MULTILINGUALISM AND INSECURITY IN NIGERIA

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Abstract
The exponential increase of insecurity in Nigeria is a matter of utmost concern. Its hike poses a big threat not only to the law enforcement agencies but also to the law itself. Its menace cuts across almost all the Nigerian states. The country is known for some well trained terrorist groups like Islamic State West African Province (ISWAP), Boko Haram, and other numerous terrorist groups. Replete of multilingualism, Nigeria faces the issue of eradicating insecurity amidst diverse ethno-linguistic heritage. The activities of the Islamic sect (Boko Haram), Fulani Herdsmen menace, banditry and kidnapping, militancy in the South, incidence of secessionlist activities in the South East hijacked by hoodlums known as Unknown Gunmen etc, and which have led to the loss of countless lives and property in the country buttress this claim. The paper examines the incidence of insecurity in Nigeria, a multilingual state par excellence. It argues that since language and society have bidirectional influence, the existence of many languages in Nigeria can help one gain insight into the root causes of and solutions to insecurity in a multilingual nation-state. The study highlights how multilingualism has negatively affected the security state of Nigeria, stating that it has not only succeeded in dividing Nigerians and weakening the central unity, but it has also reduced the effectiveness of the individual security functionality through the limitations arising from lack of understanding among security activities. The findings revealed that the causes of insecurity in Nigeria range from de-emphasis of the multilingual nature of Nigeria, ethno-religious difference, illiteracy and poor educational system, bad governance, weak judicial system, weak and ethnicised security apparatus, high level of unemployment and poverty, porous borders, marginalization and inequality in the country. The solution posed consists of opposing the aforementioned causes of insecurity in the paper. Data for this study were collected from existing body of literature and verified news published on some media platforms like Aljazeera's documentaries, and analyzed using the Socio-linguistic Theory of language policy and language planning.
Keywords: Multilingualism, Insecurity, Nigeria, Causes, Solution

Introduction
Language as an inseparable tool of man cuts across every sphere of man's endeavours. There is no gain-saying the fact that language is life and informs what obtains in a sociolinguistic setting. Sameness of language creates a sense of acceptance and provides the basis for togetherness, solidarity, brotherhood and identity, whereas multilingual setting drives gross hatred, chaos, acrimony, secessionalism, political and religious bigotries, insecurity to mention just a few. This correlates with Nwala's (2015) assertion that language as a powerful tool distinguishes allies from foes and can move people to take up arms against those that have a different one.

In the global community, especially in the plurilingual one like Nigeria, diversities of language have contributed to the enormity of insecurity which has thrived over time and which has made some to question the essence of multilingualism in Nigeria. This has led to the United Nations to add that the entire region of West Africa especially Nigeria is on a tipping point and close to a collapse, should the situation continuous unabated. What then are multilingualism and insecurity?

Multilingualism is a linguistic situation where there is the existence or presence of more than two languages in a linguistic setting. This is in line with Agbedo (2000) assertion that multilingualism represents a linguistic situation whereby more than two native languages exist in a speech community. Crystal (2011) agrees that it is a term used in sociolinguistic to refer to a speech community which makes use of two or more languages, and then to the individual speakers who have this ability in contrasts to monolingual situation. Multilingualism is commonly marked by different ethnic and cultural values. Nigeria therefore, exactly fit into this kind of a community, in that there are more than 400 hundred languages in Nigeria. Some of these languages include: Hausa, Yoruba, Igbo, Tiv, Idoma, Igede, amongst others.
Many believe that this linguistic situation of Nigeria fans the ember of insecurity and that the notion of having a monolingual or homogenous society is but a fiction because there might be traces of the existence of other language(s).

Insecurity on the other hand, is a state of unrest, anxiety, fear, or uncertainty which makes one or a group of individuals feel vulnerable to attack, danger, peril, loss or even death. It is a condition of lack of confidence, low self-esteem, discomfort and probably death. Adebanjoko and Ugwuoke (2014) opine that insecurity is the state of being subjected, in every respect, to terror, threat, risk, molestation, bullying, harassment, etc. It is the absence of security. Security has been defined by Cambridge Dictionary (2012) as freedom from danger or threats. Imbighe (1990) opines that security is the freedom from threats to a nation's capability to defend and develop itself, promote its values and lawful interest. Security is a provision in practice in a society that allows order and people for the good of the people.

Insecurity has become a hydra headed monster which security agents in Nigeria appear incapable of handling vis a vis its multifaceted manifestations like bombing, kidnapping, banditry, unknown gunmen activities, clash between security agents and secessionalist groups like IPOB, MOSOP etc. In recent times, Nigeria has witnessed an unprecedented level of insecurity since the advent of the present democratic dispensation. The pattern of insecurity has been regionalized: militia groups in the South, insurgency in the North, kidnapping and banditry in the North and South, ritual killings in the East and West, secessionalism in the East and West.

The rise of insecurity in Nigeria is a thing of dire concern as no single day passes without records of acts of insecurity. In some quarters of the region, for some undisclosed reasons, it has become seemingly impossible to curb insecurity. Insecurity thrives uncurbed in all the six geopolitical zones of the country, though particularly more pronounced in the North-East, North-Central and South-East regions. Governmental set- ups seem out-rightly weak and confused on how to tackle it.

In the contemporary world, the security of lives and property remains paramount in the socio-cultural, socio-economic, socio-political and socio-linguistic development and survival of any nation. In pursuit of that, the nitty-gritty of securing lives and property requires utmost

elaboration and elucidation so as to pin-down the systematic causes and workable solutions to a state trapped in insecurity. This study is triggered by the upsurge of security challenges in Nigeria. The root causes and plausible solutions to them are also discussed.

Theoretical Framework

There are two major theories to the study of language policy and planning in the society, namely: Instrumental theory attributed to Tauli (1968) cited in Adeniran (2005) and Socio-linguistic theory propounded by Rubinand Jernudd (1973). The instrumental approach to language planning 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 proponents see some languages as being 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. They see language 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.

However, 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. 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. Doing 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 as a resource that can be used to proffer solution to a social problem.

The Socio-linguistic Theory 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 realized 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.

An Overview of the Linguistic Situation of Nigeria
Nigeria is a multilingual, multi-ethnic and multi-cultural nation. The number of languages and ethnic groups co-existing in Nigeria's linguistic environment varies from scholar to scholar. Agbedo (2015) identifies fifty-one ethnic groups and over four hundred and thirty languages. Bamgbose (1995) estimates about 400 to 515 distinct indigenous languages. Ethnologue: Languages of the World (2013) puts the total number of Nigerian languages at 527. This led Eno-Abasi (2003:135) to assert that "we cannot promptly specify the number of languages spoken in Nigeria as a nation". With a population of over 150 million people, three language phyla (Niger-Congo, Nilo-Sahara and Afro-Asiatic), out of the four major language phyla to which Africans are grouped, are linguistically represented and spoken in Nigeria. Little wonder Nigeria has been addressed as a multilingual nation par excellence.

Within this multiplicity, only three (Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba languages) are accorded recognition as the only indigenous national languages while the remaining over 400 languages are labeled minor languages. These indigenous languages co-exist with foreign ones such as English, French, and Arabic.

Even though most ethnic groups prefer to communicate in their own language, English being the official language, is widely used for politics, education, religion, foreign diplomacy, commerce, administration, science and technology and for other numerous official purposes. Its dominant use in the country and its seemingly ubiquitous influence in different spheres of activities have certainly kept speakers of Nigerian indigenous languages and her linguists worried about the future of the indigenous languages. Nigerian "eliteness" is proven when one is proficient in learning, writing, reading and speaking the English language. This attitude hampers the growth and development of the indigenous languages. The National policy on Education (NPE, revised 2004) subjected the use of mother tongue to early child education while the English language is reserved for learning and teaching from upper primary school to

the tertiary level of education (Emenanjo, 2000). In other words, the policy constrains the use of one's L1 when one is not yet aware of the happenings in his environment.

However, prior to colonialism, there was meager linguistic rivalry as every ethno-linguistic society seems to be living peacefully and harmoniously with one another in their respective geographic locations. However, in 1914, Lord Lugard, the colonial administrator, amalgamated the Northern and Southern protectorates, resulting to the marriage of people of diverse ethno-linguistic backgrounds. This led to the de-emphasis of the linguistic, cultural and ethnic peculiarities of the various ethnic groups. In other words, there was an indirect attack on the linguistic core values of the people. The place of language in a multilingual setting of this sort cannot be over-emphasized. This supports Fishman (1999) assertion that language is the "store house of ethnicity; each ethnic group speaks, and its cultural paraphernalia is shaped by its language. An attack on a language is an attack on the speakers of the language". In 1960, this monstrous amalgam was concretized with an independent state called Nigeria. From then on, the people became a conflicting entity replete of acrimony, hatred, chaos, fights, wars, religious and political bigotries, linguistic secessionalism, insecurity to mention just a few. That was the beginning of an ending in Nigeria; insecurity ensued!

In Nigerian state as a multi-ethnic state or nation-state with over 400 groups of diverse ethnic and religious identity, every group is dissimilar to another based on the uniqueness of cultures, languages, religious and values systems (Aluko, 1998" Oja, 2006). The language difference has been one of the major reasons for security challenges in the country. As the confusion caused by differences in language is a very serious threat to the unity in every society or country to be able to effectively ensure security and progress in its environment. The differences in the entire language group in the country with dissimilar values and pursuit has weakened the central unity and creates more crisis than unity of purpose to fight a national course. This in similar to (Salawu, 2010) affirmation that this ethnic intolerance is root to incessant recurrence of ethno religious conflict, which have birthed copious ethnic militia: the Bakassi Boys, O'dua People Congress (OPC), the Egbesu Boys, the Ijaw Youth Congress (IYC), the Arewa People Congress (APC), the Igbo People Congress (IPC) and the Movement for the Actualization of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB), amongst others.

Most of the above groups are linguistically based, and each of them has a desire to achieve their individual goals which is contrary to the national goals and values. Their varying approaches and means of fighting have always created unrest contributing to the security challenges of this great country, Nigeria. This multilingual nature also weakens the security system of the country. While other scholars may look at the weakness in terms of less power located at the central governing security strategies and weapons, it is noteworthy also to look at the convergent language nature of both security personal and the population. This is because in spite of the central weakness, there are linguistic clicks formed among security personnel that affect the accurate functioning or demonstration of their security actions. This may be a deliberate action spring from groups reasoning but it could also be unconscious, natural tendencies interrupting the flow of security members based on misunderstandings and limitations arising from their linguistic backgrounds.

Causes of Insecurity in Nigeria
Many factors have been postulated as the key issues that cause insecurity in Nigeria. Some writers put their blames on the government while some others pass the bulk blames on parents. Others hold the youth as being responsible while others combine the above-mentioned factors.

In this paper, however, the followings are seen as the core causes of insecurity in a multilingual state such as Nigeria:

De-emphasis of the Multilingual Nature of Nigeria

In Nigeria, there has been a gross disregard and non-recognition of the wealthy ethno-linguistic nature of the Nigeria prior to and after independence. Among the over 500 languages in Nigeria, only three of them are given national recognition. This national recognition is only on paper. The colonial language, English, has over shadowed the indigenous ones. The language policy on education is not implemented. Many of the labeled minority languages feel marginalized. Nigeria's current government has been strongly accused of ethno-linguistic marginalization. There is agitation in some quarters of the country, for instance, in south-east for self determination, even though they are seen in some parts of the country as being domineering. There has been an attack on the Igbo business empires in the Northern and Western parts of Nigeria. A priest was recently suspended for declaring that Igbo songs should not be sung in his Church, accusing Igbo of being over-domineering. Some Nigerian 'elites' precisely from the North have been quoted to have vehemently said that they would never allow certain linguistic area of the nation, especially the Igbo, to ascend the apex power, and have demonstrated their stand severally during elections. All this boils down to what the people speak. This, in no small measure, has caused the Igbo to see themselves as not belonging to the entity called Nigeria. That may explain the agitation for the Biafra Republic and several breaches of security order like reprisal attacks on security apparatus which the agitators see as wolves among the sheep.

There is also an unspeakable sense of oppression, deprivation, dissatisfaction, marginalization and loss of hope among many of the so-called minority language speakers when it comes to the federal character principle. Who occupies certain sensitive positions in some government parastatals depends on the language one speaks. Meanwhile, by labeling some "minority", they see themselves as second class citizens of the country and feel grossly insecure. Politically, these linguistic entities are, most often, not incorporated into the power shareholding unit of the federation. Appointments into sensitive positions appear reserved for one particular ethno-linguistic group or another. Their only source of hope of the said "minors" is resorting to agitation for self determination. This supports Rufai (2000) point of view that the impediment in communication, understanding and harmony encourages distinctiveness and at the same time discourages sense of belonging, causing some to resort to arms when they feel that their voices are not heard. Agbedo (2011:165) adds to this by asserting that "multiplicity of languages was intended by nature to render human communication impossible, thus providing veritable ground for breeding unending mutual suspicion, misunderstanding, quarrels, acrimony, unnatural rivalry…."

Menace of Unemployment and Poverty

Unemployment and high rate of poverty leads to insecurity. While unemployment is said to be when people are not engaged in meaningful work and are lacking the basic needs of life, poverty is a situation of living below a defined standard of living so that individuals and nations are classified and indentified as being poor. According to the data released by the National Bureau of Statistics, the population of unemployment of Nigerians during the last quarter of 2022 stood at 45.6 percent. This places Nigeria in the number 3 position among countries with the highest number of unemployment people in the world. The same data states that the number of people living with abject poverty in Nigeria is between 96.6 million to 98.7 million in 2022. Thus, Nigeria stands as one of the nations with the highest poverty index in the world. The

World Data Lab noted that an estimated 120 million Nigerians are expected to slip into extreme poverty in 2030. Worse still, the government care-less about this and most often, those who are favoured politically, especially the northerners occupy the meaningful positions and marginalize other ethno-linguistic groups. Nwagbosa (2012) believes that the past and the present governments have failed to put in place actions that will reduce unemployment and poverty rates. He goes further to allege that, in some occasions, top office holders in a bid to impoverish some ethno-liguistic groups through unfriendly policies, endanger the lives of the entire Nigerian populace. The current hasty implementation of the cashless policy, which some allege that it is targeted on some individuals and which has done more harm than good to Nigerians, supports this claim.

Every year, tertiary institutions produce graduates who are thrown into the labour markets with no hope of job opportunity in sight. Some who eventually 'lay hold' of some jobs are persons of some ethnic nationality. In some contexts, during interviews, the major prerequisite for getting a job is the language one speaks. Many become frustrated in order to keep mind and body together and engage in violent acts such as kidnapping, militancy, armed robbery etc.

Poor Leadership and Gross Level of Bad Governance
In Nigeria, the level of poor leadership and bad governance is very alarming. In a plurilingual setting of this sort, language should be understood as a principal weapon for governance which has the ability to destabilise a people if not properly harnessed or used. Language can make or mar a people, group or a nation at large. In Nigeria for instance, language is one of the major reasons determining the behaviour in the political affairs. Some languages are rated above others, such that it is believe that the leadership of Nigeria should only come from such specific ethnic groups. The attempt to view it differently to such highly esteemed languages is deemed abnormal and unethical. To some extent, it is looked upon as a "political or leadership sin" for people from minority languages to become leaders in this country. This supports Nwadialor (2011) point of view that Nigeria's current government has been strongly charged with ethnic disparity, and the marginalization of some sections of the country in the provision of basic infrastructure. Theses have significantly compounded Nigeria's insecurity. The provision of basic amenities like water, electricity, good road network, quality education and general infrastructure is on the low ebb. In some parts of the country like the South Eastern Nigeria and South Southern Nigeria, there is high level of agitation and consequent crimes because the quarters feel alienated by the government in her provision of the fundamental amenities. The increasing incidents of violent attacks and insecurity are symptoms of weak, marginal or exploitative government systems in Nigeria. Who benefits from government depends on one's ethno-linguitic phylum. Basically on this, the northerners are more favoured than any other region because those occupying the seats of authority come from the North. Crimes are only punishable if you are from notable parts of the countries like the South. The ruling political party protects those within her umbrella and forms a threat to others in the opposition parties. The Boko- Haram sect, the bandits, the Fulani herdsmen and kidnappers ravage lives and property but several calls from the masses to the government to combat these crimes have only yielded no meaningful result. In most occasions, there are allegations that some politicians mastermind the formation and operation of these orchestrations of menace to the populace to enrich themselves, like banditry, kidnapping, etc. The masses, most often, are thrown into bewilderment when these evil perpetrators are caught and only referred to as repentant criminals but when those agitating for good governance to be enshrined in the Nigerian system from some linguistic phylum are caught, they are prosecuted and in most cases, are killed back-doors. All this boils down to the menace of linguistic discrepancies.

Corruption: Corruption is generally believed to be the greatest cankerworm feasting on the development of Nigeria with evidence of government failure and systemic infrastructure collapse. The present state of insecurity in Nigeria is unarguably as a result of government failure, attributed to widespread corruption. This hydra-headed monster has had an enormous impact in the fight against insecurity in Nigeria as the Nigerian government allocates billions of naira for the purchase of sophisticated weapons for the Nigeria army to effectively prosecute the war against terrorism. It is however regrettable that this huge amount of money finds its way into the private accounts of politicians and high ranking military officers, leaving the foot soldiers weak, vulnerable and less equipped against the heavily armed terrorist groups. 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. He goes further to say that corruption in Nigeria has been spurred by ethnic tendencies where the government in power only creates crimes and corrupt fighting agencies to assert their force on stipulated group of language speakers. This has not only fanned the ember of corruption but has made the 'disfavoured' linguistic set to keep feeling insecure.

Weak and Ethnicized Security Apparatus:
Security is the most vital element in human life. Without it, social, economic, and political achievements cannot be attained, (William, 2008). The Nigerians security system is weak and ethnicized. Major Nigerian weapons of securing lives and property are found in the Northern part of the country. The location of this security apparatus informs some ethnic tendencies. When crimes occur in some parts of the nation, it takes ages to be able to respond to it because of the delayed movement of some security machineries. In some occasions, insecurity is seen in some quarters as a means of enriching certain linguistic background. For instance, the kidnapping mantra and unknown 'gunmenism' have been hydra-headed monsters which have defiled revelation of the people responsible for their orchestration. The unknown gunmen operation in the East has been attached to IPOB but the worrisome thing is that some culprits who have been apprehended by the Nigerian security agencies were not persons of Igbo origin. Some were sent from certain ethno-linguistic group to unleash mayhem on the populace and cart away arms which have been alleged to be kept for battles untold by some ethnic group.
Nigeria is largely under policed and this partially explains the Nigerian Police Force's failure to effectively tackle the country's crimes, corruption, and insecurity. Onifade (2008) asserts that the police population ratio in Nigeria is 1:450 which falls below the United Nations' standard. This implies that as a country, Nigeria, being this grossly under-policed, perhaps, explains the police inability to effectively tackle crimes and security challenges.

There is also lack of funding to security agencies as they have, in some cases, met their dead end while combating criminals who have more sophisticated weapons than them. Many of the soldiers fighting insurgency in the Northeast of the country have been ambushed on some occasions and killed by the rebels as a result of information leaked to them by those who think that their ethno-linguistic group is being attacked. In other cases, mobilization of soldiers to insurgency areas has been alleged to be ethno-linguistically informed. The Southerners allege that they are being selectively sent to insurgent prone areas whereas their northern colleagues stay back at the barrack. Do you talk of appointments into sensitive security positions? Ethnicity counts.

The Solution to Insecurity in a Multilingual Nation, Nigeria
i. Re-emphasis and recognition of the multilingual heritage of Nigeria: Nigeria, as multilingual nation, hosts over 500 languages. To enliven and incorporate every ethno linguistic group in Nigeria, each language should be made a medium of instruction at the pre-primary and primary school levels in the immediate community by developing the orthographic and test books of many Nigeria languages. In other words, the medium of instruction will be principally the – mother tongue and the language of the immediate community at those mentioned levels, and to this end, (the government) will develop the orthography of many more Nigerian languages. There should be revision of the National Policy on Education (NPE). There should be enhanced freedom of mother-tongue usage in any governmental and non-governmental establishment while interpreters will complement the process where necessary. The incorporation of many Nigerian indigenous languages into the scheme of things through well defined and practically language policy will allay the fear of ethno-linguistic hegemony and enhance the consciousness of being a Nigerian in every citizen. This supports Agbedo (2004) point of view that one sure step towards curbing the menace of multilingualism is through the formulation of a language policy that emphasizes the development of all Nigerian indigenous languages irrespective of their individual status.

ii. Creation of Employment Opportunities and Poverty Alleviation Programmes:
Nigerian government should create an economy with appropriate social, economic and physical infrastructure for business and industrial growth thereby enhancing job opportunities for the teaming youth. This will make them abstain from crimes. Job opportunities should not be ethnically politicized rather those that merit it should be gainfully employed. More centers of entrepreneurship studies across the nation that will boost people's standard of living should be established irrespective of language spoken in that part of Nigeria. To reduce threats on some languages, there should be inalienable right for all ethno-linguistic groups to participate in the various spheres of developing the nation through linguistic heritages and core values, created by equal employment opportunities for all linguistic entities. Perhaps then, Nigerians, irrespective of their ethno-linguistic backgrounds would be encouraged to invest their collective hopes in the Nigerian nation.

iii. **Leadership positions should be given to people with unquestionable characters who have been tested and proven to be none ethno-linguistically driven.** Leadership positions of national interest should be allotted for individuals who understand the multiplicity of languages in Nigerian nation; individuals whose conscious management of language use allays fear of linguistic hegemony and enhance ethno-linguistic mutual trust and confidence. Where necessary, some powerful and sensitive leadership positions should be rotated ethno-linguistically.

iv. **Corrupt practice of all sorts should be grossly checked and culprits made to face the law**. The organization overseeing the fight against corruption should be an independent one and which its team of persons must be a people of proven character dispositions who do not carry out their weight of legal sanctions on the defaulters based on language. It is unfortunate that language has gone a long way to stratify who faces the wrath of the law in Nigeria. This ought not to be! The law should not be a respecter of persons but the opposite is the case in Nigeria where certain group of linguistic background is favoured by the law while the other is at the mercy of the law.

v. There should be equal distribution and diversification of Nigerian's security apparatus. There is need to establish community policing within each divisional police headquarters for effective representation of diverse multilingual backgrounds and management of insecurity. When this is done, there will be an enhanced level of curbing linguistic annihilation and engendering confidence in the established governmental security machinery. The people will feel free to work with them in curbing crimes. There should be improved training conditions for these security personnel with modern security apparatus. Sufficient training in modern security methodologies and good service conditions for security agents will help and equip them to tackle insecurity without fear or favour.

Conclusion

The paper has examined the incidence of insecurity in Nigeria, a multilingual state par excellence. It argued that since language and society have bidirectional influence, the existence of many languages in Nigeria can help one gain insight into the root causes of and solutions to insecurity in a multilingual nation-state. It explained that the root causes of insecurity in Nigeria includes the activities of the Islamic sect (Boko Haram), Fulani Herdsmen menace, banditry and kidnapping, militancy in the South, incidence of secessionlist activities in the South East hijacked by hoodlums known as Unknown Gunmen etc. It found out that insecurity ravages the country as a result of the de-emphasis of Nigerian multilingual nature, ethno-religious difference, illiteracy and poor educational system, bad governance, weak judicial system, weak and ethnicised security apparatus, high level of unemployment and poverty, marginalization and inequality. Meanwhile, the inference drawn from the observations above is that insecurity – social, political, economic or otherwise is inevitable in human society. The onus is on each society to devise means and strategies through which such insecurity could be tackled. The present endeavour is one of such strategies – 'a language-based approach' to combating insecurity in Nigeria. Therefore, the place of language should not be underestimated in a multilingual setting like Nigeria, and should be used as a bed-rock in tackling insecurity.

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