



THE ROLE OF LANGUAGE IN PROMOTING PEACE AND SECURITY IN NIGERIA: THE 21ST CENTURY OF THE GLOBAL PEACE AND SECURITY: AN APPRAISAL

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Abstract

The global stage since the turn of this century has witnessed incessant unrest, crisis, chaos and what have you. Various interpretations have been given by scholars, experts and intellectuals as their root causes. Whichever one is the case. There is available evidence proving that the world population has almost doubled in recent times. This gave birth to various attendant challenges making the hand of the world leaders full. Crisis they say is inevitable, peace on the other hand, is not the absence of crisis . But what must be said above all things is that the attendant challenges rocking the world today are basically due to migration, increase in population and development cum modernization. Whatever be the case, language as an instrument has been there to provide a platform for dialogue in order to ensure there is at least relative peace. On the other hand, insecurity has been among the things posing great challenge to the world at large even at the moment. What is needed is dialogue and dialogue cannot take place in the absence of language. This research is engendered by the high rate of insecurity and incessant disturbances the world over. Various data collection techniques were used as the textbooks, journals, the newspapers, internet, and even the survey method. The Marxian paradigm was used as its theoretical underpinning, thereafter, summary, conclusion and recommendations followed.

Keywords: *Language, Promoting, Peace, Security, Nigeria, 21st Century.*

Introduction

The global scene at the moment has proved to be a wrestling ground or better still, a battle field for various interest groups and for various reasons. What is

negatively astonishing is the careless attitude of various leaders at their respective places or countries. The recent cases in Nigeria is an evidence to prove that when it comes to security of human lives and property, need be to have it revisited. The government at various times and places seemed clueless and know nothing to do which can ensure peace. On the other hand, this study is of the belief too that certain individuals seem to benefit from the situation on ground. But, what they seem to benefit is best known to them. This is because at certain points in Nigeria and at different places the security officials seem to run for their lives. Then the question every right thinking individual has been asking is, are these individual terrorist groups better equipped with ammunitions to stampede the state of affairs and grind the economy to a halt or still the nations security outfits? These are questions begging for answers and still yet unanswered. It has to be said that there is an urgent need for dialogue with both stakeholders in the security sector and the lay man on the street to find a lasting solution to this problem of insecurity it has to be said here that language is expedient for the promotion of peace in the country.

Eyisi (2000) notes that every conceivable human activity revolves around language to express love, hatred, anger, happiness praise, satisfaction and political, social, educational or economic situations in the country to confirm or express religious beliefs, to comment on the weather and even to fill a vacuum when there is nothing else to do especially in the exchange of pleasantries. Human beings, therefore are naturally endowed with the tendency to always talk, to use words, to employ language for a mutual social relationship with their fellow individuals and for the achievement of their daily objectives for their well-being and for the well-being of their community. People get on well when their communication flow. The same way, if there is no proper communication, activities in a given community would definitely crumble. One wonders what the world would have been without language. Language lives and dwells with the people, and the perception of the real world in construed by the language habit of the people or group of speakers. In his words sapir (2009;234) succinctly opine that “we see and hear and otherwise experience very largely as we do because the language habit of our community predispose certain choices of interpretation”

In furtherance, the functional characteristics of language are not just limited to communication or transfer of information. Language also provides means of confirming information as well as unraveling hidden agendas and codes. In this situation, specific types of language or codes are utilized. The information in this case is hidden from the vast majority; while only a privileged few have access to the information.

Role of Language in promoting peace and security in Nigeria

There are a million and one ways language help in promoting peace and security in the country and these include the following.

1. Communicating national development via indigenous languages. National development is not a sole property of individual, but a group of individuals can converse to formulate strategies for the development of the nation. This formulated national development from a few individual is usually conveyed to the entire populace via linguistic resources. So language provides a tool for the conveyance of national development.
2. Documenting national development via indigenous languages. Edward and Sienkewicz (2010) in observing the importance of language in documenting national development, cites Mamadou Kouyate thus, : we are vessels of speech, we are the repositories which harbor secrets many centuries old. We are memory of mankind; by the spoken word we bring to life the deeds and exploits of kings for younger generations. Documentation is a tool for preservation. Egbokere, Francis (2019) captures the importance of language is in ethic and national sentiments, nothing that because of its powerful and visible symbolism it becomes a core symbol or x- raying point. He x – rayed the impact of language as a symbol of national identity from the perspective of the history of the Basques, an ethic group in the North of Spain.
3. Providing a strong base for relationship and interrelationship of people from different religious, ethic and cultural backgrounds. Language and its off-shoot dialogue go a long way in making dialoguing a possibility and achievable.

Theoretical Framework/Functionalism

This research adopted functionalism as its theoretical stand point. As said else where, language is an integral part of the human society. Hence, this theory was found by the great socio- economist cum mathematician, Marl Max. The position of Karl Max and his co-proponents are of the view that the human society has various parts which relate to each other. According to them (functionalists) peace or homeostasis exist in the society when no part of the society is affected. This is because, to them when one part is affected it results in an injury to all the other parts in that sense language is a key part of the human society, though of the sub- structure, if it is injured or negatively affected through negligence or by intension, it will definitely go a long way in affecting the rest of the parts. Going by the above position the paradigm is considered suitable for adoption in this study and hereby is adopted as its theoretical standpoint.

Summary

By way of summary, it has to be stated and without any form of mincing of words that language plays a key role in nations and such roles are actually indispensable and included but not limited to communicating national development via indigenous languages. That implies that national development cannot take place without language. And again, language serves as an instrument for documenting national development. That goes a long way to telling us that without language, continuity of the culture will be a thing of the past and far from being actualized. That demonstrates to us the imperativeness of language.

Conclusion

Conclusively, it has been clearly spelt out that language is an indispensable instrument for dialogue in virtually every human society. It has to be mentioned that no matter the type of language or means of communication among a set of people, language is language and the degree of respect accorded to a particular language considered modern will also be the level of respect that will be accorded to the language that is considered weak. That is to simply say that language is language everywhere.

Recommendations

Having concluded this research study, we make the following recommendations.

1. Every human society should make tangible and untiring efforts to adopt its language as the best and do everything within its powers to protect it especially knowing that it must someday come in contact with the presumed stronger languages.
2. Open criticism of other people's language will not attract credit and can be provocative and should be discouraged.
3. Cultural ethnocentrism (Belief that one culture is superior to the other) must be discouraged at all cost.

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