Towards Effective Utilization of Langauge for Youth Empowerment: Implications for National Security

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Abstract

This paper focuses on effective utilization of Language for youth empowerment cum its implications for national security. Language is considered as the tool of integrating, orientating and transforming individual into the societal dictate. This work discusses the education as mean of transforming the citizenry into the self development and society transformation. It further considers human rights education as an exposure of individual to the self realization through the knowledge and skills acquired. It then explains language education as the basic tool that the individual needs to comprehend and express their opinion. The work emphasizes the importances and negative effects of the insecurity to the realization of youth empowerment, while considering youth empowerment as self reliance without youth depending on the charity to survive.

Keywords: Education, Language, National Security, Youth Empowerment

Introduction

Every child deserves better treatment. The parents and society need to provide adequate programme that will compliment the potentials of the citizenry. As it was used to say, idle hands are the devils' workshop. The civil crises witnessed by the country and the individuals were due to the mismanagement of human beings and the available resources. The uncared attitude, less concerned behaviour, "national cake" syndrome and others, are the causes of the national insecurity (Okoli 2013; Obodumu Ogbo and Utulu, 2010). To redeem the nation past glory, the Nigeria stakeholders- government (Executive, Legislature and Judiciary), citizens, Nation's workers (both Public and Private), friends of the country (foreigners) and others, must put all hands on desk in empowering youth. There had been several cases of security threats in Nigeria. Such as: inter-tribal and ethno-religious disturbances, boko-haram, kidnapping in different parts of the country which led to loss of many lives and destruction of properties worth billions of Naira (Jonatan 2013; Gbadamosi 2011). Political analysts, religious leaders and other concerned individuals have tried to proffer solutions to these recurrent national problems that threatens our co-existence and unity as one indivisible entity (Fakeye 2010; Umukoro 2009). Several efforts put in place to provide lasting solutions is exhaustive. These according to Sopeka (2009) includes the setting up of a panel of enquiry; declaration of amnesty; emergency rule and drafting of military personnel to the troubled spot among others.

However, none of the solutions proposed brings sustainable peace in the affected areas, hence youth empowerment (Okoli 2013; Ododumu & etal 2010) and linguistic approach (Fakeye 2010, Olagbaju 2010) to the resolution of the problems have been canvassed. This paper, therefore, aimed at taking a cursory look at inter-relationship of language and youth empowerment to promote National security.

The State of the Nation

The healthy and peaceful society celebrates its citizenry. The goverment transformation agenda can be achieved in a peaceful co-existence. The state of Nation determines almost every aspects of state. According to Cohen in Gele (2010) National security is considered as:

> *the requirements to protect a distinguished nation-state through the use of economic, military and political power and the exercise of diplomacy (p.62)*

This was supported by Rodde in Gele (2010) by considering security as relative freedom from war coupled with relatively high expectation that defeat will not be a consequence of any war that should occur.

With these opinions, National security is considered as the adequate protections of man and available resources against both internal and external attacks, irrespective of the location within the Nation-state. In a broad sense, national security implies absence of threat to life, property and socio-economic well being of the people.

According to report released by Global Peace Network, Nigeria was ranked low in Global Peace Index with five major issues that pose threats to Nigeria's ability to secure its vital interest, they are politcal vilence, violent extremism, communal violence, the Niger Delta and maritime security and transnational crime. Otheres are economic insecurity, food insecurity, health insecurity, and environmental insecurity (Ogidan 2013). In reality, each of these issues overlap in many ways, hence the need for total overhauling of factors that promote insecurity in the nation.

Nigeria, in recent times has witness an unprecedented level of insecurity and its associated factors. Several reports revealed that the major perpetrators of terror activities in Nigeria are youths as shown in table 1.

Youth Empowerment and National Security

The unemployment of the youth is not only the threat to National security, but to the concerned parents as well. Youths are the backbones of the family and Nation-state

development. The country that fails to provide functional education to her teeming youth is still crawling and far from meaningful development. This assertion is in line with Taiwo in Ogunwuyi (2010) views on education as a programme that accorded young ones self-reliance without depending on others to live. In other words, Obodumu, Ogbo and Utulu (2010) consider empowerment as programme that strengthening people's access base namely Natural, physical capital, human capital, social and financial capital and by providing the legal institutional framework to guarantee their command over resources. With the above explanation of empowerment, any programme provided that hindered people's ability to be self reliance but depending on the other is not adequate.

Youth empowerment is a vital component in promoting and sustaining stability and development (Aguilar-Francis 2012). To disengage youth from crisis and conflict, the Nation-state stakeholders must adequately provided for youth needs. The above youth empowerment explanation was supported by African traditional education. Empowerment is the key component of the traditional education which is the aggregate of all the processes through which a child develops abilities, attitudes, and other forms of behaviour which are of positive value to the society in which he lives (Fafunwa in Ogunwuyi 2010). From the foregoing, the societal and parental reformation of the individual with realization of youth's potentialities to develop and independently living within the legal framework is called youth empowerment.

Education, Language and Citizenry

According to Fafunwa in Ogunwuyi (2010) education is considered as aggregate of all processes through which a child develops abilities, attitudes and other forms of behaviour which are of positive values to the society in which he lives. On the other hands, education is view by Taiwo in Ogunwuyi (2010) as training of the young with a view to their growing up and developing into adults who can find for themselves, live in a society and be of service to that society. In Fafunwa, education is considered as the transformational tool of individual to fix into the society positively while Taiwo sees education as any programme for self-reliance and society development.

Therefore, education is a well packaged programme, assessed, tried out, valued and considered for the development of individual and the society from one generation to the others.

Table 1: Sample of Cases of Youth Involvement in Security Threats in Nigeria

Perpetrators	Motives	Nature of act	Target	Date/Place
Vigilante/youths	Revenge	Murder and Arson	Civilians, security personne l and area commander of police killed	Dec. 9th, 2012 Ijebu Ife, Ogun state.
Ewudu youths	Revenge on land dispute	Abduction/Murder	82-year old retired Inspector of Police killed	May 10/ 2013, Ewudu village, Edo state
MEND Niger-Delta Militants/ Hoodlums	Demeanded a ransom of #1 Million	Kidnapping/ Abduction	Queen Gladys Oharisi	Abraka road, Edo State, June 6, 2013
MEND Niger-Delta Militants	Resource control	Bombing and Murder	Civilian population and security men -lo people died	Oct. 1st 2010 Abuja Eagle Square
Teenage Girls	Immorality/poverty	Baby factory/ baby trafficking	Babies,teenage, girls & women	June 17, 2013, Aba
Boko Haram	Religious fanaticism	-Series of co-ordinated bombings -Teams of gun men launch parallel attacks with guns and bombs -attacks 4 churches -attacks school	Bombing of the united Nations Head -quarters - Church and police -kills pastor and 2 others -kills 7 students and 2 teachers	August 26, 2011, Abuja-January 20, 2012, Maiduguri-June 17, 2013, Gwoza-June 18, 2013, Maiduguri
Fulani Herdsmen clash with Egbe youth	Land dispute/ resource control.	Destruction of properties murder	Over 05 were reported dead	April 26, 2013 Kogi.
Muslim Fulani in Dogo-Nahawa village	Revenge	Ethno-religious conflicts	2010 Jos crisis 400- 500 Berom Christians were killed	Before dawn on March 7,2010, Jos
Pipeline Vandals and crude oil theft	Monetary gain	Pipeline vandalism	Economic sabotage, loss of #163 billion from 2009-2012	June 19, 2013, Arepo in Ogun state, Olorunkemi/ Alaakia village in Oyo State

Source: www.ngrguardianews.com; www.tribune.com.ng; www.allafrica.com

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Education is orientational, transformational and self-dependence tools to change young into adulthood, entrepreneurially equipped youth with the positive contributions to societal economy, political, social and development.

To achieve good education for the nation's citizenry, the human rights education must be considered as the best tool of youth self-realization. According to Richard (2002) human rights education is: process of acquiring relevant knowledge, skills and values for knowing, asserting and vindicating one's rights based on international human rights norms.

The above type of education is the training that every young one needs in order to realize their right to education and potentials. With the youth exposure to human rights education, all citizens will consider education as their fundamental human right not a privilege.

The dissemination or facilitation of knowledge or skills in the citizens is unachievable except with the adequate language of expression. The language education is the inter-link of the education, citizens and the provider of education (government). According to Sesan (2009) Language education is adequate training or exposure to the skills and techniques of manipulating, utilization and understanding the rules that governed language usage.

With the above view, language education is seeing as all trainings that expose people to the understanding, manipulation, utilization of rules that govern language according to the native speakers dictate. This was supported by Adubuola (1990) in his definition of language as:

A system of vocal sounds, visual signs and graphic symbols to which meaning is attached as a matter of common convention and used for communication among the members of the community, social group or society that owns it.(p.4)

With Adubuola's explanation of language, it is a communal, structured, meaning embedded, conventional, purposely for communication and both vocal and graphic implied according to native speakers. Language education is aimed at developing the following according to Roseberry-Mckibbin and Brice (2013):

i) Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS) which involves the context-embedded, everyday language that occurs between conversational partners.

ii) Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP) which involves the context-reduced language of academics takes five to seven years under ideal conditions to develop to a level commensurate with that of Native speakers. Therefore, Language education must expose citizens to adequacy in the effective usage and comprehension of both phonic substance of Language (BICS) and graphic substance of Language (CALP).

The Inter-Relationship of Language and the Youth Empowerment

Language is made up of sounds which are used in speaking as well as signs, marks or letters, and even figures that are used in writing (Fakeye 2010; Adubuola 1990). With this definition of language, it is a mean of communication ideas or opinions, either orally or literally. Though, the language materials that are the constituents of information identified by Adubuola (1990) are:

i) Form/structure: this is an expression which has to do with the organization, lexically and grammatically or structurally of language substance e.g language structure like SVCOA- subject, verb, complement, object and Adjunct.

ii) Content: this is the subject matter i.e the issue or topic in focus e.g the issue or subject of the discourse.

Youth empowerment is any programme that made the youth independence of relying on others to survive. Since the language is the means of equipping, assessing, and evaluating the individual achievement, youth empowerment is a programme that's depending on language presentation of ideas. The adequate understanding of language by the youth will aid expressions of his potentials.

Since the youth empowerment has to do with self sustainability, the language ability of youth will assist the society to identify the needs of youth. The language policy of Nation-state determines or influences youth empowerment programme. For instance, a multicultural Nation-state must adopt National language or a common lingua franca. This will assist unity in diversity of the youth. The language is the bridge at which a federalism Nation-state can adequately reach its youth. For example, the issue of tribal or communal crisis can be resolved through a national language policy.

The main focus of youth empowerment is making our youth the self-reliance citizens. This was supported by Igbanibo (2010):

Countries that have wholly followed the paths of self reliancism are Japan, India, north Korea, China etc because they looked inwards and adapted to their environment by creating scientific innovations that are imbued in Nationalistic and patriotic sentiments. (p.78)

Therefore, second language or National Language should be promoted along the adequate adaptation of scientific innovations. The Nation-state youth needs adequate disorientation against regional interest. The citizens must reform towards patriotic and Nationalistic sentiment with the promotion of lingual franca.

Implications for National Security

Since National security is the protections from internal and external attacks of man and the available resources, language in use, must bridge the gap between the existence tribes within Nation-state. According to Agbonna, Yusuf and Okafor (2010) cited Peretomode

….if communication is hampered in the administration of any organization, the entire organisation suffers, when it is accurate, thorough and timely, the organisation can move effectively toward goals achievement. (p.112)

The main focus of language is the effective communication. The constructive communication centres on who says what, to whom and by what means. The blessing of Nation's adoption of common language- assisted Nigerians to see each other as a Nation bond citizenry.

The youth empowerment is achievable at the Nation where there is peaceful co-existence. Language the tool of unifying youth in multicultural state can only promote empowerment if language of community is used in training them. For instance, roadside technician do repair imported engines without formal education or foreign language acquisition but through community language. The youth self reliance discouraged misused of youth as agent of destruction. So, to protect the Nation from both internal and external attacks on lives and properties, community language must use in the vocational training and literacy programme of youth.

Conclusion and Recommendations

To achieve transformation agenda of the nation, language should be at the centre of youth empowerment. It is the means of promoting empowerment, if communication tool is in favour of community language. The introduction of training to the youth through community language makes youth comprehend the goals of empowerment and embrace

legitimate means of livelihood instead of engaging in cultism and other criminal activities that threatening National security. And in today's world, we need to be more focused by creating decent jobs for youth through community language. Therefore, the following are hereby recommending for the promotion of security which is the key to attracting investment and development in this nation:

Community language must be in used to train the youth, since it's their means of social interaction that assist vocational training.

The nation's education system must encourage community language along foreign language at school, since the students only adopted foreign language at school and community language at homes. This will bridge the gap between the school and community and makes learning of vocational training relevant.

Lastly, the promotion of community language will bridge the gap between educated youth and non-educated youth which leads to self realization and career pursuance.

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