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Language Can: Ensuring National Security through Effective Use of Language (Pp. 216-233)

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Abstract

National Security has been a challenging and disturbing issue in Nigeria. Several efforts have been made by national security agencies to provide effective and endearing security mechanisms, yet, the problem of national security has continued to rear up its ugly head. This paper is one of such efforts to show that ineffective language use can threaten national security while effective use can enhance it. Language use in interpersonal relationship is like a double- edged sword. It can be used to destroy as well as be used to mend. The present democratic dispensation in Nigeria has been characterized by several sheds of crisis situation, most of which have been connected to or existed in ineffective, inappropriate language use by political players. This raises the question of “political correctness” which argues about the relationship between words and “meaning”. The thrust of this paper has been to examine how ineffective language use threatens the desired security of the nation. It also exposed how effective language use could enhance the management and resolution of the already threatened situation which affects interpersonal relationship. Thus, the researcher examined and analysed some excerpts from a selected print media which are comments credited to top political players in Nigeria. The analyses have

considered both the semantic and pragmatic imports as they affect the sociopolitical situations in the country.

Key words: Language, Language Can, Security, National Security, and Language Use.

Introduction

National Security has been a persistent problem that seemed to have defied solution in Nigeria since 1999. Different researchers from different persuasions have shown varying interests as they try to proffer solutions to this problem which its continued existence has called for the present exercise. National security is not only threatened by political exclusion, economic marginalization and social discrimination, etc as previous researchers have discovered but also by ineffective, inappropriate language use. Language, to a great extent, makes human existence worthwhile or chaotic. This paper sees it as a major factor in national security because the terms are themselves expressed in English language which is the nation's lingua franca. Most perpetrators of crisis in Nigeria have usually done it through this language communication and some have tried to calm the situation through appropriate use. Suffice it to say that language use in interpersonal relationship is a double-edged sword.

The present democratic dispensation in Nigeria has been characterized by several sheds of crisis situations which seem to have aggravated the existing unresolved conflicts. From the report made by Institute for Peace and Conflict Resolution (IPCR) in October 2002, Njoku in Clark (2009:230) discover that as ethnic/ religious conflict persist, they can acquire multiple faces; they can start with dispute over territories and manifest attitudinal antagonism (as Ife- Modakeke conflicts), from struggle about environment to resources control (Niger Delta), killing of the Igbos in the North whenever there is religious riot, etc.

IPCR had in their report classified conflict under the following five headings to include: Security related manifestation of conflicts; Political manifestation of conflicts; Economic manifestation of conflicts; Social manifestation of conflict and Psycho-cultural dispositions. Njoku in Clark (2009:231) cites the report which states that, "In order to preserve democracy, these root causes now need to be addressed and a wider range of policy responses should be considered. Failure to resolve basic issues relating to resource competition and policies will allow the situation to degenerate into violent conflict".

Although the IPCR effort is appreciated, they fail to discover that ineffective, inappropriate language use is a major cause of conflict or insecurity. These “root causes” in the quotation above can better be addressed through effective use of the Nigeria’s official language.

Most of the hostility, disagreement, rivalry (ethnic, political, etc), and in fact, insecurity experienced among Nigerians have been as a result of ineffective use of language, especially by some political players. So, there is need for political correctness, a situation where users of language should put into consideration the relationship between the words they choose to use in different contexts and their meanings.

It is pertinent at this juncture to define the terms that form the crux of this study in order to clarify them as well as situate this research in its proper context.

Language

One set of belief about what is “natural” consists of ideas about what language is and how it works and about how communication works. McLaughlin (2006:19) sees language as “the system of arbitrary verbal symbols (and non- verbal means) that speakers put in order according to a conventional code to communicate ideas and feelings or to influence the behavior of others”. The means available to us in communicating our ideas and feelings is usually the symbols of a language which we choose to speak, write or gesture. According to Fromkin et al (2003:3), “the possession of language, perhaps more than any other attribute, distinguishes humans from other animals. To understand our humanity, one must understand the nature of language that makes us human”. Thus, language is very important because it enables one to speak and be understood by others who are intelligible in the same language.

Halliday in Webster (2003:404) on his own believes that language is a “meaning Potential: a system-and process of choice, choice which typically goes on below the threshold of attention, but can be attended to and reflected on under certain circumstances- most typically, though not exclusively associated with the evolution of writing”. Language is therefore a compendium of words, phrases, clauses and sentences which a user chooses from and strings together, systematically, to express meanings that are appropriate in a particular context.

Language can

Essentially, the meaning(s) of words we choose to use may be identified in context of situation. Looking at the linguistic context of the term “language can”, we can distinguish between two different meanings in order to disambiguate it. As a verb, ‘language can’ depicts language potentialities, by implication, what it is able to do and how it is used in different ways to achieve what we want. We shall later in this paper discuss what language can do.

On the other hand, ‘language can’ as a noun could be used to mean a kind of ‘container’ from which we extract elements. That container, in this context, is the human brain and mind in which grammar lies and grows. As Cook and Newson (2007: 185) point out, language is part of human inheritance; it is in our genes. However, just like other inherited attitudes, this does not rule out variation between individuals as some may be more linguistic competent or communicative competent than others.

Fromkin et al (2003: 33) in an excerpt from *Hippocratic Treatise on the Sacred Disease* see the brain as “the messenger of the understanding (and the organ whereby) in an especial manner we acquire wisdom and knowledge”. They therefore believe that language is the first cognitive model to be localized in the brain via scientific evidence. Evidently, the brain contains a repertoire of language from which the individual selects to use. Chomsky (1955) in Kottak (2004: 399-400) has argued that the human brain contains a limited set of rules for organizing language, so that all languages have a common structural basis. Therefore, the brain as a container houses language and the carriers of language should select intelligently the appropriate component that denotes their meanings in specific contexts. This relates to language use which shall be given a special attention in this paper too. Meanwhile, let us examine what language can do in relation to man, society and the world.

Language can: a functional perspective

Every normal human being depends, in all his social activities, on the use of language to do things. Finegan (2012:302) opines that people use language principally as a tool to do things: “request a favour, make a promise, report a piece of news, give directions, offer a greeting, seek information, extend an invitation, request help and do hundreds of other ordinary things...”

What we do with language can have positive or negative consequences on us. For instance, it could negatively affect us when it is used to curse, fire an

employee, etc but positively when used to pray, propose marriage, tell the truth, etc.

Considering conversation generally, Wardhaugh (2000: 280) asserts that it involves much more than using language to state propositions or convey facts. According to him, “Through conversation we establish relationships, and so on. The utterances we use in conversation enable us to do these kinds of things because conversation itself has certain properties which are well worth examining”. It is therefore important to understand what utterances do, how they can be used, and specifically, how they can be used in conversation.

Language also performs a social function. Mey (2001:137) considers the social function of language from two points of view. First, he looks at its function from the content with a focus on what the conversation is about, the topic discussed, and how they are brought into the conversation; whether or not these topics are overtly announced or maybe presupposed, or hidden in other ways; what kind of topic lead to other topics and why, etc. Secondly, he considers the function of language in creating an ‘ambience’, a context in which the conversationalists are able to pursue their (overt or hidden) goals.

Sometimes, individuals simply need to establish ties or union by a mere exchange of words. In relation to this, Wardhaugh (2000:281) notes that Malinowski (1923) ascribes a social function he calls “phatic communion” to language which we employ for its affective value as indicator that one person is willing to talk to another and that a channel of communication is either being opened or kept open. So, the essence of this function is that each utterance is an act serving the direct aim of some social sentiment or other.

Essentially, whenever we use language, we perform different kinds of acts. The utterances/words we use are locutions. Most locutions express some intent that a speaker has. This tells why Austin and Searle in Wardhaugh (2000:283) ascribe an illocutionary function to language and see language as “illocutionary and performative acts”. These have a signification that a speaking person is doing more than mere communication; he is also “doing”. In other words the illocutionary and performative functions of language show language as an action, a performance. Most verbs we use carry some illocutionary and performative forces. Such verbs include; pronounce, nullify, baptize, declare, congratulate, etc. This is why the declaration of June 12, 1993 Nigerian election as of null and void remained nullified with its negative consequences.

Another important function of language is that it determines our social-cultural reality. Hence Sapir (1929) and Whorf (1939) in Wardhaugh (2000:216) claim that every language has an effect (negative or positive) on the way in which the people who use it view the world- how they feel, think, see and talk about things. This claim point to the relevance of a language user to have not only the knowledge of his language but also the culture of his society since the 'real world' is to a large extent unconsciously built up on the language habits of the group.

However, there are many other functions of language as we hardly can think of any human activity that will be performed without the facility of language. Thus, we can use language to make statements, ask questions, persuade, dissuade, pray, curse, abuse, praise, perform rituals, recall, threaten, make peace, etc.

The examination of language from functional perspective has enabled the researcher to discover, like Halliday in Webster (2003:312) that;

- (1) Language serves for the expression of 'content' or what may be called the 'ideational function'. This is the major component of meaning in the language system that is basic to more or less all users of language.
- (2) Language serves to establish and maintain social relations known as 'interpersonal function' through which social groups are delimited and individuals identify and interact with others as a way of developing their own personalities.
- (3) Language serves for making links with itself and with features of the situation in which it is used. This is called the 'textual' function which enables language users to construct 'texts' or connected passages of discourse that are situationally relevant (and appropriate) and which are understandable (and acceptable) by the receivers.

Language therefore is very essential because it makes life easier and meaningful. Language can do all these and many others if used appropriately. Without language, human life would have been chaotic.

Language use

Knowing a language is not simply a matter of knowing how to encode a message and transmit it to a second party, who then decodes it in order to

understand what we intended to say. Language use does not simply involve encoding and decoding of messages or just attaining grammatical competence where every sentence would have a fixed interpretation irrespective of its context of use, it also embodies our ability to use language accurately, appropriately and flexibly to be communicative competent.

Communicative competence has been defined by Hymes (1972) in Schmitt (2002:22) as “the capabilities of a person, a competence which is ‘dependent’ upon both (tacit) knowledge and (ability for) use”.

The focus here is more on appropriate use of language, that is, on how language functions in various contexts (pragmatic competence).

Ability to use language appropriately means that we can interpret or produce appropriate messages and feedbacks. This is sociolinguistic competence which enables a user of language know when and where to use language. Using language flexibly implies that the user has strategic competence to organize a message effectively and to compensate, via strategies, for any difficulties in what he intends to express. These abilities in language use are the key elements in communicative success as individuals use it to do what people use language to do (Yule, 1996: 197).

But Johnstone (2008:268) on his part is worried that people do not actually appear to do what they do by “using” a body of “language” or “Knowledge of language” or “linguistic competence” that they already possess. To him, language seems to be created by speakers as they interact, noticing, repeating and sometimes making reflective generalizations about what other people do, in the process of evoking and creating a world.

Language, no doubt, is a vital means human beings use in discourse and individuals learn to use it by speaking in the continual process of being and acting. To maintain continuity as well as achieve peace and success in language use, people should constantly and strategically figure out what to say, how to say things and how to understand what others say in the process of interacting with others.

Thus, the language we use and the way we use it all depend on the context of the situation in which such speech acts are produced and the way we perceive the world. Language use in different speech situations is, however, affected by certain factors as:

- Social class and education (where certain speech patterns are ranked ‘better’, ‘more sophisticated’ or ‘worse, cruder’) used by people we also rank as ‘educated’ or ‘uneducated’;
- Age and gender ,(as younger speakers and older people use language differently) as evidence of changes in the language over time, hence, male and female use different variants (of high – prestige or low – prestige standards);
- Audience is another factor that determines the language a speaker uses to “accommodate” and ensure fidelity in communication, and finally
- Identity which enables people to be identified by their idiosyncrasies or linguistic patterns, (obviously seen in their personal, ethnic, geographical, political and family) identities. This tells why people use particular language pattern when they try to identify with one social group or the other.

However, irrespective of differences in the way people use the same language, the essence of using language is always in their minds which is mainly to achieve communicative effect.

The present problem of national security has been located in the inappropriate choice and use of words by people, especially the top political players, who fail to strategically, figure out what to say or consider what would be the import of what they say. And what do we mean by national security?

Security and national security

Security or National Security gives the import of safety of lives and properties of individuals. Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English (1995: 1282) defines security as “things that are done in order to keep someone or something safe”. Security involves some activities geared towards the protection of a country, building or person against attack, danger, etc.

Any nation that experiences security threat of any sort would always strive to restore peace for development to be achieved. The issue of national security in Nigeria has been a thorn in her flesh since 1999 and has been worsened by

the Boko Haram menace. Odunlami (1999:128) believes that security for any nation is a very important element for any form of development to take place. It is very unfortunate that people strive for development but do not know how to protect it when it is achieved, it becomes a fruitless effort.

In view of this, Nwolise in Odunlami (1999: 128) advises that “as Nigerians think of how to develop the country, accumulate national wealth and live the good life, we must also be thinking of how to protect these from forces that may want to snatch them from us”. Nnoli (2006:i6) sees national security as a cherished value associated with physical and psychological safety of individuals, groups or nation-states, together with a similar safety of their other most cherished values. These definitions give the semantic import of freedom from threat, anxiety and danger.

People have talked about different kinds of security both at personal and national levels as: physical security, food security, human rights security, job security, family security, and others (personal level). At the national level, 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. Hence, citing Mcnamara, Odunlami (1999:129) writes that:

In a modernizing society, security means development. Security is not military force, though it may involve it, security is not traditional military activity, though it encompasses it, security is not military hard-ware, though it may include it. Security is development and without development, there can be no security.

Language, national security and development have intricate relations. Every nation's target is positive development and to attain it, there must be maximum security ensured not just through military force but something more subtle and powerful than that. That thing is effective, appropriate use of language communication (a generally accepted language). In other words, right choice of words that will not create threats, anxiety or danger for human existence.

The national security that has formed the major theme of many conferences recently, needs collaborative efforts of every one not just the duty of the government and security agencies. It is in view of this that Nwolise in Odunlami (1999:129-30) believes that:

... The security of Nigeria is not only the function of the government, armed forces, Police, Intelligence Agencies, the Nigeria Customs Service, the Immigrations, Prison Service, and National Road Safety Corps. The Judiciary, Media Organisations, the workers and farmers, nurses and doctors and general masses are also involved in one way or the other.

Interestingly many factors have been identified as exacting impact on national security. Among those that constitute threats are: bad and weak government, human right violation, unjust and inequitable distribution of national resources (e.g. in political posts, industries, investments, funds, etc), disunited and unintegrated ethnic groups, ethnic and religious antagonisms, and cleavages, weak and poor economy marked by corruption, weak currency, etc, socio-economic hardship, unemployment, hunger, etc, weak military might, weak media, communal clashes, unhealthy competition among the ethnic groups for national resources, political domination, abuse and misuse of power by some defense and security agents etc (Odunlami, 1999:131).

Although the above factors can threaten national security, Odunlami seems to undermine language use which is an element central to all that he has mentioned above as none of these forces could be achieved without inappropriate use of language. On the other hand, Odunlami identifies some factors that enhance national security as: good and strong governance, respect for human rights, just and equitable distribution of national security and other positive factors that can be drawn from the negative factors mentioned above. This paper adds that effective and appropriate uses of language communication enhance national security. This is why it is a great worry here about the ignorant way some political players use words of the English language in an unguarded manner.

Ugwu in Clark (2009:520) attributes ignorance, unguarded utterances and rumours to factors that can lead to conflict or crisis. The effects of such attitudes on national security have prompted President Goodluck Jonathan to caution those playing politics with national security at the occasion of Senate Retreat in Uyo, Akwa Ibom state on 25 June, 2012 with the theme “The National Assembly and National Security: Securing the Future for Development”, the President in his speech, as quoted by Folasade-Koyi and

Effiong, fingers politicians who make inflammatory statements as chief culprits. Citing his words, they write:

As food security is necessary, we want national security. We are committed to physical responsibility and consolidation. We have several challenges including terrorism which undermine our national security... Bitter and inflammatory statements emanating from some politicians have in recent times in the history consumed thousands of human lives in the country (Folasade-Koyi and Effiong, 2012, p. 5).

This is actually what has given this research its impetus as efforts would be made at examining the “political correctness” of some selected inciting utterances (words used), their meanings and their possible effect on the receivers.

Illustrations/ analyses of extracts

Here, few illustrations of extracts from selected volumes of *The Daily Sun* newspaper of ‘unguarded’ and ‘inflammatory’ statements (ineffective language use) by some top political players in Nigeria are given as well as their semantic and pragmatic analyses to lend credence to the thrust of this paper- showing how ineffective language use can threaten national security.

Expressions are usually intended for certain meanings and such meanings manifest in different linguistic forms to depict the intention of the speaker. Meaning is embedded in language. The branch of language that studies the meaning of words is semantics. Umera-Okeke (2008:2) defines semantics as “the scientific study of words and sentences”. Closely related to semantics is pragmatics which Cook (2003:51) defines as “the discipline which studies the knowledge and procedures which enable people to understand each other’s words. Its main concern is not the literal meaning but what speakers intend to do with their words and what it is which make their intension clear”.

The literal (semantic) meaning of words may lead to contextual (pragmatic) meaning as people tend to interpret meanings of words further by examining some extra-linguistic features like context/situation, tenor, mode, locution, illocution, perlocution and felicity condition.

Illustration 1

“God willing, by 2015, something will happen. They either conduct a free and fair election or they go a very disgraceful way. If what happened in 2011 should again happen in 2015, by the grace of God, the dog and the baboon will all be soaked in blood.”

The above statement was made by General Muhammadu Buhari and captured by Amanze Obi in the Daily Sun, Tuesday, May 17, 2012, P. 56.

Analysis

The semantic import of “SOMETHING will happen” raises the perturbing question – what is that ‘something’? It could, be anything, hence, its componential items include: +Pronoun +Indefinite (leaving it open – ended). His reference to “free and fair” election which he felt was not achieved in 2011 semantically mean: +adjective +not controlled (free); +adjective +acceptable +appropriate (fair). And then, the choice of the words: ‘dog’, ‘baboon’ and ‘blood’. Semantically, dog = + noun + animal + four legs; baboon = + noun + animal + four legs; blood = + noun + red liquid.

When extra – linguistic meanings are incorporated into the literal interpretation, Buhari’s latest utterance is highly inflammatory, inciting and intimidating. Such war –mongeing is scaring. He is not only alleging that 2011 election was not free and fair but also threatening the already existing national security and making people to expect the worst in 2015.

However, at the locutionary level, it may not be surprising if some people, particularly the authorities, take Buhari’s statement as ordinary and care less to make much out of it. Despite this, this paper is perturbed by the effect this utterance is already having on Nigerians at the illocutionary level and its perlocutionary imports as most people take it serious and are scared. It might be suspected that he is warning President Goodluck Jonathan whom he feels might use his power of incumbency to manipulate the 2015 election, and many other interpretations. The picture created with this is that of insecurity when politicians will be engaged in a bloody war for presidential sit. This is so because the felicity condition of the speaker, that is, as a top politician from the North (his constituency) as a sacred cow, seems to give him right and freedom of speech.

The field of the utterance, however, is politics (do or die politics); its mode was oral means but whether serious or casual, it has been converted to written mode, published formally in a Newspaper for wider audience and more serious interpretations. The tenor of discourse for his utterance is a public gathering of mixed audience, this is what the speaker fails to consider, that when such unguarded utterance is made, some miscreants in such gathering take advantage of that to perpetrate evil in an attempt to put into action that which their political leaders carelessly spoke. The case would have been different if he had made the statement in the National Executive Council where high caliber of people will form the audience.

Our political leaders have failed to understand that language is a ‘container’ from which users draw their choice based on contextual variables.

Illustration 2

“Rogues, Armed Robbers are in the States and National Assemblies, what sort of laws will they make?”

The above statement is credited to former Nigerian President, Olusegun Obasanjo quoted in Taiwo Amodu’s interview with former Deputy Senate President, Senator Ibrahim Mantu.

Analysis

Everyone has his own opinion about people and their activities. Some are satisfactory while some are unsatisfactory. This statement forms Obasanjo’s judgment about the Nigerian Assembly members. The unfolding events in recent time may tend to justify this judgment, making a ‘cheap hero’ out of ex-president Olusegun Obasanjo who called the law makers ‘thieves and rogues’ and seem to create the picture of “legislators” rather than “legislators”.

However, the interest in this study is on the choice of words and the fallacy of generalization in it. First, the major import of Obasanjo’s statement is the suspect nature of the National Assembly members vis – a- vis their ability to perform their duty of making laws genuinely and diligently. Significantly, the choice of words “rogues and armed robbers” sounds too hard and strong or even too crude for the description.

Their semantic components may broaden the description beyond the features of the objects of description. “Rogue” has the semantic features: +noun +dishonest + immoral etc. Also, “armed robbers” has the semantic features

as: +adjective +weapon+ dangerous. Such analyses, therefore, bring us to doubt the appropriateness of the lexical choice whether used metaphorically or used to mean real rogues.

Again, the non – specific nature of the statement in terms of the object of reference is a form of fallacy. Is it that some members belong to this class or all of them belong to the class? The fallacy is, however, intentional so that any reaction from any member of the assembly will likely receive the questions, “Did I mention your name? “Are you a rogue or armed robber? No doubt, the lexical choice and the intentional fallacy are products of emotional out - burst.

Incidentally, what the speaker does not know is the perlocutionary effect of the speech on common Nigerians. We should recall that in this context, the speaker is an ex –president. Therefore, speech act theory assigns a favourable felicity condition to him in the speech. He occupies a very high position such that his statement cannot be easily swept under the carpet. It attracts locutionary and illocutionary forces greater than personal judgment. And if such statement is taken instantly as fact by not so critical mind, it is likely to cause tension and crisis.

It is believed here that with these few illustrations and their analyses, the claim of this paper that ineffective and inappropriate choices of words and language use in general threaten national security more than any other factor is justified.

Illustration 3

Amanze Obi on Thursday, May 17, 2012 made reference to former Head of State Muhammadu Buhari’s threat during his electoral campaign in 2011 as he reports:

After the 2011 presidential elections in which he was pronounced a loser, he ignited an orgy of bloodletting through his inflammatory utterances. ... Then came the Boko Haram insurgency that has largely been traced to his threat that ‘Nigeria would become ungovernable’ if he was not elected as president in 2011.

Analysis

The above report is also credited to former Nigerian Head of State, General Muhammadu Buhari whose threat about ‘*ungovernability*’ has been traced to

Boko Haram menace by many Nigerians. Buhari's choice of the word 'ungovernable' is the interest and worry of this paper and it calls for a critical analysis.

Semantically the word 'ungovernable' means: + adjective + negativity+ impossibility+ ungovernability. Hence its semantic import on any hearer would be an action intended to make a nation impossible to govern or control. The threat is also conditional- "if he was not elected the president..." and eventually, he was not elected!

But situation may take these meanings beyond their literal level to incorporate extra- linguistic factors. Such interpretation is better examined pragmatically where some pragmatic principles are employed. One of such principles is Speech Act theory which according to Bickhard and Campbell in Mey (2001:104) "focuses on the 'action' inherent in an utterance which is still an action (a message transmission, not an interaction) based on an encoded (abstract) proposition".

This brings up issues like locution, illocution and perlocution and the issue of 'felicity condition'. Hence, General Buhari's threat at the locutionary level may be over looked or taken as ordinary utterance made by a politician but at illocutionary level, it raises the question of the effect of his utterance on the hearer while we still consider how the receiver (public) takes the statement at perlocutionary level. We also consider who said what and whether he has the right to say that from the angle of felicity condition, such that his position/rank in the society, his personality, constituency, locus standi, etc are all considered. Of course, if a road-side mechanic had made such utterance as Buhari's, he would not be taken serious but because of the political position being occupied by Buhari as as well his personality, his statement is taken very seriously such that people are drawing a very strong connection between his utterance and Boko Haram menace – a situation which has been a serious threat on the nation's security and development.

This pragmatic analysis can better still be examined from the aspects of field, mode, and tenor of discourse. In this sense, the field for Buhari's utterance is politics, a brand of politics the former president, Obasanjo called 'a do or die affair' and which has stuck till date. The mode of discourse is written medium as it passes the stage of casual oral statement to a serious written one published in Newspaper. In language and communication, when something is written, especially for public consumption, it is taken more seriously that it can be given formal reference.

The tenor of discourse in this context raises the question, who is the speaker and to whom has he spoken? Of course, Buhari is the speaker, a 'big gun' in Nigerian politics. This is clear in Obi Amanze's description of him as he writes, "He cuts the image of a sacred cow who cannot be held accountable for any action of his..." His audience becomes whoever that reads the published article and interprets the statement in different ways as he tries to figure out the speaker's intention.

Conclusion

National security is a cherished value to many Nigerians. Yet, many do not care any longer about new development but go about igniting fire to consume the existing development. This they do through their ineffective use of language. It is important that our political players, and indeed Nigerians in general, should try to maintain continuity as well as achieve peace and success in language use by constantly, and strategically figuring out what to say, how to say things and how to understand what others say in the process of interacting with others.

The problem of national security is not that of the government alone but what every Nigerian should collaborate to ensure through effective and appropriate use of words of the accepted language communication. A thought should therefore be given to what one wants to say, his receiver, the effect of his utterance on the receiver, the possible interpretations that might be given as his intended meanings. These are necessary because the insecurity in Nigeria has taken a shape that needed, more than any other thing, effective and appropriate use of language as a more comprehensive measure to address it.

Recommendations

For any meaningful democracy to exist there must be peace to be enjoyed by every citizen. Nigeria needs peace and concentration for its continued existence, development and security. It is in view of this that this paper recommends the following in order to enhance national security:

- Nigerians, especially the political players, should avoid making inflammatory and unguarded utterances that threaten national security.
- People should strengthen their feedback mechanism and improve on their communicative competence.

- Federal Government should show more commitment to the issue of national security by bringing to book anybody reported to be using inciting statements and not to be treated as “a sacred cow”.
- We should all engage in persistent prayers for peace to return to our country.
- Finally, we should imbibe the spirit of sportsmanship where politics would be seen as a game rather than “a do or die affair”.

It is the belief here that if these are effectively implemented, the far-fetched solutions to national security would have been reached.

Suggestion

This paper therefore suggests that further studies should be done on national security by exploring how indigenous languages like Igbo, Hausa, Yoruba, etc. could enhance National Security

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