognition of the content of the persuasive language of liturgy itself and cognition (understanding) on the application of the message of liturgy for daily life are aspects that need further investigation.

Analysing perspectives from the field of language philosophy

Vanhoozer (2002:229) explains that language does not bar people from reality, but reality comes mediated by language. The meaning of words refers not only to what is done and what is said, but also to the process of doing it (Vanhoozer 1998:202). It should be recognised that language is a God-given capacity that enables human beings to relate to God, to the world and to one another. In the discussion that follows, attention is given only to the insights of Searle, Ricoeur and Habermas as mere samples of the broader investigation within the field of language philosophy. Afterwards, analysing perspectives from the field of cognitive psychology are provided.

John Searle's focus on influential speech acts

Searle was of the opinion that language can only be understood in the situation and circumstances of its use (Osborne 1991:399). For Searle sentences are used as intentional devices through which the communicator brings hearers into the proper arena so that they might apply the correct rules and recognise the meaning (Vanhoozer 2002:127). The basic unit of meaning is not merely in the word, but in the speech act (Vanhoozer 1998:209). People can do at least five things with words: (1) they can tell other people how things are; (2) they can try and get people to do certain things; (3) they can commit themselves to do something; (4) they can express their feelings and their attitudes; and (5) change can result because of the utterance (Osborne 1991:400). Searle highlighted the fact that communicators intend to produce effects that could be understood by hearers.

Searle identified three basic dimensions in which different kinds of speech may vary from one another: (1) the illocutionary point of the act, insofar as it is an act of a certain type; (2) what he called the act's direction of fit; and (3) the psychological state expressed by the act (Bergh & Theron 2008:312). Searle developed, according to Bolton (2005:11), an elaborate speech act taxonomy, consisting at its highest level of five categories, namely:

- assertive statements, descriptions, and predictions
- directives orders, requests, and direction-giving messages
- commissive promises, oaths, and bets
- expressive greetings, congratulations, and thanks
- declarations (excommunications and declarations).

Paul Ricoeur's focus on language as discourse

Bohnen (1981:40) points out that it was Ricoeur's opinion that reflection on the issue of cognition has culminated in the discussion of language. In Ricoeur's thought about language the importance of symbols is highlighted. In his opinion, symbols have the function to recharge language or even to recreate language. The implication is that symbols have to invite thought or something to think about (Bohnen 1981:43). Ricoeur distinguished three phases of understanding, namely the phenomenological phase of repeating (to place the symbol in a bigger totality), the second phase of interpretation, which has to with personal involvement that involves understanding in order to believe, and the third phase of reflection or creative interpretation (Bohnen 1981:50–51).

Ricoeur differentiates between verbal and non-verbal language. When communicators are using language they refer to reality in the present tense (Pieterse 2001:84). The

experiences of the past, tradition, culture and the various circumstances are all part of the understanding of reality. This reality influences the content and manner of language that will be used. When communicators speak, an utterance of meaning takes place (Vanhoozer 1998:214). Language as discourse entails that something is said to someone about something. Language must refer itself to the world (Osborne 1991:405). A discourse has a sense (something said), a reference (about something) and a destination (to someone). In fact, according to Riccoeur, language has the purpose to express what is real in life (Vedder 2003:139). Therefore, metaphors in language are important to assist people in making sense of life (Vedder 2003:141). Metaphors help people to create acts in the world, but also to give value (the essence of attitudes in evaluating things) to these acts. New horizons replace old horizons in forming a new referential horizon (Vedder 2003:145). The use of language is important in helping people to establish a new horizon of hope (Vedder 2003:150). Vanhoozer (1998:215) points out that Ricoeur's understanding is not a matter of knowing things about texts and messages, but of being affected by them. It is about the transforming effect it has on hearers and readers. Ricoeur also distinguished the two-dimensional character of a discourse, namely *langue* (static system of language) and *parole* (the active use of language). Therefore, this discourse has to do with both event (the saying) and meaning (the said).

Jürgen Habermas on language as communicative action

Habermas was concerned with communicative competence. Under competence he understood a kind of implicit, intuitive knowledge that undergirds all successful communication (Vanhoozer 1998:217). Each speech act must meet three validity conditions, namely:

- It must be true.
- It must be truthful.
- It must be right.

Habermas was deeply concerned about domination and distortions as a result of power relationships in communication (Snyman 1995:229). Space must be created in which participants in communication can critically reflect on traditions. One of Habermas' best-known ideas is *communicative action,* in which actors in society seek to reach common understanding and to coordinate actions by reasoned argument, consensus, and cooperation rather than strategic action strictly in pursuit of their own goals (Bolton 2005:13). Language is a means for coordinating human action (Osborne 1991:218). Language should therefore serve understanding. Meaning is not an affair of consciousness, but of the community. A sentence means what the members of that linguistic community intend it to mean when they utter it. Communicative action is action aimed at bringing about understanding and action based upon this deliberative process where two or more individuals interact and coordinate their actions based on agreed interpretations of the situation. Habermas distinguishes it from other forms of action, such as instrumental action, which is pure goal-oriented behaviour, by taking all functions of language into consideration (Vanhoozer 1998:223).

Conclusion

The following perspectives follow from the discussion above:

- The interrelatedness between communication and communion is important for research on the language of liturgy.
- The words used in language are important; they give direction and meaning to the encounter between people; every word in liturgy has a meaning.
- Language, also liturgical language, has to contribute to have an effect on people's lives; people have to become involved in liturgy.
- Language must enable people to understand the essence of the act of liturgy.

Perspectives from cognitive psychology on language, attitudes and cognition

Eysenck and Keane (2010:327) point out that social interactions rely heavily on language. They also mark the fact that knowledge (cognition) is passed on from one generation to the next through language. It is therefore important to take note of this relationship between language, attitudes and cognition, which is done here from the viewpoint of cognitive psychology. Language remains, whether it is spoken, written or signed, the most important cognitive mechanism (Kolak *et al.* 2006:188). In what follows, three key aspects receive attention.

The components of attitudes

When speaking about people's attitudes, it is important to realise that the topic of the functioning of attitudes is more problematic than the naked eye can see. Woolfolk (2007:89) indicates that attitudes can distance people from one another but they can also bring people together. With the help of attitudes, people make favourable or unfavourable evaluations of the objects of their thought (Kruger 2015:3). Attitudes develop through interaction between parent and child, periods in development, ways of learning, social and cultural influences, information transmitted through mass media and personal experiences (Bergh & Theron 2006:174). The triangular compilation of attitudes is important in visualising their essence. Kruger (2002:137) indicates that scholars are unanimous that attitudes consist of three components, namely:

- a cognitive component (thoughts and beliefs)
- an affective component (evaluation of things and emotions)
- a conative or behavioural component (motives and intentions as ways in which attitudes are expressed).

The way in which an attitude functions can differ according to the extent to which the attitude becomes perceptible either more cognitively or more emotionally (Bergh & Theron 2006:173). Changes in one of the components also influence the functioning of the other components. A different way of

thinking will definitely influence people's feelings and their behaviour and vice versa. Applied to liturgy, it means that a distorted way of thinking about liturgy could also have a negative influence on people's feelings and actions. When the components of attitudes are inconsistent, one of them may be more closely related to specific forms of behaviour than the other (Steinberg 2007:30). It is important to note the fact that certain attitudes are more difficult to change and can be regarded as central attitudes. Other attitudes are regarded as peripheral attitudes as they are subject to change (Bergh & Theron 2006:174). This fact underlines the importance of liturgists carefully reflecting on the use of language. It is important to distinguish what the outcome of language use must entail.

The interrelatedness of the three components of attitudes leads to the issue of attitude strength. Without over-simplifying the issue, it is important to note that stronger attitudes are better at predicting behaviour than the other way round (Tubbs & Moss 2008:104). Baron and Byrne (1994:139) emphasise that direct experience, vested interest and self-awareness play an important role in the strength of attitudes. Attitudes that are formed through direct and personal experiences are normally stronger than attitudes that are formed through observation. A vested interest in the object of the attitude also plays a major role. Self-awareness refers to the extent to which persons focus on their attitudes and action. If people can bring their own attitudes to mind (cognition) the greater is the possibility that it will affect behaviour (Swartz & De La Rey 2004:178).

The interrelatedness between language and cognition (thought)

Fiske (2004:123) indicates that cognition constitutes the process through which people think about and make sense of other people, of themselves and of their social situation. Cognition is essential to one's knowledge of human beings and of life, because it is the mental representation through which persons make contact with the world (Bergh & Theron 2006:153). It could also be said that cognition facilitates life in the real world. It is about how people know by means of processing information and utilising knowledge by productive thinking. In this process language as tool or mechanism facilitates people's social communication and self-expression (Swartz & De La Rey 2004:179). People's memories store everything they know. Language is interwoven with cognition (Swartz & De La Rey 2004:232).

Eysenck and Keane (2010:329) respond to the question whether language possibly influences human thinking. The main issue in the minds of Sapir and Whorf was: *Do people think first and then use words to express their thoughts or do words influence the way people think*? (Steinberg 2007:130). According to the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis, language definitely shapes a person's thoughts (Tubbs & Moss 2008:82). Language restricts each language community to a particular view of the world. Learning a language is not simply a matter of mastering the mechanics of speech or acquiring a list of concepts (Kolak *et al.* 2006:191). By learning a language, people also acquire words that have meaning in their culture and words that shape the way they think and behave. Language not only provides people with a means of communication, but it also transmits the attitudes that the community has regarding the world (Steinberg 2007:131). Language is the primary vehicle of culture (Tubbs & Moss 2008:82). People's thoughts about life are also influenced by language use.

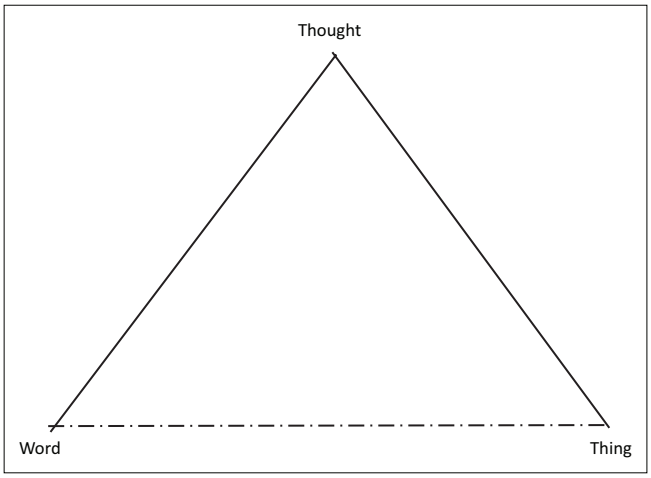
Eysenck and Keane (2010:330) posit that according to the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis, language as cognitive mechanism could also be helpful in relabelling people's experiences. Language does, according to Tubbs and Moss (2008:83), two important things in people's lives, namely:

- Language serves as an aid to memory: it makes memory more efficient by allowing people to code events as verbal categories.
- Language enables people to abstract indefinitely from their experiences.

Steinberg (2007:123) explains the triangle of meaning that illustrates how words are related to thoughts (cognition). The following sketch or diagram could be useful, namely:

This triangle explains how words are related to thoughts (meanings) and things (see Figure 1). The dotted line connects word (sign) and thing (a referent) and indicates that the word is not the thing and that there is not necessarily a direct relationship between the two. The only direct relationship between words and the things they represent are in people's minds, indicated by the solid lines between thought and word and between thought and thing (Steinberg 2007:123). This triangle of meaning is also helpful in understanding why people often misunderstand each other, because the meaning or thought a person associates with a word may differ from the association of another person. The words people use can cause misunderstanding between people (Grant & Borcherds 2009:79).

It is important that communicators choose language according to their goal (Grant & Borcherds 2009:78). The



Source: Steinberg 2007:123

Figure 1: The way in which words are related to thoughts and things.

purpose of communicating can be to inform people, to persuade them, to motivate them or it can even be a combination of all the aspects. When language is used with the goal to persuade, words must be used that are more general and abstract. Words like evaluative, comparative, interpretative, adverbs, adjectives, inferences and opinions are important (Grant & Borcherds 2009:70). Facts must be used to inform people. To persuade people, opinions must be used and to express feelings poetry and lyrics could be helpful (Barker & Angelopulo 2010:266).

Attitude change through an understanding (cognition) of persuasive communication

Persuasive communication is communication that intentionally aims to change a person's attitudes and behaviour (Kruger 2015:4). Fiske (2004:243) points out that persuasion has to do with the deliberate attempt to change another person's attitude. Grant and Borcherds (2009:21) have defined persuasion as the conscious attempt by individuals to change people's attitudes, beliefs and behaviours. In this process there are verbal and also non-verbal strategies that can be utilised. In connection with verbal strategies, the following aspects could be helpful, namely emotive language, rhyme or rhythm, repetition and quotations. Non-verbal strategies that could be used are *inter alia* images, metaphors, symbols, gestures, diagrams and pauses (Grant & Borcherds 2009:22). Persuasive language, therefore, needs the space of interaction and is aimed at agreement (Barker & Angelopulo 2010:76).

People seek and interpret information primarily to support their functioning attitudes. However, people have a natural tendency to oppose persuasion. From a cognitive viewpoint, it is also important to note what people really think when they are exposed to persuasive appeals and to what extent these thoughts lead to attitude change (Baron & Byrne 1994:144). When people receive a persuasive message they think about the arguments that are made and in some instances they also think about the information that has been left out (Gass & Seiter 2003:159). These thoughts about the message influence attitude change (Fiske 2004:238). When persuasive messages deal with issues that are relevant to people's lives, they are likely to devote their attention to the message and its arguments. Persuasion occurs in this instance via the central route (Woolfolk 2007:46). In this instance the arguments must be convincing. If messages deal with aspects that are relatively unimportant and not relevant, persuasion could be reached through the peripheral route where little cognitive participation is performed (Baron & Byrne 1994:145). Attitude change in this instance is the result of a response to persuasion cues. It has to do with aspects like the communicator's likeability, prestige and the style or form of the presentation.

The elaboration likelihood approach that is described in the previous paragraph highlights the importance of cognitive processes involved in persuasive messages. It must also be remembered that people's first tendency when hearing persuasive messages is to use the arguments to support their own current attitudes (Gass & Seiter 2003:161). Therefore, this model also indicates that the greater people's liking for the sources of persuasive messages, the stronger the motivation will be to process the information they received (Baron & Byrne 1994:146). However, people can also make use of heuristics that can be called mental shortcuts in the processing of information. It also indicates that when people's involvement in persuasion is low, they will make use of shortcuts, for they will rather be persuaded by individuals who are experts than by non-experts. Cognition about persuasive language is influential in the changing of attitudes. Language is meaningful. Therefore, conscious language use is also influential as part of persuasive messages that are utilised to change people's attitudes.

Normative perspectives on the role of cognition in language in the process of attitude change from Romans 12:2

In this section the functioning of cognitive language as part of the renewal of the mind in the letter to the Romans is investigated. The connection between cognitive language and ethical guidelines in Romans 12:1–15:13 is also evident.

The relation between indicatives and imperatives as directive for a new life (Rm 12:1–15:13)

Cranfield (2004:595) argues that Romans 12:1–2 provides a theme or entrance to Romans 12:1–15:13. The issue in this bigger passage is the conduct of behaviour, code of conduct or the passage about ethics (Moo 2002:176). Stott (1994:317) explains that Paul is combining belief with behaviour in Romans 12:1–15:13. Therefore, Paul is concerned with the ethics of the new community of believers that Jesus has brought into being by his death and resurrection (Du Toit 2004:140). Strong (2007:17) highlights the importance of Paul's method of coupling indicatives and imperatives. This method entails that Paul is first of all indicating to hearers who they are in Christ as the real source of motivation, and afterwards he encourages them to live up to what they are in Christ. The change of mode in Paul's communication is striking, especially the way in which he becomes practical (Strong 2007:17). The language of liturgy has to reckon with this unique relationship between indicatives and imperatives. There cannot be claims or imperatives without the cognisance of God's acts or indicatives.

It is evident that the description of a new conduct of behaviour is introduced by highlighting the importance of worship (Cranfield 2004:599). Christians are exhorted to worship God with their bodies so that worship includes all activities of body and mind (Stott 1994:321). This living sacrifice of body and mind (spiritual worship) is not aimed at a church building in the first instance, but rather at people's homes and in the marketplace (Moo 2002:177). In dealing with the persuasive language of liturgy, it is important to note that the moral (new) life as a sacrifice of gratitude flows from the content (theology) of the gospel (Moo 2002:177).

The persuasive message of God's Word has everything to do with human life.

The importance of the renewing of the mind for the demand of change in persuasive messages (Romans 12:1–2)

Paul starts his message of persuasion by using the words παρακαλῶ οὖν ὑμᾶς (therefore I urge you). Cranfield (2004:597) indicates that the verb παρακαλῶ (urge) denotes exhortation as an earnest appeal based on the gospel to live with the gospel they have received. In this sense of the word this urging is also authoritative, because obedience is asked in the name of the gospel. In his persuasive language Paul does not ask some kind of favour from his hearers, but he beseeches them in the name of Christ as the source of mercy to render their lives (Stott 1994:322). Paul also uses the concept of ἀδελφοί (brothers) deliberately. He indicates that he is not against his hearers, but rather acts and speaks as one of them (Du Toit 2004:141). His attitude as communicator is one of somebody who does not speak because he is haughty. Stott (1994:321) argues that religion is nothing else than grace, and ethics is nothing else than gratitude. Ethics in Christians' lives is theological motivated. Moo (2002:176) indicates that Romans 12:1–2 issues the basic call for a transformed life. All teaching and learning about God and the gospel has implications for people's lives (Rasnake 2005:178). All teaching about God should lead to change in the way we think about God and about reality (Stott 1994:323). Therefore, the exhortation to present yourselves as a sacrifice expresses the idea that believers must offer themselves entirely to God (Cranfield 2004:599). The action of worshipping (offering ourselves to God) is the main issue in life. Cranfield (2004:601) also indicates that the implication of this is that true worship embraces the whole of a Christian's life from day to day. Paul is using the concept of worship (liturgy) based on God's mercy as his entrance in speaking about attitude change. Liturgy also has to do with people's attitudes.

According to Romans 12:1–2 the continuous presentation of believers' bodies to God is nothing else than their spiritual act of worship to God (Stott 1994:322). No worship to God is pleasing to Him if it is purely inward. Worship to God must express itself in concrete acts of service produced by our bodies (Moo 2002:177). It can also be said that life is worship. However, human life is subjected to continuous change. Something of a paradigm of true change is found in Romans 12:2 (Strong 2007:18). Paul's persuasive communication states that any transformation in people's lives has to do with transformation according to God's will (Stott 1994:323). In Romans 12:2 two verbs are used and both are present passive imperatives that denote the continuous attitudes believers must retain (Cranfield 2004:602). The first attitude has to do with refusal to conform to the world's way of doing. The second attitude has to do with transforming according to God's will.

Two moulds of life are described in Romans 12:2, namely the mould of the world and the mould of God's will (Stott 1994:323). Regarding the mould of the world, transformation is required, namely μὴ συσχηματίζεσθε (not to be conformed to). The concept of scheme is evident in this exhortation and refers to the external form. It could also denote the idea of not conforming (Rasnake 2005:180). Contrasted with the exhortation *not to conform*, stands the idea of μεταμορφοῦσθε (be transformed). The second Greek word used for the concept of form is recognised in this concept, namely the word *morfe*. In the concept of *morfe*, the essence of inward substance is found (Du Toit 2004:141). The idea is that believers must be transformed in their inmost nature. Stott (1994:323) indicates that this same verb of transformation is also used in Matthew and Mark for the transfiguration of Jesus. The concept, therefore, denotes the idea of complete change, namely, a transformation away from the standards of this world to the image of Christ (Moo 2002:179). The big contrast in Romans 12:2 is the contrast between conformed and transformed.

The transformation (renewal of mind) that is mentioned in Romans 12:2 is not the believer's own doing, but it has to do with the work of the Holy Spirit. Believers should respond to the leading of the Spirit to let themselves be renewed (continuously) by the Spirit (Cranfield 2004:607). But how is this transformation taking place? The transformation is manifested through the renewal of mind. Strong (2007:19) proposes that Romans 12:2 actually indicates that people have to let themselves be transformed by the renewal of their minds. The word ἀνακαινώσει is used. This word consists of two words, namely *neos* and *kainos*. The concept of *neos* denotes a new point in time, while *kainos* denotes a new point of character and of nature (Strong 2007:19). The concept of mind denotes people's inner direction in their thoughts and minds (Stott 1994:324).

Being transformed by renewing your mind does not mean that people must not use their minds (Stott 1994:325). It is also important to note that mind is not confined to intellectual pursuits, but embraces it (Strong 2007:20). In Romans 12:2 the inward change of personality is demanded so that believers can experience a change in their thinking. Moo (2002:178) argues that believers are reminded of the fact that they must participate in the life-long process of changing the way they think. By changing the way they think, believers are also altering the way they are living. Renewing of the mind enables people to discern and put into practice the will of God (Cranfield 2004:610).

Renewal of the mind must lead to thinking soberly (*phronesis* – Rm 12:3)

A person's renewed mind, which is capable of discerning God's will, is the driving force in the evaluation of the self and of the person's real identity (Stott 1994:325). The renewed mind is the big indicative behind the sober self-image or a humble mind like Christ's (Moo 2002:180). The metaphor of the body is used to explain that each member of the body must understand their own unique place within the communion of the body. In the beginning it was stated that

communication and communion cannot be divided. The noun φρόνησις and the verb φρονέω come to the foreground. Bond (2007:319) explains that the verb φρονέω can denote *thinking*, *to have an attitude* or *to have a frame of mind*. Cranfield (2004:612) proposes that Paul uses wordplay in Romans 12:3. The fourfold use of the word *think* has the function to emphasise the importance of thought. The concept of thinking is used four times, namely: μὴ ὑπερφρονεῖν παρ' ὃ δεῖ φρονεῖν ἀλλὰ φρονεῖν εἰς τὸ σωφρονεῖν. Each member of the body needs a kind of wisdom (*phronesis*) that differs from over-confident wisdom (Moo 2002:179). This entails that each member of the Body of Christ must think about their unique place and about the gifts they have received. This is what can be called sober thinking (Stott 1994:325). Romans 12:3 describes the kind of thinking that is suitable for believers. Believers are exhorted to think with sober judgment according to the measure of faith (Cranfield 2004:613). They have to think according to their new life in Christ. Thinking about this new life (Rm 12:1) will direct their thinking and keep them within proper limits.

Thinking about yourself is the result of having a renewed mind. The change of attitude must therefore also be part of the process of the renewal of mind. People's minds matter in persuasive language. Persuasion must result in a new kind of thinking. According to Paul, believers should reason theologically. The God who restores the mind through the work of Christ, empowers believers to reason in a renewed, theological way (Bond 2007:320). Louw (2015:64) therefore indicates that the concept of φρόνησις is meaningful in the context of the Christian faith, which deals with the question of *phronesis* – wisdom as the driving force behind the actions of religious communities. When this search for wisdom is connected to the intention of God's will for human life (the mind of Christ), practical theology deals with the praxis of God and his involvement and engagement with the trajectories of human lives.

The importance of cognition in persuasive language contributes towards attitude change – implications for the language use in liturgy

The above paragraphs discuss the importance of understanding (cognition), the functioning of attitudes and the challenge of persuasive communication. People's understanding and knowledge really matter and are favourable in the process of persuasive communication to change attitudes. All people have attitudes on liturgists, worship services, life and society. These attitudes could be positive, but also negative. Van Ruler (1972:170), for instance, once wrote on the topic, why people should go to church. This article demonstrates that liturgists should become increasingly aware of the fact that the manner in which they are utilising words to conduct liturgy should open new windows on a new cognition on what is actually happening during worship services, but also on how daily life should be understood. It is about influencing people's lives through liturgy so that they will change their attitudes according to their understanding of God's will for their lives. The following perspectives focus on the fact that meaningful language during worship services should also open a new cognition on the meaningfulness of liturgy as vessel for a new understanding on the liturgy of life. In this process negative attitudes could be a hindrance. Liturgy should provide a persuasive message in changing attitudes. Next, some aspects related to this receive further attention.

The meaningful act of worship

Forrester *et al.* (2004:3) warn against the misleading understanding (cognition) of worship services as something that merely has to do with set times for formal rituals in church buildings. Worship is not a distinct, specialised part of life that only takes place in church buildings. Worshipping is to offer the whole of life (according to Rm 12:1–2), and, therefore, the relationship with God cannot be confined to one compartment of human life. Byars (2002:7) asserts that a church that worships carelessly without attention to what it is doing, may become something other than a Christian church. The way people worship shapes the kind of church they will become. Hughes (2003:31) highlights three dimensions of meaning (cognition) in worship, namely:

- The event of worship has to make sense and a certain kind of rationality is therefore demanded.
- The meaning of liturgical acts has to be multisensory, transmitted through verbal and non-verbal channels of signification.
- The liturgical acts must be theologically competent, which means that it should make sense for participants that are dealing with reality in the world.

Liturgy should open space for reasonableness (cognition) that has to with a recognisable force that is able to persuade people (Hughes 2003:32). Liturgy during worship services has to connect to the lives of participants in liturgy to really be meaningful and to make sense (Burger 2009:27). Liturgics is dealing with the communicative acts of liturgy and therefore the concept of dialogue is important (Vos & Pieterse 1997:23). For dialogue to flourish, the encounter between God and his people and the encounter between people (participants) are needed. However, all people have their own opinions and attitudes. These opinions and attitudes are under scrutiny during the encounter and it opens the way for liturgical persuasion (Vos & Pieterse 1997:24). Dialogue must enrich relationships between people and the importance of relationships between people is why liturgy should persuade people in a relational manner. In the normative section, perspectives are offered on the renewing of mind that must lead to a new kind of cognition. In praying, hearing and participating in liturgy, aspects of God have to be remembered and, therefore, liturgy also has to do with knowing God according to the renewed mind (Saliers 1994:86). For people to participate in the meaningful act of liturgy, the whole

human being must be engaged and must be renewed through the senses. There must also be recognition of the fact that liturgy signifies something beyond immediate experience (Saliers 1994:144). In liturgy people not only sing to make music, they do not only speak to teach and learn. The sermon is important, but it is not merely an attempt to impress people with words. Liturgy in itself is parabolic, which takes people to somewhere else and speaks of something else and tries to make connections (Saliers 1994:144). To act in liturgy during worship services is indeed meaningful. Therefore, cognition is needed to make sense of what is happening during the act of liturgy in worship services.

The persuading power of liturgical language in changing people's attitudes

If worship services are meaningful (as explained above), meaningful liturgical language that conveys persuasion regarding the meaningfulness of life is also needed. Liturgy should not create fear for daily life or any avoidance of reality. To persuade people through communication is to help them in gaining consensus and to cooperate according to God's will for their lives (Grant & Borcherds 2009:3). In liturgy, it is not the case of liturgists that gang up against the participants in liturgy. Therefore, persuasion is different from manipulation that drives people away from the communicator. In using liturgical language, liturgists must first of all have cognition of the fact that they are guiding or accompanying people in liturgy as responsible participants because of the fact that they are also a participant in liturgy. It is pivotal that liturgists have to become personally engaged in the act of liturgy. It is important to note that persuasion has to do with change. Change is always difficult to achieve in people's lives unless people can see its resulting benefit. Cleary (2010:159–172) indicates the importance of five concepts regarding the use of persuasive language, namely attention, comprehension, belief, repetition and action.

Cleary (2010:162) further elaborates on the five words and indicates the following aspects:

- To be influential, liturgy must evoke the interest and the positive attitude of participants. In this instance the liturgist must be aware of what kind of information is needed to best understand the participants in liturgy. Cognition (knowledge) about participants could help liturgists to identify what the effects of the changing of attitudes will entail. Cognition could also help the liturgist to locate his or her own attitude that could possibly differ from the participants in liturgy. Cognition of the participants' language and thoughts are needed to promote a situation in which liturgists and participants can operate on the same wavelength. This process also requires active listening and knowledge of different viewpoints. Each person's attitude on liturgy, on life itself or aspects of life includes cognitive, but also affective elements. An earlier paragraph described the relationship between cognitive, affective and behavioural aspects. Participants must recognise their own voice and the practice of their lives within the elements of liturgy (cf. Byars 2002:27). The problem is that if people do not have meaning for other people, words will also fall short in meaning. Communication (language) and communion cannot be separated.
- In shaping the persuasive language of liturgy one should bear in mind that liturgists must help participants to understand the message of persuasive language. There should be cognition of the kind of language that is familiar to the participants and words that have definite meaning for participants. What kind of words are considered to be persuasive? Words that are clearly understood and language that is direct and vigorous, aided by an imagination that can paint word pictures are very persuasive. Cilliers (2007:80) did extensive research on the topic of aesthetics in liturgy. This entails that concrete examples are very helpful. Without understanding (cognition) of the meaning or intent of the liturgist's language use, nobody can really act accordingly. Liturgical language must make sense to participants in liturgy. Liturgical language must be intentional to help participants to worship meaningfully (Hughes 2003:127). Applied to the topic of discussion, it entails that participants in liturgy should become aware also how to act in forming good attitudes regarding dignity, piety and reverence.
- The liturgist should believe in what they are communicating. The issue at stake is that the liturgist's own attitude must be correct. It is true that aspects like appearance, fluency, rate of speech and other aspects could influence the communication process; however, no liturgical language will ever contribute towards attitude change unless participants notice enthusiasm from the liturgist and receive enough information to understand what is expected of them. It has to do with the matter that liturgists have to show that the content of their language is also a living voice within themselves. Enthusiasm intrigues people. After noticing enthusiasm, participants will look for clues why the liturgist is so enthusiastic. It is possible that participants will change their attitudes because of the information they explored themselves. Enthusiasm could help hearers in the exploration process. Language must help participants to understand why the persuasive message of liturgy is the solution to wrong and sinful attitudes.
- For language to be persuasive, liturgists must be aware of the fact that participants must be able to remember the essence of liturgy. Participants must be able to recall what they are persuaded to do. The influence of liturgical language has to do with important messages that are spaced during the act of liturgy. Spaced repetition of important messages will ensure increased retention. Therefore, coherence between preaching and the other elements of liturgy is also needed. Preaching also entails that it takes place within the space of liturgy.
- Action and a change of attitude that affects the liturgy of life and the liturgy of the streets, are the deepest purpose of persuasion that has to do with a kind of cognition to act

according God's will. Liturgical language and the way in which it is facilitated must be clear in view of the outcome of liturgy. Liturgical language that is influential emphasises language that also urges for attitude change. Liturgy and ethics cannot be separated. Liturgy without the outlook of ethics will become blind and short-sighted. Through the language use in liturgy, Christ is presented in such a manner that everybody will realise that God is present, but liturgy also cultivates the discovery that God is present in daily life. It could also be said in another way, namely that liturgy has to do with the cognition of God's presence (*praesentia realis*). Cilliers (2007:80) highlights the importance of this encounter with God and the transforming power of this encounter. He underlines the idea of rapprochement or affection. Three key components are distinguished, namely people's affection for God, God's affection for people by means of his promises, the sacraments and his Word and people's affection for the world. The interaction between the three components is the main cognition behind worship services, namely to seek a meaningful encounter with God to live meaningfully in this world.

Conclusion

This article indicated that the relationship between cognition, attitude change and persuasive communication needs attention. This issue received attention from the viewpoint of the act of liturgy in worship services. It is evident from this research that the meaning of words and the meaning of people's lives cannot be separated from each other. The encounter with God and with one another is a meaningful experience in the lives of believers. To experience meaning, meaningful words (language) are needed. Liturgy in itself is persuasive, because it has the purpose of persuading people to change their attitude and to a change in their own cognition. Liturgists must contribute to a better understanding of believers' own cognition; therefore, a better understanding of the power of language use in liturgy is also needed.

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