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TEACHING AND LEARNING LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE IN NIGERIA FOR NATIONAL SECURITY AND CRIME PREVENTION: THE CHALLENGING ISSUES

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Abstract

The paper discusses the place of language and literature pedagogy in Nigeria for national security and crime prevention. Employing a

descriptive survey and a review of related literature, the paper presents an assessment of the security situation in Nigeria including the causes of insecurity in the country. It contends that even though the place of education in security matters has hitherto been neglected, proper education as found in language and literature pedagogy could be a potent force for combating insecurity given the right climate and disposition. The paper recommends that for corporate existence and collective fight against insecurity, Nigerians must shun ethnicity and the fear of domination; recognizing, believing and accepting the fact that as a nation, those things that bind us together are far more important than the issues of diversity. This way, all and sundry would see matters of national security with the required same eye-glasses.

Key Words: language, literature, teaching & learning, national security.

Introduction

It is true that there is no problem-free society. It is also true that there is no crime-free society ever recorded in history. Even when the indices are favourable and the basic strategies to enhance security are firmly in place, there will still be crime and traces of insecurity. Therefore, it appears the fact of crime and by implication insecurity in society is, to an extent, 'normal'. However, what makes the issues of crime and insecurity worrisome and really problematic is when the following dangerous trends emerge:

- i. Where and when crime has assumed a dangerous dimension in terms of frequency, volume, nature, character, patterns, etc, thereby constituting real threat to the security of life and property of the citizens, and even the credibility of the state.
- ii. When the government, even with its security and criminal justice system becomes as helpless as the ordinary citizens in combating crime.

It is crystal clear that these critical indices are already evident as far as the issues of crime and insecurity in Nigeria are concerned. Therefore it calls for this kind of attention, if not more.

It is no longer news that in addition to the largely unattended chronic corruption and corrupt practices in Nigeria, there have been crime problems and acute situations of violence unleashed on many parts of the country by certain interest groups such as the Niger Delta People's Volunteer Force (NDPVF) or Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND), Boko Haram, deadly ethnic/communal clashes in central Nigeria, and complements of armed robberies, kidnappings, suicide bombings, assassinations, ritual killings, religious killings, politically-motivated killings and violence, etc across most of the geo-political zones of Nigeria. As Odekunle (2012:2) puts it, figuratively, blood has been flowing on the streets of many of our cities 'which have been turned into semi-battle-zones with battle-ready soldiers and citizens living in perpetual fear of unpredictable eventualities'. With this scenario, even the smallest of children in the affected locations knows there is a problem that requires urgent attention. The physical and even the spiritual environments are not left out in the devastating effects of the crime and insecurity problems in which we have found ourselves in Nigeria.

Having agreed that we have a problem of this magnitude on our hands, should we go to sleep with our roofs on fire? The answer is no. In tackling certain problems, if the conventional weapons, usual/normal solutions are becoming ineffective, wisdom demands we should employ some unconventional means, hence the timeliness of the effort at proffering solution to a national problem this way using these peculiar veritable weapons of warfare; education, first of all, and then the respective disciplines: language and literature. This, therefore, is indeed a timely response to the strong advocacy for a multi-stakeholder approach or intervention to the security challenges in Nigeria rather than merely leaning on military options alone (see Ujomu 2001, Okeke 2012 Imhonopi & Urim 2012).

In order to appreciate the problems on our hands and to ensure a better grasp or comprehension of the concern, scope and contents of the paper as well as its overall discourse structure, the remaining part of the presentation shall attempt to answer the following questions:

- i. What do we mean by national security?
- ii. What is the security situation in Nigeria and what are the causes of crime and insecurity in the country?
- iii. To what extent can the teaching and learning of language and literature prevent crime and aid national security consciousness in Nigeria?
- iv. What factors militate against the effectiveness and efficiency of literature and language pedagogy in crime prevention and national security consciousness?
- v. Even against all odds, what is the way forward?

National Security: Some Conceptual Explications

Security as defined by Ibidapo-Obe (2008) is that situation that exists as a result of the establishment of measures for the protection of persons, information and property against hostile persons, influences and actions, and in the opinion of Achumba, Ighomereho & Akpor-Robaro (2013), security is the existence of conditions within which people in a society can go about their normal daily activities without any threats to their lives and properties. It is in the light of these conceptual clarifications that Igbuzor (2011) isolates the essential features of security as follows:

- ✓ protection from crime (feeling safe)
- ✓ predictability of daily life (knowing what to expect)
- ✓ stability and continuity of livelihood (stable and steady income)
- ✓ freedom from psychological harm (safety or protection from emotional stress which results from the assurance that one is wanted, accepted, loved and protected in ones community or neighbourhood and by people around)

It is this broadened concept of security as captured above that had led people to talk about different kinds of security at both personal and national levels such as physical security, food security, human rights security, job security, social security, family security, and others (personal level). And at the national level, Okeke (2012) has argued that the old school of militarist thinking which has conceived national security primarily as military response and management of threats has given way to the new school of thought which sees national security beyond military force only. Thus, the concept 'national security' has assumed an all-embracing meaning to scholars as that which involves some activities geared towards the protection of a country, including life and properties of individuals against attack, danger and so on. This way, national security is seen as that cherished value associated with both physical and psychological safety of individuals, groups or nation-states. It connotes freedom from threat, anxiety and danger of whatever form and from whichever direction(s).

In my sincerely considered opinion, it appears we may appreciate the concept 'security' better when juxtaposed with its antonym 'insecurity' because as it is said: 'How would beauty be recognized if there was no ugliness? ... How would the tranquility of peace be appreciated if there were not the horrors of war?' (Bialonwu, 1988:97). Herein lies the rationale for juxtaposing security with insecurity so that we could appreciate our security better in the face of insecurity. What then is insecurity? The notion 'insecurity' is usually ascribed different interpretations because of the very many ways in which insecurity affects human life and existence. Some of the common descriptors of insecurity include: want of safety, hazard, want of confidence, trouble, lack of protection, subject to danger, uncertainty, unsafe, lacking stability, open to threat, vulnerable, inadequately guarded and protected, exposure to risk or anxiety, lack of control over certain forces, incapable of taking defensive action, and so on (see also Onifade, Imhonopi & Urim 2013, Achumba, Ighomereho & Akpor-Robaro 2013, Okwudishu 2013). From the foregoing, one could see clearly that insecurity is the antithesis of security. Besides, just as

security is an all-encompassing condition which suggests that a territory must be secured by a network of armed forces; that the sovereignty of the state must be guaranteed by a democratic and patriotic government, which in turn must be protected by the military, the police and the people themselves; and that the people must not only be secured from external attacks but also from devastating consequences of internal upheavals such as unemployment, hunger, starvation, diseases, ignorance, homelessness, environmental degradation, pollution and socio-economic injustices (Nwolise 2006), insecurity is likewise all-encompassing except that it tends towards negativity in all directions. The common descriptors of insecurity outlined above clearly indicate that.

What Is The Security Situation in Nigeria and What Are the Causes of Crime and Insecurity in the Country?

Having understood what we mean by security, insecurity and national security, we are left in this section to examine the security situation in Nigeria so far and to equally discuss the causes of insecurity in the country. National Security (internal) has been a challenging and disturbing issue in Nigeria since the 1990s. A brief review of some of the notable cases would suffice to illustrate the point at issue. These are the Niger Delta crisis, Jos crisis and the Boko Haram insurgency.

The Niger Delta crisis emerged in the early 1990s consequent upon the tensions between international oil companies (IOCs) and some representatives of Niger Delta minority ethnic groups who felt they were being exploited without due compensation (Osungade, 2008). As one would recall, the ethnic and political unrest continued in the region throughout the 1990s and persisted despite the enthronement of democracy in 1999 and even into 2009 before the amnesty programme which only reduced the rate of militancy in the region. You would also recall the agitations, reactions and violence that followed the extra-judicial killing of Ken Saro-Wiwa and nine Ogoni leaders on the 10th of November 1995 amidst the Niger Delta crisis. It was the failure of the military government then to address the root causes of the

agitation (environmental problems, poverty, unemployment, lack of basic amenities, etc.), in the Niger Delta region, that resulted in the springing up of ethnic militias of Niger Delta origin leading to the militarisation of the region. Thus, the foundation was laid for the wave of insecurity that engulfed even the entire nation because the history of kidnapping with impunity and reckless abandon in Nigeria has its origin in the Niger Delta crisis. The Government's intervention later through the establishment of some institutions or agencies in the area such as the Oil Mineral Producing Areas Development Commission (OMPADEC), Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) and Ministry of Niger Delta (MND) to douse the tension notwithstanding, the conflicts and insecurity in the Niger Delta region persisted. As mentioned earlier, the Federal Governments' amnesty programme only reduced, to some extent, the rate of militancy in the region. It is not completely over yet.

The Jos crisis is another internal security threat that started as a sectarian violence but degenerated into very radical and worrisome dimensions in 1999 even though the first major crisis in the area erupted in September 2001. As Oladoyinbo (2007) has observed; the crisis in Jos, Plateau state was, and still is a very complex one as it has ethnic, religious, socio-political and economic undertones. The Jos crisis, one would recall had resulted in unimaginable confrontations, killings, bombings and other forms of violence. For instance, from 2007 – 2010, several thousands of lives were lost to the crisis. Many had relocated from Jos. As it is, the problem is not completely over yet because of secret calculated killings that still go on in some parts of Jos and its environs including the clashes between the Fulani herdsmen and some communities in certain Local Government Areas in Plateau state. Whatever reasons (remote and immediate causes) that may be advanced for those horrible crises in Jos, the fact remains that it has emerged as one of the greatest internal security threats to the corporate existence of Nigeria. Just like the cases of widespread kidnappings in the South-East Zone of Nigeria especially in Abia, Imo and Ebonyi (following the 2007 election and the attendant thuggery

activities during the elections) which greatly affected business concerns in the zone, the Jos crisis has adversely affected the economy and unity of Nigeria. This is because apart from those who relocated from Jos and lost their business opportunities, even those living far away from North Central zone had their relations killed in the crisis. The scars left on certain families and communities in this nation by the Jos crisis as well as the attendant ripple effects of the crisis can only be imagined.

In addition to the Jos and Niger Delta crises is the emergence of Boko Haram menace since 2002. The Boko Haram insurgency happens to be yet another major security challenge in Nigeria which; as many of us are living witnesses to, has adversely affected the Nigerian economy, and security to life and property in the country. As you were aware, Boko Haram is a controversial Nigerian (but immigrant infiltrated) militant Islamist group that has sought to impose Sharia law or its radical interpretation of Islam on the northern states of Nigeria and then to other parts of the country (see Duma 2010, Olugbode 2010). The group opposes not only western education, but also western culture and modern science. The group also promotes a radical form of Islam which makes it forbidden (haram) for Muslims to take part in any political or social activities in the society: voting in an election, wearing of shirts and trousers or receiving secular education (c.f. BBC News Africa, 2010). As we had witnessed and are still witnessing in recent times in Nigeria, the activities of Boko Haram have constituted a serious security challenge to the nation. It has not only paralysed economic and social activities in the north but has also made Nigeria unsafe for any meaningful investment, tourism and even serious academic endeavours by both indigenous and foreign researchers especially in northern Nigeria. Besides, as Odekunle (2012) has pointed out, part of the immediate and foundation rocking consequences of the Boko Haram terror is the fact that it has already defeated the original aims of certain schemes and programmes put in place for proper national (re-)integration and reconstruction, following the devastating experiences of the Nigerian civil war. For instance,

instead of the erstwhile modality or acceptable reasons for redeployment during NYSC such as medical conditions and marriage, it is now the fear of insecurity of the posting-destination. Despite the fact that most states in the north are willing to pay more as NYSC allowance, not many corps members are willing to stay.

Analyzing the security situation in Nigeria, it could be said that even though Nigeria is not completely immune from external security threats occasioned by terrorism, globalization, religious fanaticism, sea piracy, economic melt-down and the collapse of certain financial institutions, external threats have been minimal or even somewhat non-existent. As Odekunle (2012:6) has observed, 'it is in the most important area of internal or domestic security that the situation has been critical and remains critical'.

Thus far with our discussion on the security situation in Nigeria, the pertinent question to ask at this juncture is what are the causes of crime and insecurity in the Country? Drawing from extant literature on insecurity in Nigeria, the causes could be divided into two categories: remote and proximate (Onifade, Imhonopi & Urim 2013) or root and contributory causes (Okwudishu 2013). Generally speaking, the following factors have been isolated as the root causes of insecurity across nations of the world including Nigeria:

- Climate change
- Increasing competition over natural resources
- Militancy
- Marginalization across most of the majority population

These, most scholars believe, are perhaps the most underlying drivers of insecurity. These drivers of insecurity, according to Okwudishu, eventually trigger other insecurity problems which are a threat to life and property in Nigeria. Besides, classifying the factors (root vs contributory, remote/distant vs proximate/immediate) as external versus internal, one is convinced that the challenge is not so much about insecurity from external sources, but rather that which is caused

by internal factors (c.f. Odekunle 2012). Therefore in what follows, we shall concentrate more on the internal (remote and proximate) causes in Nigeria especially the remote causes as outlined in Onifade, Imhonopi & Urim (2013), namely:

- The failure of the government to deliver public goods to its citizens: This results from absence of institutional capacity which in turn weakens state governance and democratic accountability, and thus paralyses the existing formal and legitimate rules put in place to maintain social order. This lack of basic necessities by the Nigerian people, as argued in certain quarters, has created a growing army of frustrated people who resort to violence at the slightest provocation. This way, the crime rate shoots up and even the government could no longer guarantee security of lives and properties in the country.
- The widening gap between the rich and the poor, inequality and absence of fairness and justice: Marginalization inequality, unfairness, injustice and the grinding poverty to which many Nigerian citizens are subjected to by the political or ruling class has toughened the people thereby forcing them to take their destiny into their hands by whatever means.
- Ethno-Religious Conflicts: Ethno-religious conflicts identified as a major source of insecurity in Nigeria arise when the social relations between members of one ethnic or religious group and another of such group in a multi-ethnic and multi-religious society or community is characterised by mutual suspicion and fear, lack of cordiality and a tendency towards violent confrontations as a means of settling grievances. These conflicts as observed by Adagba, Ugwu & Eme (2012) have always revolved around who gets what and how in the state especially as it concerns the distribution of scarce resources, power, land, chieftaincy titles, control of

local government councils, control of markets and expansion of religious territories. These conflicts have resulted in large-scale killings and violence among ethno-religious groups in Nigeria so far. Countless instances abound.

- **Disconnect between the People and Government:** In Nigeria over the years and even at present, there has been that growing disconnect between the leaders and the led thereby allowing for some misunderstanding, mistrust and resentment. As a result, because the people do not understand the government, they would always conclude that the government does not care about their welfare. With this mindset, the people can become easy prey to certain opposing forces ready to incite them against the government.
- **Weak and Poorly Funded Military Establishments:** The huge sums received as security votes by government officials at both federal and state levels, in most cases, end up in the pockets of some highly-placed private citizens and the Chief Executives of the states, leaving the defenceless and hapless citizens to the mercy of criminals. Besides, even the armed forces, paramilitary establishments and the police under federal control are weak institutionally as such formations are sometimes heavily politicised and poorly funded. This way the nation's security is easily compromised.
- **Interagency Rivalry:** The failure of security agencies such as the police, the military, State Security Services and paramilitary units to share intelligence information has been identified as one of the factors negating the quick apprehension of culprits (Omede, 2011, Onifade, Imhonopi & Urim 2013).

- Non-Prosecution of Perpetrators of Violence in Nigeria: Perpetrators and sponsors of violence have continued to walk freely on the streets of Nigeria. Sometimes even when prosecuted, the punishment or penalty is not commensurable with the gravity of the offence(s) committed. This, typical of our Nigerian mentality, encourages many more social deviants and their godfathers to perpetrate more evils and even abominable acts in the land. It is quite unfortunate that our judicial system is abysmally weak in implementing or enforcing the law.
- Loss of Socio-Cultural and Communal Value System: Frankly speaking, I quite share the opinion or conviction of Onifade, Imhonopi & Urim (2013) that the collapse of moral values in Nigeria is one critical factor responsible for the continued security challenges that the country is faced with. Our hitherto cherished Nigerian (African) core values; the endearing social values and morals have been traded off or completely abandoned for western values which have little or no regard for communal value system. As it stands, the situation in which we find ourselves in this country is ‘where every individual is for himself and nobody is for Nigeria’ (Odekunle 2012). No brother’s keeper and no sense of common good or collective responsibility.

The Teaching and Learning of Language and Literature for National Security and Prevention of Crime in Nigeria

On the whole, the place of education in security matters which has hitherto been neglected has received some attention in recent literature on security (Odekunle, 2012, Okwudishu, 2013). Okwudishu, in particular, argues that even though popular discussions on national insecurity and its causes tend to focus on numerous factors, rarely does education and its internal indicators feature in the discussion. According to her, education is a critical component in the fight against

both national and individual insecurity. Hence, there exists a relationship between education and (in)security however paradoxical that may seem: education contributes to insecurity, insecurity impacts on education and education is a potent force for combating insecurity. All said, since the focus of the present paper is not on the extent to which education in general is relevant to national security consciousness but rather language and literature, we need not pursue the argument any further here.

The Teaching and Learning of Language for National Security and Prevention of Crime

Language is the phenomenon that makes others possible. It is a major cultural phenomenon in human society and therefore an important regulator of individual consciousness and social interaction. The term 'language' can be analyzed or interpreted at two levels; it could be viewed either as a system of rules or as a form of behaviour. In considering language as a system of rules, we concentrate on the structural properties of language without going into the social context. Here, the concern on language is purely generative, that is, one is only interested in the grammar and how the finite resources of language are employed or channelled into infinite production/usage bordering on both the organic and dynamic creativity in human language. But in considering language as a form of behaviour, attention is shifted to varieties in language use according to situations and intentions. Here too, one is tempted to look at speech (language) as a part of social process (Omachonu 2013).

Realistically speaking, it amounts to a failure of intellect when human beings in their right minds engage in any of the activities considered as threats to personal and/or national security. Because with our God given ability of speech (language) and knowledge (education), we could think and understand issues, and then dialogue intelligently to resolve all our differences, and even combat, in our collective resolve, other forms of security threats that are not man-made. No wonder a philosopher, Daniel Webster once remarked:

If all my talents and powers were to be taken away from me by some inscrutable providence, and I had my choice of keeping but one, I would unhesitatingly ask to be allowed to keep the power of speaking; for through it, I will quickly recover all the rest (Culled from Omachonu & Ibrahim 2001:1).

The question to address at this juncture is, how can we make the teaching and learning of a veritable and indispensable instrument or tool of the above description, a potent force for combating insecurity in Nigeria? Isolating from our descriptions of what language truly is, one would realize that language has two sides to it relevant to our present discussion namely; one, the formal/structural properties of language concerned with the system of rules of the grammar of a language and two, the social context of language identified as a social process and/or a form of behavior.

Considering the teaching and learning of language as a system of rules operational in the grammar of a language, pedagogy in English as well as our own indigenous languages would be relevant in combating crime and insecurity or security challenges. It is important to note that the ability to speak other languages (including a foreign and international language like English) has long been recognized as a critical skill for national security and homeland defense even against the possibility of external attacks. Therefore taking a critical look at language pedagogy in Nigeria, especially as it relates to the teaching and learning of the English language, there may be basically two ways of making English studies, in particular, relevant to national security consciousness and crime prevention. These are: one, training in forensic linguistics and two, the teaching and learning of legal linguistics (jurilinguistics) as an aspect of English for specific purposes (ESP).

Forensic science, always referred to as forensics, is the application of a broad spectrum of science and technologies to investigating situations after the fact, and to establish what occurred based on

collated evidence (Schafer 2008). Forensics is especially important in law enforcement where it is done in relation to criminal or civil law. Forensic linguistics, in particular, deals with the application of linguistic knowledge, methods and insights to the forensic context of law, language, crime investigation, trial, and judicial procedure. Principally, forensic linguists concern themselves with (1) understanding language of the written law, (2) understanding language use in forensic judicial processes, and (3) the provision of linguistic evidence in the judicial system.

As a branch of applied linguistics, forensic linguistics is viewed as an aspect of linguistic study which cuts across virtually all the core levels of linguistic analysis. It deals with the study, analysis and measurement of language in the context of crime, judicial procedure, or disputes in law. Forensics studies any text or item of spoken language which has relevance to a criminal or civil dispute, or which relates to what goes on in a court of law, or to the language of the law itself. Consequently, the linguist may be called upon to analyze a wide variety of documents, for instance, agreements relating to ancient territorial disputes, the quality of court interpreting, an allegation of 'verballing' (claims by defendants that their statements were altered by investigating police officers), a will in dispute, a suicide note, a ransom demand, and so on (Omachonu & Wakawa 2010).

To be more specific, the forensic phonetician, for instance, who is concerned with the production of accurate transcriptions of what was being said, could be called upon to assist the judicial system in revealing or authenticating information about a speaker's social and regional background through accurate transcription of utterances. He can also determine similarities between the speakers of two or more separate recordings. Voice recording as a supplement to the transcription can be useful as it allows victims and witnesses to indicate whether the voice of a suspect is that of the accused or not. The introduction of this kind of programme into language pedagogy in Nigeria will help to strengthen judicial procedure and crime prevention thereby ensuring national security.

Closely related to the above is legal linguistics which helps translators of legal texts, general language users and lawyers in need of legal linguistic information. Legal linguistics deals not only with the major legal languages but also with the legal orders behind those languages. Thus, several disciplines are combined: history of law, comparative law, classical and modern philology, research into languages for special purposes, terminological research, theory of translation, as well as, to some extent, communication theory, and legal semiotics. This aspect of linguistics is helpful to lawyers and translators in placing legal institutions and concepts, along with their designations, in the broadest of contexts. This makes it possible to avoid disastrous mistakes and misunderstandings thereby helping the judicial or justice system to function more properly in dispensing justice and punishing offenders commensurably.

The training in legal linguistics is important because legal language as a functional variant of natural language, with its own domain of use and particular linguistic norms (phraseology, vocabulary, hierarchy of terms and meanings) possesses a number of specific features: morphosyntactic, semantic, and pragmatic used in particular social roles such as pleading, alleging, claiming, denying and so on. From all indications, legal language is based on ordinary language. For that reason, the grammar and the vocabularies of legal language are the same as in the case of ordinary language and therefore needs to be learnt. Legal language is a language for special purposes. This means, first of all, that a large number of legal terms exist whose properties vary according to the branches of the law. Besides, the legal languages of different countries and of different periods possess, to a varying degree, unique characteristics that distinguish them from ordinary written language especially in style and structure. Thus, legal language may be incomprehensible from the standpoint of the general public, hence the need for some training (c.f. Mattila 2006).

On the teaching and learning of language as a form of behavior or social process, equally two issues may be of interest to us as far as our involvement in language pedagogy is concerned. These are (1)

effective use of language to ensure national security and/or peaceful co-existence and (2) an appeal to moral values and virtues/ethics embedded in language as a component of the culture of a people.

As Okeke (2012) has observed, the problem of insecurity in Nigeria has gone beyond what the government alone can handle. Just like Okeke, I believe that effective and appropriate use of language promotes peaceful co-existence and contributes to ensuring national security. It therefore becomes imperative that our political leaders, opinion and community leaders and indeed every Nigerian should endeavour to be mindful of the sociolinguistic implications of certain communicative situations by ensuring that they do not speak or use words anyhow. They should constantly and strategically figure out what to say, how to say it and the effect of the utterance on the receiver, the possible interpretations that might be given as the intended meanings so as to avoid unguarded utterances and a breakdown in communication. Conversely, listeners should learn to carefully and properly interpret and understand what others say in the process of interacting with them. This way, we shall be working together towards ensuring, peaceful co-existence, national security and by implications, securities to life and property. As language teachers, we could strategically and tactfully inject into our teaching, aspects of the sociolinguistic implications of communicative situations to guide language users appropriately.

Apart from effective use of language to ensure national security, we could also appeal to moral values, virtues and cultural ethics embedded in language as a component of the culture of a people to bring about good governance, maximum loyalty to leadership and security to life and property. As it is said, the absence of character is the beginning of crisis, and that it is only positive knowledge that is blended with positive attitude that produces the best result or action. Part of the security challenges plaguing the nation is caused by what some scholars have described as the collapse of moral values in Nigeria (Onifade, Imhonopi & Urim 2013). To bring back these moral values and virtues, we have to invoke the relevant folk media

embedded in the language and culture of the people that would help re-invigorate the hitherto cherished core moral values, virtues and cultural ethics of the society. Here, the language teacher has to be involved in advocacy, leading by example and production of relevant and original teaching materials that could help to inculcate the desired value system in the learner; value system which places high premium on human life and despises greed, dishonesty, oppression and exploitation of the weak, might-is-right syndrome, among others. It is to be noted that English language may fail us in this regard because of its foreign nature and alien cultural contents. But the language teacher can achieve something meaningful in this direction if he resorts to effective and appropriate translation of those indigenous folk media as relevant pedagogical materials into English for value re-orientation. It is to be noted, however, that considering the components and contents of folk media as found in songs, music, proverbs, folk dance and memory, folklore and folktales (Onogu 2012) for value re-orientation, it may be better to handle the subject matter under the teaching and learning of literature as we proceed to render in the next section (4.2.).

The Teaching and Learning of Literature for National Security and Crime Prevention

Literature is language in its sophisticated form. Literature, whether handed down by word of mouth or in print, gives us a second handle on reality (Achebe 1975, 1988). Literature helps develop cultural trends by showing various activities in different lights. As Achebe pursues the argument further; literature plays an essential role in any society. It has both social and political importance. Literature provides a necessary critical perspective on everyday experience; educates us on the meaning of our actions and offers us greater control over our social and personal lives. According to Achebe (1988), literature works by:

enabling us to encounter in the safe, manageable dimensions of make-believe the very same threats to integrity that may assail the psyche in real life; and at

the same time providing through the self-discovery which it imparts a veritable weapon for coping with these threats whether they are found within our problematic and incoherent selves or in the world around us (p?).

Inferring from the above excerpt and explications on the role of literature in the society, and as it relates to the place of literature in combating national security challenges through value re-orientation, the following functions of literature as highlighted in Austen-Peters (2013) are worth mentioning:

- i. Literature helps in the preservation and transmission of the socio-cultural values of the society of which it is a product.
- ii. It serves as a tool for moral education, and for sensitization and mobilization of the society.
- iii. It is an instrument for combating corruption and other socio-political ills of the society
- iv. It is an important instrument in the task of socio-cultural regeneration and re-orientation.
- v. Literature also helps to galvanize and rekindle the flame of patriotism and good leadership in the members of the society.

If literature could perform all these functions and many more in the society, it means literature could be used as a potential and veritable instrument for solving all kinds of societal problems including the problems of crime, insecurity and corrupt practices. The challenge to us as literature teachers and creative artists is how best we can utilize our expertise in terms of the contents of our creativity, selection of relevant/appropriate lecture materials and texts, and employment of state-of-the-art teaching methods.

In terms of the contents of our creativity in the production of literary works across genres of literature especially prose, poetry and drama, the lessons from Athenian education (an ancient Greek city-state) becomes instructive. Those of us conversant with the history of education in the classical era would recall as reported that much of the

morals were learnt through poetry as the contents of poems contained a lot of the intended moral lessons. Two great Athenian poets, Solon and Homer stood distinguished in this regard; hence the poetry of Solon and Homer became standard texts in the Athenian schools. I think the sense in history is not just history for the sake of history or the past; it is that we can learn from the past for the purpose of getting it right at present and laying a formidable foundation for the future. As creative artists and writers, if we reflect the intended moral lessons in our creative works (extolling good over evil) and use such works as lecture materials in our literature classes, it would yield positive results in value re-orientation/character moulding in the learner because if one captures the mind, he has captured the entire being. No wonder Abraham Lincoln in a letter to his son's teacher writes: 'Teach him to sell his brawn and brain to the highest bidder but never to put a price tag on his heart and soul.' I enjoin every parent and teacher to read that letter.

In addition to reflecting the necessary folk media relevant for value re-orientation in our creative writings and/or productions, the teacher must be careful to select same as the relevant/appropriate lecture materials and texts for his/her literature classes. He/she must also employ state-of-the-art teaching methods preferably a multi-dimensional approach for effective content delivery and far-reaching desirable effects on the recipients and the society in general. After all, education in its ancient conceptualization was a process of transmitting core values and desirable attitudes to the learner and so the educator is expected to play the roles of a refiner and regulator of human behaviour in the society. This way, the teacher (even the modern one) is seen to be constantly involved in the business of changing human behaviour and transforming the society for the better, particularly considering the respectable and dignified way and manner in which he/she accomplishes the tasks.

Lastly, for the teacher to achieve the feat of using literature to bring about value re-orientation and regeneration of virtues and cultural ethics in the society, he/she may have to evolve a holistic approach

which combines action, research, advocacy and even activism in addition to utilizing his expertise in creative writing, selection of relevant/appropriate lecture materials and texts, and employment of state-of-the-art teaching methods. Part of the action, advocacy and activism is that the teacher should start with himself living worthy of his profession in both character and learning. He should be a readily available model and standard or leading example for all in the society to see and emulate.

The Challenging Issues and the Way Forward

In section 4 above, we have tried to discuss the extent to which the teaching and learning of language and literature in Nigeria could help to prevent crime, fight insecurity and, probably, bring about national security consciousness. However, the proposals and/or suggestions are not free from challenges. In fact, the challenges are numerous. But within the limited space available to us, the following major challenges have been isolated for discussion:

i. Curriculum Issues

Obviously you would agree with me that our school curriculums (all levels of education) in Nigeria are not yet designed in such a way to accommodate the kind of proposals for the teaching and learning of language and literature discussed above. Even with those of us in linguistics, one hardly finds any department of linguistics in Nigeria where forensic linguistics or jurilinguistics is offered as a course, let alone a full blown programme even at the post graduate level. Even at that, we can start from somewhere if we are so determined to bring some positive change into the security situation in Nigeria through our disciplines. After all, Rome was not built in a day, and a journey of many miles usually starts with just one step forward.

In another development, taking a critical look at the school curriculums in Nigeria across levels of our educational institutions from primary to the tertiary, one would notice what could be described as faulty curriculums in terms of design, planning and

implementation. If not, how else can one explain the fact that an educational system produces youths who are unemployable in every sense of the word. The issue is that most of the curriculums are overloaded and they also lack emphasis on the content required for adequately preparing the Nigerian youths for the world of work, for self reliance and for both internal and global cultural awareness and competition. Even though there was an attempt to address this gap during the most recent curriculum review by the NERDC, we need to be more serious and more practical about this so as to save ourselves of certain avoidable embarrassments before the international community (refer to World Bank 2001 report on graduates of Nigerian universities). A comprehensive and careful curriculum review across levels of educational institutions in Nigeria focusing on appropriate design, planning and implementation may help a great deal. We must ensure that the curriculums address the societal needs and aspirations.

ii. Ignorance and High Rate of Illiteracy in Nigeria

Statistics has shown that over 10.5 million Nigerian children of school-going age are not attending school – highest in the world (UNESCO, Education For All (EFA) Global Monitoring Report 2012). Northern Nigeria, for instance, harbours the highest number of school-age children in the world that were out of school (*Punch*, October 16, 2012). With this alarming rate of illiteracy in Nigeria, how many children and adults will benefit from the proposals of combating crime and insecurity through education as could be made possible by pedagogy in language and literature in our educational institutions even at all levels? The government must, first of all, ensure the provision of all forms of education, particularly formal education to all and the opportunities it provides to individuals to realize their full potential. There must be education for all in the proper and practical sense of it in all the regions of the nation.

iii. The Lopsidedness of Language Education and Multiplicity of Languages in Nigeria

Language education in Nigeria still has some issues to contend with. Nigeria is a multilingual nation with over 512 languages (Blench 2011) yet the National Language Policy on Education accords the English language the prestigious status of official language used as medium of instruction, for administrative purposes and as language of wider communication. The implication is that majority of the local languages are not developed and therefore do not empower their speakers to exploit the opportunities provided by the new information technology. In addition, millions of Nigerian children are denied the opportunity to use their mother-tongues as media of instruction/learning, and this amounts to a violation of their right to learn in their language. Unfortunately, English is a legacy of colonialism, to which many Nigerians find it difficult to reconcile themselves. The scenario reported above is one dimension of marginalization which has been identified as one of the root causes of insecurity. Besides, even the English language which has been accorded the official status has consistently recorded a high percentage of failure rate in examinations at all levels of educational system. With this development, effective use of the English language in terms of the rules of the grammar and the social context of usage may be a far-cry or an uphill task for many to achieve in Nigeria. By implication, even the poor performance in other subjects is linked to the language problem since English serves as the medium of instruction through which other subjects are learnt. Besides, even though the use of English helps in several respects, Nigeria as a nation does not have a medium in which to keep its secret(s) with English as the national or official language. This in itself is a major security challenge.

Limited Formal Knowledge and Negative Attitude towards the Indigenous Languages

Most Nigerians as far as we can tell are as illiterate as the wall when it comes to the issue of formal academic study of their respective

indigenous languages. As a matter of fact, they display a glaring case of ignorance and poverty of the knowledge in matters relating to what the study of the languages generally entails. This is in addition to their negative attitude towards the languages. As Omachonu (2007; 2008) argues, it is quite evident that most Nigerians display grossly negative language attitude towards their native languages, worse of all, when it comes to studying the languages as an academic discipline or having anything to do with them in scholarship. This gross negative language attitude of Nigerians towards their respective native languages runs counterproductive to national development. Considering the symbiotic relationship between language and society as well as the place of language in national development, until we accord the right values to our indigenous languages and turn off our grossly negative attitudes towards them, true national development will continue to elude us as a nation. For instance, true development starts with the people, and how can the people be reached or affected without their culture and language? One wonders the kind of development we can achieve as a people in Nigeria without carrying along our cultures and languages. Not until these issues have been properly addressed, the search for cultural re-birth and national development would remain a mere dream. And for us to address these issues, we need to speak the truth to ourselves so that we can adjust appropriately or change for the better; turning our grossly negative language attitude to a positive one through attitudinal change and value re-orientation in this direction (c.f. Omachonu & Wakawa 2010:102).

Concluding Remarks

Yes, pedagogy in language and literature can ensure national security consciousness given the right climate and disposition. But in Nigeria, it appears there are still certain fundamental issues that we may need to address, first of all, before other proposals could fall in line. For instance, as one ponders on the language situation in Nigeria as it relates to security problems in the nation, the issues of the effects of multilingualism (ethnicity) on the corporate existence of Nigeria and

the ancient grudge of the fear of domination still call for a great concern.

Nigeria is known for its extreme linguistic diversity given rise to by the diversity of ethnic groups that were brought together as a nation for administrative convenience following the regrouping of African territories by the colonial powers in the 19th century. This is directly connected to the fact that up till now Nigeria has no national language to serve as its national symbol and unmistakable identity, no comprehensive and well-planned national language policy and as a result, Nigeria lacks viable plan for the development and use of its indigenous languages. The worst of it all is the fear of domination triggered-off by the extreme ethno-linguistic diversity of the nation which has always led to the agitations for federal balancing. The fact that Nigerians (including the elderly statesmen) hardly believe that we are one is worst than any form of insecurity. The fear becomes more genuine when one considers the Nigeria experience so far against the background of the following statements ascribed to famous Nigerian statesmen representing the voice(s) of the people especially the major ethnic groups in Nigeria (see Osuntokun 1998, Ozoigbo n.d, 66-67):

Abubakar Tafawa Balewa: ‘since the amalgamation of the Southern and Northern provinces in 1914, Nigeria has existed as one country only on paper... it is still far from being united. Nigerian unity is only a British intention for the country.’

Obafemi Awolowo: ‘Nigeria is not a nation; it is a mere geographical expression. There are no ‘Nigerians’ in the same sense as there are ‘English’ or ‘Welsh’ or ‘French’; the word Nigeria is merely a distinctive appellation to distinguish those who live within the boundaries of Nigeria from those who do not.’

Chukwuemeka Odimegwu-Ojukwu: ‘Nigeria is an amorphous ‘groups’ of individuals pretending to be a nation. Nigeria has never been a nation.’

The question is that have we really stopped thinking like this? If yes, why the obvious dichotomies: north/south, Christian/Muslim, etc.? At present, the matter has degenerated to the extent that the political class no longer sees even matters of national security with the required same eye-glasses (Odekunle 2012). One would recall that while some northern leaders appear to see the Boko Haram insurgency as ‘understandable’ (a response to the current political-power arrangement or configuration in Nigeria), certain southern political leaders see Boko Haram as only a northern gang-up against the Jonathan Goodluck’s Presidency (see also Odekunle 2012). As we have suggested elsewhere, Nigerians must see themselves as one irrespective of religious and ethno-linguistic affiliations. This is only possible if we follow the part of peaceful co-existence, recognizing, believing and accepting the fact that as a nation, those things that bind us together are far more important than the issues of diversity (Omachonu & Binchi 2012).

If Nigeria would remain a nation that speaks in one voice, preventing crime and ensuring national security consciousness through pedagogy in language and literature is achievable. For language, in particular, what the users would need to do which matters above everything is to avoid unguarded utterances, ambiguity and arbitrariness in their use of language bearing in mind that if we get it wrong in language usage, we are likely to get it all wrong. Hence as it is argued (Confucius as cited in Eyisi 2003: xi):

If the language is not correct, then what is said is not what is meant; if what is said is not what is meant, then what ought be done remains undone; if this remains undone, morals and arts deteriorate; if morals and arts deteriorate; justice goes astray; if justice goes astray, the people will stand about in helpless confusion.

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