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Articles

Exploring a Language-Based Solution to the Problem of Insecurity in Boko Haram Dominated North Eastern Nigeria

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Abstract
For a couple of years, linguists in Nigeria have proposed language-based solution(s) for social integration and national development in Nigeria. However, to the best of our knowledge, none has suggested such for peace and security, especially in the turbulent and crises-ridden North-Eastern Nigeria, where Boko Haram insurgency has been the order of the day for some time now. This paper therefore explores the possibility of harnessing our linguistic resources through aggressive language planning to tackle this problem, with a view to attaining peace and security in Nigeria. The socio-linguistic theory of language planning which sees language as a national resource that can be used in improving social life, forms the theoretical framework for this paper. Data were collected from existing literature and interactions with students and lecturers from different geo-political zones in Nigeria. Knowing fully well that ethnicity-induced problem is invariably tied to the language question, a number of proposals are prescribed along this dimension. Some of them are an aggressive language planning, backed up by strong political will; the use of mother tongue as medium of education; the recognition of regional lingua francas and languages of Local Government Areas as official languages of government business; provision of compulsory pass in a second Nigerian language at WASCE; a deliberate policy of reward for scientific and technological research in local languages and the implementation of an obligatory language learning component as part of the mandate of the NYSC scheme. Rather than seeing our multilingual complexity as a curse from the tower of Babel, our languages should be seen as natural resources with which Nigeria is blessed for peace, security and national development.
Keywords: Boko Haram, North Eastern Nigeria, Language-based Solution, Peace and Security

Preamble
When you speak to a man in a language he understands, you reach his head, whereas when you speak to him in his own language, you touch his heart. – Nelson Mandela

1. Introduction
In recent times, scholars have focused on the issue of harnessing our linguistic resources as a nation for National Development. See Elugbe (1992), Omamor (2003), Adeniran (2005), Owolabi (2006), Owolabi (2010), Oyebade (2013), Oyetade (2015) and Odewumi (2015) among others. This is very commendable, since every nation strives for development. However, security is a very significant aspect of development, there can be no reasonable development if the security of a nation is in jeopardy. Developed nations are rated on the basis of security. Any development attained in the midst of insecurity would be destroyed. This is exactly what has been happening in Nigeria for some time, especially in the North East. The crisis of Boko Haram in the North East is a case in point. Previous scholars seemed to have neglected the issue of harnessing our linguistic resources for peace and security in Nigeria. The major focus of this work therefore is on the possibility of proffering a language-based solution to the issue of peace and security in the North-Eastern part of Nigeria.

1.1 The Problem
Boko Haram was founded in 2002 by Mohammed Yusuf in Maiduguri, the capital of north-eastern state of Borno. The group started out with the basic ideology of bridging the gap between the rich and the poor, the government and the governed, so it was generally welcomed among the teeming jobless youths. By denouncing the police and state corruption, the leader drew a large followership among the unemployed. The group conducted its operations more or less in a peaceful way within the first seven years of its existence, withdrawing itself from the society to remote north-eastern areas. However, things changed in late 2009 when Yusuf, the leader of the group was arrested and shortly after, died in police custody. The radical deputy of Yusuf, Abubakar Shekau took over the leadership of the group and launched a violent campaign against the police and the state.

Shortly after that there was a police attack on the group during a funeral procession. According to a reliable source, police officers met members of the group and ordered them to surrender by instructing them to 'Hands up' in English. Majority of the group who did not understand the instruction because of their illiteracy did not obey the instruction and were shot by the officers. This was the beginning of a series of attacks on the police first, later on government officials and innocent citizens which has led to the death of millions of people in the North-East and destruction of government infrastructures worth billions of Naira.

Obviously, this ugly scenario would have been avoided if the police officers involved could communicate

in the languages understood by the Boko Haram members. Information has it that three main languages are used by the Boko Haram in their meetings, these are Arabic, Kanuri and Hausa. First, the police officers mobilised to the place could not speak any of these languages because they were not from the north. Secondly, they were very brutal in their approach. If they had been more humane, the violence that erupted could have been avoided. This is why our recommendations here will not be restricted to the issue of language.

1.2 Methodology

Data for this study were collected from existing literature and interactions with students and lecturers from different geo-political zones, especially, the North-East. Our interactions with two professors from the University of Maiduguri (Professor RotimiBadejo of Linguistics and Languages Department and Professor Waziri Ibrahim of History Department) yielded bountiful information on the situation of things in the zone. Our LIN 271's (The Linguistic Situation in Nigeria) students were not left out. They were divided into six groups. Each group was commissioned to give a detailed discussion on the linguistic situation in each zone in Nigeria. Of course they did this willingly, with the hope of scoring high in their continuous assessment which constituted 30% of the examination for the session. The presentation took four hours of robust discussion. We also got information from ALJAZEERA's documentaries on Boko Haram, in which interviews were conducted with stakeholders from the North-East, especially, governors, politicians, emirs, elders and numerous others. In fact, some ex-members of the group who had left as a result of violence were interviewed. All these were reflected in this work.

1.3 Justification for the Study

Peace and security are germane to development in every country of the world. When there is no peace, development will not take place. Life and living will be meaningless. This exactly is what has been happening in the North-Eastern zone of Nigeria. Bedevilled by Boko Haram insurgencies, many lives have been lost, properties running into billions of naira have been destroyed. Education has been at a standstill. Business activities are moribund. Religious activities have been stalemated, since both churches and mosques are attacked regularly. Governance in the zone has become a hide and seek game, since political meetings are disrupted with heavy casualties. The security agencies, especially, the police and the army are targets of attacks; so they prefer to disguise their identity by going mufti and hiding their weapons. In the light of this, there is need to explore every possibility to stop the madness. Proffering a language-based solution is one of the possibilities available, and this exactly is what this paper intends to do. Its presentation in this forum (an international conference) and eventual publication is designed to create awareness of stakeholders, lecturers, students, politicians and policy makers on the efficacy of language planning and policy in such a time like this. The case of India, engulfed in violence and inter-tribal clashes, shortly after independence is a case in point. Effective language planning and policy in India has been one of the means (among others) through which relative peace and stability has been achieved.

Some are likely to raise the question of timeliness of this work. For instance, some would make us to believe that the present government, through aggressive defence system has almost wiped out Boko Haram. How true is this assertion? We still hear about sporadic attacks through different means. Those who were interviewed are of the opinion that even if Boko Haram is wiped out now, the effect would be tentative and transient, because the ideology behind it will continue to reverberate, so there is the need to nip it in the bud once and for all.

2. Theoretical Framework

Odewumi (2015), among others opines that language policy and planning is a comparatively new field and no over-arching theory could be said to have been formulated in it as in other areas of linguistic studies, such as phonology, syntax, semantics, pragmatics, etc. According to him, no consensus has emerged about the scope and nature of the field, its theory or its terminologies. To this we agree in part. However, since the late 1960s, to be precise in 1968, Taulicited in Adeniran (2005) has been acknowledged as one of the advocates of an instrumental approach to language policy. The major problem with the instrumental theory is the fact that it contradicts one of the major attributes of language, which states that all languages are equal and that no language is superior to others. Even though we know like George Orwell's 'Comrade Napoleon' that "all animals are equal, but some are more equal than the others". That is, some languages, by virtue of their development, standardisation and elaboration of functions are perceived to be superior to others that lack these qualities. The fact still remains that any language could be developed to any extent to perform any function that could be allocated to it. That being the case, no language should be relegated to the background to the advantage of others, that would be tantamount to linguistic imperialism (Ansreh, 1976).

In reaction to the instrumentalist's view, Rubinand Jernudd(1973) came up with the sociolinguistic theory, which sees language, (every language for that matter), as a resource that can be used to proffer solution to a social problem. To these scholars, we align to assert that our linguistic plurality and multiplicity are actually

resources (just like mineral resources), that could be harnessed to proffer solution to the conflicts and security problems rampant in Nigeria. Let us briefly examine the two theories and then make our choice.

2.1 The Instrumental Theory

Tauli(1968) cited in Adeniran (2005),is probably the best known advocate of the instrumental theory. This approach sees language fundamentally as a tool. Just as work is easier for mechanics if mechanical tools are standardised, communication would be easier if languages were standardised. The only criteria to be used in the standardisation of mechanical tools are concerned with making them more suitable to the task they are used for. The same principle applies to language standardisation. Some languages are better than others in their balance of beauty, clarity, elasticity and economy and these ought to be chosen over less adequate languages where possible. When this is not possible, language planning should be used to improve the quality of the inadequate languages. Here, language is seen as a tool or an instrument which can be evaluated, changed, regulated and improved, even new languages can be created. The instrumental approach characteristically considers some languages inherently better than others and places little confidence in conscious efforts to make inadequate languages better. The symbolic value of language and the concept of language attitude are not taken into consideration.

As observed above, this theory's basic weakness is the idea of assuming that some languages are better than others. One of the basic attributes of human language is that all languages are equal and every language can be sufficiently developed to express any idea. The idea of deliberately promoting some languages at the expense of others is tantamount to 'linguistic imperialism'. So, this theory is not suitable for this work.

2.2 The Socio-linguistic Theory

'Sociolinguistic' is hyphenated to imply that this approach begins with the recognition of a social problem that is connected with language. Scholars of this school of thought do not attempt to improve the aesthetic and functional qualities of languages as instrumental tools. Rather, they see language as a resource that can be used in improving social life. This approach to language planning attempts to determine which of the available linguistic alternatives is most likely to improve a problematic situation, then orderly steps are to be taken that will make the best alternative succeed. Scholars of this view are very sceptical about the instrumentalist idea that it is possible to determine what is most efficient in language in the absolute sense and plan for that (Rubin, 1968; Rubin and Jernudd, 1973).

Jernudd (1973: 14) cited in Adeniran (2005:7) asserts as follows:

If a community lacks a common language it matters [little] if the first effort in bridging that gap is linguistically beautiful (in any absolute sense) or not.

The best solution is the one that works in alleviating the social problem. Scholars who work in this frame of reference also take the idea of 'planning' seriously. In dealing with societal problem connected with language, as in dealing with social problem in general, the facts are to be marshalled, alternatives identified, evaluations of the alternatives made, steps in the implementation of the plan carefully designed and executed, and judgements made about how successful the plan was (Rubin, 1971/1973; Jernudd, 1973). This degree of care in the planning process is sometimes referred to as an ideal that is seldom realised in actual practice. In summary, two principles underlie the socio-linguistic theory of language planning. These are:

a.   All known languages are symbolic of equal native value.
b.   Language planning should not only deal with the technical aspects of language, but also with its social aspects. The first principle holds that though some languages lack the vocabulary necessary for talking about certain aspects of modern life in industrialised societies, that does not make them primitive. Also, vocabularies turn out to be easily expandable. From the second principle, the social nature of language is stressed. Languages are produced by people in their daily social interactions. They have different social values. Peoples' identities are strongly linked to the languages they speak. Therefore, languages cannot strongly be considered as tools like a hammer or saw. Language planning must be regarded as a form of social planning, in which an account of the social status of a language, its use in varying social contexts, its relation to the identity of various groups of speakers, etc. must play a primary role. This view does not deny the feasibility of planned language development, but it claims that the possibilities are limited and are subject to social conditions. In this study, we align ourselves with the scholars who share these perspectives. We believe this theory is more suitable than the first.

3. Findings on the Linguistic Situation in Nigeria

The fact that Nigeria is a multilingual nation has almost been over-flogged by researchers. Some of these researchers are Egbokhare (2004), Adeniran (2005), Igboanusi (2005), Bamgbose (2006b), Fadọrọ (2010, 2013), Oyetade (2015), Odewumi (2015), Oluwadọrọ and Abiola (2016), among others. According to Oyetade (1992), the language situation refers to the total configuration of language use in a community or polity and it involves:

The identification of the languages and their varieties; their distribution in terms of use and users; the attitude of the community towards the different languages used; the contact and conflict existing between the different categories of languages being used for different purposes and government policy on how the various languages should be used in different domains.

According to Odewumi (2015), the Nigerian linguistic landscape is nothing short of what can be tagged complex. The country comprises millions of people of diverse linguistic groups. Scholars disagree in terms of the exact number of languages spoken. This ranges between 374 and 500. For example, Otite, 1990 andEmenanjo, 2003 gave (374);Bamgbose, 1992 (400);Hansford, Bendor-Samuel and Standford, 1976 (394); Gital, 1998 (400-500). The Ethnologue (2005) (one of the current references on Nigerian languages, (an authoritative one for that matter) gives 515 languages for Nigeria. Among these 505 are still living, 8 are extinct, while 2 are second languages. What is clear from the above is that Nigeria is extremely linguistically fragmented.

Several attempts have been made to classify Nigerian languages (Adekunle, 1976; Agheyisi, 1989; Sofunke, 1990). The classifications done by these scholars have been reviewed by Ayodele (2004). Ayodele (2004) relied heavily on Emenanjo (2000). In this classification, Nigerian languages are in three categories. These are: (a) the major languages, otherwise known as the developed languages (b) the medium languages, otherwise known as developing languages and (c) the minor languages, otherwise known as underdeveloped languages. The major languages are three: Hausa, Yoruba and Igbo. Each of them is spoken by millions, at least over 20 million. They are referred to by some scholars as decamillionaire. They are well developed in terms of extensive orthographies and literature. In fact, two of them; Hausa and Yoruba are actually cross boarder languages. Scholars have asserted that these three languages account for between 60% and 70% of all Nigerians. A person who can speak the three languages, therefore, has about 65% chance of being able to communicate with people anywhere in Nigeria. Any communication in the three languages will also reach about the same number of people in the population (Odewumi, 2015).

The medium languages are used by figures ranging between one and three million. Scholars refer to them as developing languages because for each of them, there are some literatures. Their orthographies have been developed and they are relatively stable. It is possible to use them for classroom teaching. Some of them have had curricula developed in them for school purposes by Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council, henceforth NERDC. Languages in this group are claimed to be as many as 60 and they are said to account for 10% of all speakers in Nigeria. Each of these languages is used on the regional radio and television programmes, (though restricted to the states in which they are used). Banjo (1975) attributed their prominence to state creation since after 1966. Notable among them are Edo, Urhobo, Ishekiri, Isoko, Igala, Tiv, Nupe, Efik, Ibibio, Fulfulde, Izon, Kanuri, Idoma, Gwari, Bachamba, Kilba, Annang, Clori, Shuwa-Arabic, Atam, Esan, Esako, Ebira, Angas, Berom, Nwaghawul, Tarok, Ankwai and Jukun. According to Odewumi (2015) they are the major champions of the linguistic conflicts of the challenges being posed to the domineering status of the major languages.

The minor languages are mostly small languages referred to by scholars as undeveloped or underdeveloped languages. Most of them have not been reduced to writing and so there is little or no literature in them. Each is said to be used as a mother tongue by anything between eighty to ten thousand (80-10,000) speakers. For example, Dulbu; a language in the Jungur area of Bauchi State has only 80 speakers (Emenanjo, 2000; Osaji, 1979). Basa, spoken in Kotangora, has only 10 speakers, according to Hansford et al. (1976). Some of the languages in this category are referred to as 'thousandnaire languages'. They are benefitting from the efforts of Language Development Centre, henceforth (LDC), under the Ministry of Education and NERDC, Abuja and the National Institute for Nigerian Languages, henceforth (NINLAN), Aba, which is an institute under the University of Nigeria, Nsukka. These bodies have helped to develop and publish standard orthographies for some languages in this category.

Some of them already have Bible translations in them. But we are not sure if any of them has been sufficiently developed to be used as medium of instruction in schools. It is easy to predict that many of the languages here would fizzle out within a short time, first because they are seriously endangered by languages of wider communication, either of the first or second category. They are not being effectively transmitted to the younger generations, so most of them are spoken by adults who are bilingual or even trilingual in the major or medium languages.

Nigeria's polarised linguistic landscape is also facing a lot of pressure from English, a heritage of colonisation. Since independence, the English language has occupied a very significant position in the linguistic terrain of Nigeria. It is the official language of the country, the language of education, commerce, the media and the judiciary. It plays the role of a lingua franca (though in a restricted way), in that, it makes communication possible among the over 450 ethnic groups, with over 500 distinct languages. It is the medium of instruction from the primary to the university level. Scholars opine that English is indispensable to one's upward mobility in the country and that is why it is said: "If you want to get ahead in Nigeria, get an-English head". Although

Nigerian languages are used for vital purposes of interpersonal communication, some of them are only used to complement English (especially in the spoken form) for official roles.

3.1 Findings on the Linguistic Situation in the North East

For administrative/political convenience, Nigeria was divided into six geo-political zones during the tenure of former President Ibrahim Babangida(1985-1993). These six geo-political zones are: North East, North West, North Central, South East, South West and South-South. Only three of the six zones could be said to have virtual zonal lingua francas. These are the South East (Igbo), South West (Yoruba) and North West (Hausa). In spite of the presence of other languages in these zones, Igbo, Yoruba and Hausa respectively, are lingua francas with dominant status. On the other hand, the North East, North Central and South-South are linguistically polarised. In fact, the North Central alone, which is said to constitute just about 12% of the entire population, houses three of Africa's four language phyla. These are: Niger-Congo, Afro-Asiatic and Nilo-Saharan. Of these, the Niger-Congo has 56%, Afro-Asiatic has 29%, Nilo-Saharan has 1%. Only 2% of the languages are unclassified. The North Eastern zone has six states, namely; Adamawa, Bauchi, Gombe, Borno, Taraba and Yobe. Adamawa with a population of roughly 3.2 million has 58 languagesmost of which are extremely small and seriously endangered. Only seven of these languages –Bacama/Basa, Bwa-Pabir, Fulfulde, Huba (Kilba), Longuda, Mumuye and Samba-Data, have a somewhat dominant status.

Bauchi, with a population of 4.6 million, has 60languages. Only three of these languages have a dominant status – Hausa, Fulfulde and Bole. The remaining 57 languages are very small and seriously endangered, due to the intimidating influence of Hausa and Fulfulde. Shuwa Arabic and Marghi also enjoy some dominant status in the state. Gombe, with a population of 2.3 million, has 21 languages. Of these, only four are dominant, these are Fulfulde, Hausa, Tangale and Waje. Taraba, with a population of 2.3 million, has 73 languages. Some of these languages are extinct, for instance, Kpati is extinct, while Bate and Fali are dying. Many others are seriously endangered. Hausa and Fulani are dominant. Yobe, with a population of 2.3 million, has about 9 languages out of which four – Fulfulde, Kanuri, Hausa and ShuwaArabic are dominant. The remaining languages, Kare-Kare, Bolewa, Ngizim, Bale and Ngero are facing different levels of endangerment as a result of the dominant status of the four listed above.BornoState, with a population of 2.6 million has about 28 languages, most of which are Chadic. Hausa, Kanuri, ShuwaArabic and Marghi are dominant languages in the state.

From the analysis given above, it is obvious that the North East is linguistically complex. It houses about 240 languages (considering the fact that about 9 of these languages are spoken across the six states. It contributes immensely to the multilingual status of Nigeria as a country. However, through serious languageplanning and policy backed up with strong political will, the language situation in the zone could be handled effectively and this is what this paper seeks to propose.

4. Recommendations

Careful Language Planning and Policies

As expressed earlier in this write-up, language actuallycontributed to the first eruption of violence between the security personnels and the Boko Haram members. The latter were 'rounded up' in the midst of a funeral procession. In fact, according to our source, they were not armed. The police officers ordered them to surrender by saying: "Hands up", that is, 'raise your hands up in total surrender'. Among the Boko Haram, the English language is almost forbidden, to the level of blasphemy, 'Boko Haram' itself means; 'Western education is nonsense'. The English language is associated with western education, so it is not approved. They prefer Arabic, which is associated with Islam. Their agitations are based on creating an Islamic state, where they believe all will be equal and there will be no discrimination. The possibility then is that if Arabic had been used by the police officers to instruct the group rather than English, the violence could have been avoided. It is a well-known fact that, the Shuwa Arabs in the North East are descendants of immigrant Arabs. So Arabic is one of the dominant languages in theNorth East, especially in Borno. Most of the other languages spoken there are 'Chadic languages', just like Arabic. Apart from Arabic, Kanuri,Hausa and Fulfulde are also dominant in the North East. It is ourbelief that if either Arabic, Kanuri or Hausa had been used by the invading police officers instead of English, things would have been different.

Sequel to the above, we propose among others, that Arabic, Kanuri, Fulfulde and Hausa should be deliberately promoted by the governments in the North East and allocated functions in administration and education, among others. The question to which we now turn our attention is: 'how can thesebe incorporated into the existing policy?' This is very simple, because the existing language policy is flexible. Let us take a look at the policy statements. The first aspect says:

The medium of instruction will be principally the – mother tongue and the language of the immediate community, and to this end, (the government) will develop the orthography of many more Nigerian languages. Section 2, paragraph 11 of the language policy)

Arabic, Kanuri and Hausa fit perfectly into this aspect of the policy. First, Arabic and Kanuri are mother tongues for many of the citizens there, then Hausa, due to its influence throughout northern Nigeria, qualifies to

be the language of the immediate community. This makes the three languages to be relevant in the first aspect of the policy. Apart from these three languages, the different languages of the local government areas would also qualify. In a state like Borno, for instance, there are 27 local governments and there are 28 languages. It is clear that each local government has a dominant language. Let these languages be factored into the mother tongue or the language of the immediate community as prescribed above.

The second aspect of the existing policy is found in section three, paragraph 15:

The medium of instruction in the primary school is initially (primary 1-3) the mother tongue or the language of the immediate community and at a later stage (i.e. Primary 4-6) English.

This aspect incorporates English, because, right from the elementary stage of kindergarten, crèche and nursery, up to primary three, English must have been diligently taught as a subject. By the time a child gets to primary 4, it is assumed that he must have had sufficient exposure to the English language. Introducing English in primary four as the medium of instruction should therefore not pose any problem at this stage.

Let us now look at the final part of the policy whichapplies to the secondary school level. The document states as follows:

In addition, to appreciate the importance of language in the educational process and as a means of preserving the people's culture, the government considers it to be in the interest of national unitythat each child should be encouragedto learn one of the major languages other thanhismothertongue. In thisconnection, the government considers the threemajorlanguages in Nigeria to be Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba.

In this aspect of thepolicy, Hausa language features again prominently, so it should be deliberately promoted in the zone. As shown from our discussion earlier on, it already enjoys a dominant status in the North generally. To fulfil the prescription in detail, then either of Yoruba or Igboshould also be promoted, especially for those who already speak Hausa as their first language.

Effective Implementation of the Policy

From our discussion above, it is very obvious that Nigeria as a country has been 'somehow' involved in language planning from the 1970s when the policy first came out and eventually it featured prominently in the 1979 constitution. Why then, do we have the present problem?Language planning has two aspects. Let us show this on a tree diagram below:

Language Planning

Status Planning   Corpus Planning
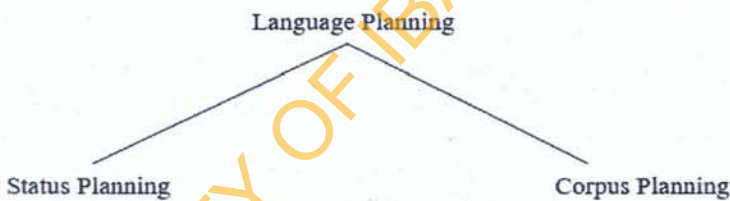
Status planning refers to the allocation of specific roles and functions to each language that is used in the society. Scholars would refer to it as language determination or policy approach. The second aspect of language planning is corpus planning, otherwise referred to as 'language development' or cultivation approach. In other words, the language to which specific functions have been allocated are cultivated, developed and expanded to meet up with the roles and functions that have been allocated to it. The existing policy has allocated roles to the different languages spoken in Nigeria numbering over 500. Each of these languages is the mother tongue of some Nigerians, the three major languages are languages of wider communication, Hausa in the North, Yoruba in the West and Igbo in the East. Nigerian pidgin is common in the South-South. Finally, English is the language of education from upper primary (4-6) to the tertiary level of education. In terms of status planning, Nigeria could be said to have done well. The problem of implementation arises because these languages are expected to be developed. Two key concepts are popularly used here – 'codification' and 'elaboration'. Under codification, the rules of spelling, pronunciation and grammar are spelt out. This is captured by the word 'orthography', which means the language has been reduced to the written form.

The second aspect is elaboration. That is, the language is expanded in vocabulary and style to express any imaginable or real idea. Some scholars refer to this as 'intellectualisation'. For the process of intellectualisation to take place, scholars and stakeholders in language must come together to expand the language in terms of vocabulary items, that is, the lexicon would be expanded. New styles and usage must be developed. This is where Nigeria has lagged behind. With reference to the major languages – Hausa, Yoruba and Igbo, much has been done. Linguists and scholars in related fields have done remarkably well, especially in metalanguage. However, more is still expected. This is somehow applicable to the languages in the second category – the medium sized languages. Courtesy of the efforts of the missionaries, Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council (NERDC), National Institute for Nigerian Languages (NINLAN), Language Development Centre (LDC), all under the auspices of the federal ministry of education. Some languages in this second category have equally been developed.

However, with regards to languages in the third category, the minor or small languages, many of them have

not even been reduced to writing and so there are no written literatures in them. Majority of them are used as mother tongues, which only exist in the spoken form. To make room for full implementation of the first and second phases of the policy which prescribes the use of the mother tongue or the language of the immediate community as medium of instruction from the pre-primary to the initial phase (primary 1-3) of education, the languages in the third category should be developed extensively. This process should be initiated by the Federal Ministry of Education in collaboration with the bodies mentioned above – NERDC, NINLAN and LDC. These bodies could easily draw scholars from the federal and state universities to the work. If the political will is there, funding will be made available, after all, we have been hearing about millions and billions of naira spent on sports and defense in Nigeria.

Academic associations and bodies, like the Yoruba Studies Association of Nigeria (YSAN), The Society for Promoting Igbo Language and Culture (SPILC) and parallel bodies in Hausa and other languages should be liaised with to make the corpus planning aspect effective. When all these have been done, implementation will be easy.

To make implementation operational, the policy statements will have to be revisited and retouched as recommended by scholars, notably; Bamgbose (2000b), Emenanjo (2000), Fadoro (2010 and 2013). Bamgbose (2000b) linked the problem of implementation with what he referred to as 'escape clauses'. According to him:

The policies are riddled with escape clauses, which make non-implementation very easy. For example, the use of the major Nigerian languages in the National Assembly was to be subject to the possibility of arrangements being made for it, and the requirement of teaching a major Nigerian language in the Junior Secondary School is made subject to the availability of teachers. Hence, waivers are routinely granted for certification without a pass in such a language. Fourth, owing to the non-implementation of the policies, the attitude of speakers of the non-major languages has started to be hostile, with a feeling on their part that English might as well continue in its former and current roles. The Nigerian experience shows thata good policy not implemented is simply maintenance of the status quo. As long as the confusion continues, English will remain a default language for use in virtually all major public domains. (Emphasis mine)

What about the first and second phases of the policy? First, an option is provided to the 'mother tongue', in the name of 'language of the immediate community'. The implication here is that if the mother tongue is not implementable, the language of the immediate community is readily available. This aspect should be made straightforward. One, the mother tongues numbering above 400 should be developed and used as media of instructions in their respective domains. Two, the languages of the immediate communities should also be promoted in their domains. That is both the mother tongues and the languages of the immediate communities should be given standard orthographies for them to be useful in teaching and serving as media of instructions in relevant contexts.

In summary, the escape clauses should be expunged from the policy prescriptions. In Fadoro's (2013) words, the use of the modal 'should' in the clause 'should' be encouraged to learn one of the three major languages; should be revised to read: 'each child must learn…' This will make the prescription more forceful as opposed to a mere expression of opinion or suggestion. Other recommendations such as, training of teachers in Nigerian languages, treating such teachers as specialists in their areas, entitlement to benefits accruing to such specialisation and incentives for schools that implement the policies as well as sanctions for those who violate should be put in place to ensure proper implementation.

Other recommendations which are beyond linguistics are also made as follows. The first one focuses on the security apparatus – the police, the military and other related personnels. Their mode of training should be reviewed. They should be made to know that force should be the last resort in handling crisis. They should be trained to be more humane. Brutality and violence should be discouraged, except when other strategies have failed. Language requirements in English, major Nigerian languages, as well as the languages of the immediate communities of their postings should be incorporated into their trainings. Of course, incentives should be added to make this aspect attractive to them.

Then, the issue of multi-level police that has been suggested severally by stakeholders in politics, security and academics should be revisited. Scholars have asserted that Nigeria is the only federation in the world without multi-level police or state police. Nwolise (2017), a scholar in the field of Political Science, Peace and Conflict Resolution is one of numerous scholars that have pointed along this direction. Obviously, the issue of cost implications would be raised by pessimists. However, when we think about the billions, if not trillions of dollars and naira that have gone into security since the tenure of Dr. Goodluck Jonathan to the Buhari dispensation, this argument will varnish into thin air. Think about the Dasuki Sambo's case and more recently, the case involving Mr. Andrew Yakubu, a former NNPC boss. What a monumental waste in the midst of severe poverty? The inference we could draw from this is that money is not really the problem but absolute greed of a few opportunists.

Moreover, the issue of the existence of militant bodies like the Boko Haram in the North East, the Niger Delta militants and avengers in the South-South and Independent People of Biafra (IPOB), Movement for the

Actualisation of the Sovereign State of Biafra(MASSOB) in the South East is very crucial. These bodies should not be taken for granted or ignored. It is obvious that any government that does this will find itself in jeopardy and great perils. They should be handled with maturity and dialogue as done by the late President Shehu Musa Yaradua and Dr Goodluck Jonathan. Violence and force have not yielded much results. In fact, they should be the last option. In this direction, Nwolise (2017) suggests that our government should mount an effective deradicalisation programme for radicalised non-violent extremists and radicalised violent extremists to enhance internal security and making the lives, human rights and properties of Nigerians more secure.

The last, but not the least, is mass education. Governments at the federal, state and local government levels should invest heavily on education. The youths that were abandoned and left uneducated in those days in the North East were those who masterminded the evolution of Boko Haram. The calamities and catastrophies visited on the North Easthave rendered many, homeless. IDP camps have multiplied in the region inrecent times. Education has been disrupted seriously. In fact, the Vice Chancellor of University of Maiduguri was recently honoured for refusing to close down the university in spite of the onslaughts of Boko Haram. It is a well-known fact that while the likes of Chief Obafemi Awolowo in the then western region and Dr Nnamdi Azikiwe in the Eastern region were busy spending heavily on education; their counterparts in the North were busy talking about 'sharing formula on money meant for education. The north has suffered for this in terms of underdevelopment and backwardness in education. Contemporary politicians should learn a lesson from this. The money spent on education is a profitable investment which will manifest in manpower development and responsible citizenship in the future. Apart from this, our governments at the three levels should pursue vigorously the job creation drive of the present government so that our graduates will be gainfully employed; a popular cliché asserts that an idle hand is workshop of the devil.

Oyebade's (2013) suggestions should also be taken into consideration. Some of these are: the recognition of regional/zonal lingua francas, languages of local government areas as official languages of government business, provision of compulsory pass in a second Nigerian language at WASCE/GCE/NECO, a deliberate policy of reward for scientific and technological research in local languages and the implementation of an obligatory language learning component as part of the mandate of the NYSC scheme. Without any iota of doubt, if the above recommendations are given careful attention and implementation, the much desired peace and security in Nigeria would be attained.

5. Conclusion

Igboanusi (2017) opines that conflict is a feature of all human societies and an integral aspect of all social relationships. Avruch (2002) observes that conflict is competition by groups or individuals over incompatible goals, scarce resources or the sources of power needed to acquire them. This competition is also determined by individual's perceptions of goals, resources and power; and such perceptions may differ greatly among individuals". According to Nwolise (2017), the unity of a country is not a claimable right or a creed imposed by force. It is worked for and earned by political leaders operating as statesmen. Governments – federal, state and local, should invest in peace through dialogue. The inference we could draw from the observations above is that conflict – social, political, economic or otherwise is inevitable in human society. The onus is on each society to devise means and strategies through which such conflicts could be resolved. The present endeavour is one of such strategies – 'a language-based approach' to conflict resolution in Nigeria. A popular Yoruba proverb says 'a drowning man will clutch at any available hope of survival, even if it is a serpent'. A language-based approach offers hope, all other things being equal.

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