LANGUAGE AND INSECURITY: A CASE STUDY OF HATE-SPEECH AND ITS EFFECTS
ON NIGERIAN SOCIETIES AND ECONOMY

Abubakar Yahaya Jega
Akinyelu Sunday Joseph
DEPT OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE,
ALVAN IKOKU FEDERAL COLLEGE OF EDUCATION, OWERRI
SCHOOL OF LANGUAGES, DEPT OF NIGERIAN LANGUAGES

Abstract
The greatest challenge of any multi-ethnic and multi-lingual society/nation is insecurity; insecurity occasioned by suspicion, lack of trust, fear, anger, hatred, and especially, the wrong use of language (hate speech). Many societies/communities in Nigeria had suffered and many still suffering lawless violence and the destruction of lives and properties, leading to retardation and any meaningful socio-economic development among the communities/societies and the country (Nigeria) at large. It is against this backdrop that this paper, adopts the cause and effect theory of behaviorism to explore the causal effects of wrong use of language on the members of the society as regards negative or ill-behaviour(s) that threaten peaceful co-existence, tangible development and sustainable human societies. This paper discovers that, the wrong use of language in any society, perhaps against a person, an ethnicity, a race, a religion, etc, is one of the major causal agents of the devastating level of insecurity in the world, and especially in Nigeria. Little wonder, the retardation in the Nigerian economy. The paper, however, discusses possible solutions to the persistent state of insecurity in Nigeria (and the retarded economy).

Introduction
The recent level of insecurity in Nigeria is so alarming that the core concern of the government and every member of the geographical entity called Nigeria, should be solutions to ensuring a secured and safe environment for lives, properties and the conduct of business and economic activities. That we all live under apprehension is an indicator that, if no drastic and feasible proactive measures are taken to tackling the ravaging social vices that include, armed robbery, kidnapping, maiming, incessant killing, destruction of properties and terrorism, Nigeria, risks its existence as a geographical entity.

According to Omoyibo and Akpomera (2013) in Olabanji and Ese (2014), security is a concept that is prior to the state and the state exists in order to provide that concept. And security is the prime responsibility of the state. In Nigeria, however, available data on the level and dimensions of insecurity reveals an increase over time, which constitutes serious threat to lives and properties; hinders business activities and discourages local and foreign investors, all which stifles and retards Nigeria's socio-economic development, Olabanji and Ese (2014). Since the security situations in Nigeria are clear pointers to the fact that, the government is failing and can no longer be bequeathed with the sole responsibility of handling security issues for the sustainability of our societies/communities and Nigeria at large, it behooves then that, all hands must be on deck to abate the devastating effects of insecurity in Nigeria.

It is therefore imperative to understand the role that languages play(s) in the insecurity and instability of any multi-ethnic and multi-lingual society/nation. Of course, insecurity is a multifaceted societal problem; this paper thus, investigates the role of language in ethnic/tribal clashes, religious clashes and, especially communal violence that further provokes incessant killings and destruction of properties. Suffice it to say that, the role of language, i.e. the gross misuse of language, technically known as hate speech, among members of any society, has contributed more to violent crimes (the destruction of lives and properties) than any other factor(s) constituting insecurity among the co-existing ethnicities, religions and languages in Nigeria.

According to Agedo 2009:

> Skinner recognizes two types of response behavior- respondent behavior and operant behavior-contrary to the classical behaviorist stimulus-response patterning that matches stimulus strictly with corresponding response. By respondent behavior, Skinner means purely reflex responses to stimulus, that is, aspect of behavior that are elicited by causal agents like the act of sniffing in response to a kind of aroma. Operant behaviour, on the other hand, is behaviour for which no particular stimulation can be designated as the causal agent.

Simply put, behaviourism holds that, certain human behaviour are as a result of certain stimuli thus, the cause and effect theory. Language is a human behaviour that also elicit other behaviour. Such behaviour could be positive or negative, depending on the language/speech contents. We therefore, explore hate speech in order to ascertain our assumption that, hate speech contributes more to the devastating level of insecurity in Nigeria than other factors that educe ill acts/behaviour among co-existing members of the society; and also, to examine it extensional effect on Nigeria's socio-economic development.

Language

To give different definitions of language, would amount to repetition(s) of known facts. However, we will adopt language, as defined by Ajileye (2007) and further discuss the basics of language. "Language is an arbitrary system of spoken and written symbols complete in its use for social interaction among human beings".

Of course, exenterate language from any human society, and experience chaos and anarchy in their strongest forms. Language in this discourse is being viewed from the social perspective. Thus, from the very crucial social role(s) of language, we intend an overview of language basics

Language is the most essential tool for the creation of friendships, acquaintances and societies. A society without language is bound to be rife with anarchy and confusion (Ajileye 2007).

According to Chomsky (1972) "When we study human language, we are approaching what some might call the "human essence"…

Evans (2006) underscores the importance of language to human living by postulating that:

> We take language for granted, yet we rely upon it throughout
> our lives in order to perform a range of functions. Imagine
> how you would accomplish all the things you might do, even
> in a single day, without language: an item in a shop, providing

> or requesting information, passing the time of day, expressing an opinion, declaring undying love, agreeing or disagreeing, signaling displeasure or happiness, arguing, insulting someone, and so on. Imagine how other forms of behaviour would be accomplished in the absence of language: rituals like marriage, business meetings, using the internet, the telephone, and so forth. While we could conceivably accomplish some of these things without language (a marriage ceremony, perhaps?), it is less clear how, in the absence of telepathy, making a telephone call or sending an email could be achieved.

From the foregoing therefore, the following are language basics:
- Language is a landmark phenomenon that sets man apart from the rest of life.
- Language is the "life line" of any human society.
- Language is man's best tool.
- Language structures and conditions human behaviour.
- Language is a window to the human mind.

Insecurity:

To have a good understanding of insecurity, it is expected to examine the concept of security. According to Stan, (2004), in Olabanji and Ese (2014),

> Security need was the basis of the social contract between the people and the state, in which people willingly surrendered their rights to an organ (government) who oversees the survival of all. In this light, security embodies the mechanism put in place to avoid, prevent, reduce, or resolve violent conflicts, and threats that originate from other states, non-state actors, or structural socio-political and economic conditions.

Nwanegbo and Odigbo (2013), posit that, the divergent approaches to the conceptualization of human security in the theoretical literature can be categorized into two major strands. One is a neo-realist theoretical strand that conceptualizes security as primary responsibilities of the state. The second strand, a post-modernist or plural view, conceptualizes security as the responsibilities of non-state actors and displaces the state as a major provider of security. Proponents of this approach argue that the concept of security goes beyond a military determination of threats. They are of the view that government should be more concerned with the economic security of individual than the security of the state because the root causes of insecurity are economic in nature.

However, there is a general consensus in the contemporary literature that, security is vital for national cohesion, peace and sustainable development. It is therefore apparent that national security is a desideratum, sine qua non for economic growth and development of any country (Oladeji and Folorunso, 2007); in Olabanji and Ese (2014). Some scholars in conceptualizing security place emphasis on the absence of threats to peace, national cohesion, political and socio-economic objectives of a country (Igbuzor, 2011; Oche 2001; Nwanegbo and Odigbo 2013).

Hate-Speech:
The term 'hate-speech' was coined by a group of legal scholars in the late 1980s in the United states in respect of what they saw as the way different legal systems tackled certain sorts of harmful racist speech, Alexander, 2017.

The term was initially within the confinement of the law. It was basically in the domain of law explicitly tools of the legislatives and the legal professionals. However, the term/terminology is now being used by great many different kinds of people who are not legislators, legal practitioners or scholars of law (Alexander 2017).

The new bit of terminology or legalese has now also been taken up by the media and by ordinary people and has taken a life of its own.
Note, the great challenge associated with the term 'hate-speech', is the factthat, since every insulting utterance, speech or sentence is often termed 'hate-speech', one is then faced with the difficulty of differentiating 'hate-speech' from 'free-speech' or say free-insulting speech. The term has been so bastardised that common insults or insulting utterances are also being tagged 'hate-speech'.
According to the Onlin Legal Dictionary, "hate-speech" is spoken words that are offensive, insulting and/or threatening to an individual or group based on a particular attribute of that person or persons being targeted. Targeted attributes include such traits as ethnic background, sexual orientation, race, or disability (Legal Dictionary, not hate-speech).

The Sweden constitution according to Online Legal Dictionary, defines hate-speech as, "public statements able to threaten or disrespect groups based on their race, ethnicity, religion, sex orientation, or skin colour.
Thus, violence inciting utterances/sentences targeted at an individual or a group based on evident or established facts about certain attributes of such an individual or individuals/group is 'hate-speech'.
Note, the devastating effect of 'hate-speech' at inciting violence cannot be over-emphasized.

Society and Economy:
According to Solanke (2015), the concept of society can be viewed in two ways:

> One is seen as aphysical entity, a constituency of natural and artificial edifice, distinctly having a location-name and politically administered as jurisdiction. The second perspective of the meaning of society is seen as a collection of uniquely distinct culture comprising manner of social, political and economic interactions among a set of people occupying a geographical space.

Economy on the other hand is the production and consumption activities that determine how scare resources are allocated in an area. It includes everything related to the production and consumption of goods and services (Investopedia (2001), https://www.investopedia.com

> According to Wikipedia,
> ……….a given economy is the result of a set of processes that involves its culture, values, education, technological evolution, history, social organization, political structure and legal system, as well as its geography, natural resources endowment,

ecology, as main factors. These factors give context, content, and set the condition and parameters in which an economy functions. In other words, the economic domain is a social domain of human practices and transactions. It does not stand alone. (https//en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/)

From the forgoing therefore, we can assert that, any society devoid of adequate security is bound to experience economy stagnation or retardation and perhaps economy declination. For there to be any tangible economy development or growth in any society, there is need for stability, peace and security. Scholars have identified strong links between security and development cannot be achieved since the cold war ended (Nwanegbo and Odigbo, 2013; Chandler, 2007). They argued that development cannot be achieved in any nation where there are conflicts, crisis, and war. There is a consensus in the literature that security and development are two different and inseparable concepts that affect each other, and this has naturally triggered debates on security development nexus (Chandler, 2007,Stan 2004 and Olabanji and Esu 2014).

Language and violence:

The cause and effect of hate-speech

Of course, it is not every violence or crisisthat is language (hate-speech) triggered, and language is not the only causal agent of insecurity in any given human society, but the role that language plays in most communal, ethnic or inter-ethnic violence and crisis cannot be over-emphasized. Note, 'hate-speech' does nothing but fuels the flames of violence and brutality.

Thus, we will therefore, here, make attempt to distinguish free speech from hate-speech. The question we want to answer is, where does free speech stop and hate-speech begins?

Free speech vs. Hate-speech:

Before this era of the bastardization of the term 'hate-speech', there are categories of free-speeches; free speech to command, praise, applaud, rebuke, insult, etc, but that did not mean that 'hate-speech' had not been from time immemorial. For instance, while as a growing child, I had heard sentences   such as follows:

1. How dare you proposed marrying the daughter of that outcast?
2. Their mothers were impregnated by monkeys.
3. Stay away from those infidels and do not spare them if need be.
4. The black race are monkey living in jungles.
5. You bastard son of Negro.

Aside the above hypothesized instances of 'hate-speech' sentences, below are typical examples of hate-speech sentences/clauses or phrases as adopted from the Online Legal Dictionary.The west bore Baptist church picketed the 2011 military funeral of a soldier who was killed in Iraq. The father of the soldier Sued Fred Phelps and his Church for intentional infliction of emotional distress after the group protested his son's funeral with songs that carried messages as:

6. Thank God for dead soldiers.
7. God hates the USA
8. Thank God for 9/11

(Retrieved from legal dictionary, net/hate-speech, on 30th March 2019)

Note, that, in time past, sentences 1 – 5 would have enjoyed the status – free speech or what we call free insulting speech, but today, with the atrocities that hostile verbal abuse or speeches rock, they are indeed examples of 'hate-speech' sentences.

Now, let us examine some few more sentences:

9. You are indeed stupid.
10. What an old fool you are?
11. You are a stark illiterate.
12. They are as stupid as I was told.
13. They are all set of idiots.
14.

A thorough examination of the semantics of sentences 9 – 13, gives the fact that, these sentences are non-hate-speech sentences.They could be called free-insulting speeches. Of course, these sentences (sentences 9 - 13), could as well provoke anger; or perhaps, they bother on certain attributes being exhibited by the targeted individual or individuals, but the fact remains that they cannot incite outlaw violence as only hate-speech as the form of language use that is capable of triggering outlaw violence and brutality.

More so, such sentences as sentences 9 – 13 are direct statements of insult to specific person(s) and not the entire body of a people, group, or race as did some of the sentences tagged 'hate-speech sentences above. The general abuse of the term 'hate-speech, further makes distinguishing it (hate-speech) from free insulting speech very difficult as even the critismof persons are also now being tagged 'hate-speech'. The worry is that, someday, even a sentence as "You are stupid", could be referred to as hate-speech.

Hate-speech and Irrational Behavior:
Language of course, is a form of man's behavior that elicits other forms of behaviour. According to a Yoruba adage: 'bi eti o gboyinkin, inukiibaje', what the ear does not hear, does not pollute the mind. In line with the behaviourism theory of response to stimulus, language is a stimulus that elicits variable behaviour on the part of the hearer. Thus, the Yoruba adage is indeed correct as the human brain processes different verbal information and different behaviours/ output are elicited based on the information that the brain has processed.

The following sentences, of course, will generate/elicit varied behaviour from the hearer or the affected person(s):

15. You are as intelligent as King Solomon himself.
16. You are as beautiful as early morning roses.
17. You are nothing more than a mare dog.
18. You are exactly what you are, a true son of a beast.
19. Just go away, stupid daughter of a whore.
20.

While sentences 14 & 15 will generate warmly nice behaviour of happiness and satisfaction on the part of the hearer(s)/ affected person(s), sentences 16 & 18 will generate unpleasant attitudinal bahaviour that might vary based on the temperament of the hearer(s) (affected persons). Although, sentences 16 & 18 might not generate/elicit a complete violent behaviour/ situation on the part of the affected person(s), definitely, some irrational behaviours that might include a response of verbal abuse or, a display of anger/annoyance at the speaker, will be elicited. It is the degree or the hostility of the verbal abuse that will determine the level of the emotion/behaviour – perhaps, it will be just verbal exchanges of abusive words or an all-out confrontation that could metamorphose into violence.

As it often sounded on the radio and the media that 'hate-speech is very destructive. It is true, as 'hate-speech' does nothing but metamorphoses or transmute simple misunderstanding to

conflict and brutal violence. To many irrational killings and destruction of properties, 'hate-speeches' are under tone/underlying stimuli of such irrational emotional responses. Reprisal attacks, and acts of terrorism are not just being perpetrated, they are both end results of hate-speeches; as are other forms of communal and ethnic violence.

The Role of Language (Hate-speech) in Communal/Ethnic Clashes, Violence, Reprisal Attacks and Acts of Terrorism:
We might reiterate the fact that, 'hate-speeches' are the under tone/underlying stimuli for the perpetration of irrational killings and destruction of properties during communal/ethnic violence. Our findings reveal that, all forms of ethnic violence and the perpetrated acts of terrorism in Nigeria, are all not devoid of inciting speeches - hate-speeches.

Hate-speech is bedrock to them all. of course, without inciting words propelling/projecting someone or a group to picking up arms to distort the peace in a community, destroy properties as well as cause deaths, such acts could have been best tagged, the act of the devil. Language is being used to brain wash and plant hatred in the minds of the feeble minded youths and the vulnerable to perpetrate communal vices. For instance, most of the attacks being carried out by the Fulani herdsmen are reprisal occasioned by 'hate-speech (es). The previous events/ incident upon which an attack is being carried out might have happened many years back, but, the event is being told to the younger ones and with the help of hate-speech, hatred is being planted on the minds of the younger ones who were not even witnesses of the actual incidents/ events. However, because language is being used as incitement to ethnic/racial hatred, and the poisoning of the minds of the younger ones through the aforementioned, on attack is perpetrated.

Note, most of the violence or attacks (religious, political based, economic based etc), in Nigeria were carried out after the leaders of the involved group(s) or ethnicity had incited their members against the targeted group, ethnicity or race, and even the government.
The group/ gang leaders (or the stimulators) use hate-speeches to provoke unethical and antihuman behaviour on the part of their members. Thus, hate-speech is a stimulus that elicit unethical and anti-human behaviour.

Terrorism:
The most fundamental source of insecurity in Nigeria today is terrorism, which is traceable to religious faratisim and intolerance particularly in Islam dominated states of Nigeria (Achumbaet el, 2013 inOlabanji and Ese, 2014).
According to Sampson and Onuoha (2011) in Olabaji and Esu, 2014, terrorism is "the premeditated use or threat of use of violence by an individual or group to cause fear, destruction or death, especially against unarmed target, property or infrastructure in a state, intended to compel those in authority to respond to the demands and expectations of the individual or group behind such violence acts".
Of course, language or hate-speech might not be the foundation cause of any act of terrorism, but for sure, language is a vital tool being used to lure and brainwash individuals into terrorist groups or calls. Language/ hate-speech is being used to kill the conscience of initiates and to incite hatred that justifies the evil/acts they perpetrate. Terrorism is more recent then every form of insecurity in Nigeria; but, it has rocked more havoc since its emergence.

Insecurity and socio-economic Development in Nigeria:

> After fifty years of nationhood, Nigeria still ranks among the poorest countries in the world, also ranks low in all socio economic indications such as life expectancy, death rates, access to water, poverty rate, mortality rate, and crime rate, and still carries the tag of a developing economy (Olabanji and Esu, 2014).

Of course, what is expected of the socio-economic activities or the economy of a country where insecurity gains straight day by day? Certainly, there is no nation that can achieve socio-economic development in an environment of socio and physical insecurity. It is sad to know that, foreign investors are scared of bringing their investments to Nigeria, and the existing ones are leaving out of fear of the unknown. Also, many developed countries, including the United States of America, Britain, France, Australia, and Russia, have warned their citizens against embarking on tourism to certain parts of Nigeria for security reasons.

Imagine the terrible state of many communities in the North East because of Boko Haram insurgency; and imagine the devastating conditions of many societies and farm settlements in Benue state because of herdsmen attacks. Or, the Northern region where religious violence is prevalent as a result of inciting speeches - hate-speeches.

What socio-economic development is expected in such region? Or how do the insecurity situations in such parts of the country contributes to the economic growth of the country? Since socio-economic development is measured with indicators such as GDP, life expectancy, literacy and level of employment, we can affirm that, the alarming level of insecurity in Nigeria, has hampered any tangible growth in relation to the aforementioned indicators. For instance, food production has reduced drastically as herdsmen keep attacking farm settlements and causing the death of farmers - communities in Benue state (food Basket of the Nation) do not produce farm products as before because of series of attacks from herdsmen. Life is almost becoming valueless in Nigeria with the series of violence and killings happening in many parts of the country.

Many citizens have been displaced (especially in the North East) and have been deprived access to education. In fact, Nigeria now has the highest number of out-of-school children in the world (Radio Nigeria news broadcast, 2019). Just as employment is ravaging the country as no investors whether local or foreign will be motivated to invest in an unsafe and insecure environment.

Thus, the economy of Nigeria, though, the present government claims progressive, from all indices is deteriorating instead of ameliorating - this, of course, supports the nation that, there is no economy that can thrive amidst violence and insecurity.

Conclusion and Recommendation:

"The presence of insecurity in any environment constituents threat to lives and properties, hinders business activities, and discourages local and foreign investors, all of which stiffles and retards socio-economic development of a country"Olabanji and Ese, (2014).

Language, of course, remain the best tool man has got. However, if negatively harnessed, it becomes an instrument capable of toppling peaceful co-existence among members of the community as well as retards economic growth and development of any country.

It is in this regards that, we persuade all and sundry to shun the use of hate-speech at any level of our engagement or interactions with other members of the society. All leaders, political, religious, social,ethnic, etc. should desist from using inciting words to spur their followers to perpetrating acts of violence and terrorism.

All the religious leaders in particular, because of their influence on their followers should emphasize the theme of love more in their speeches and teachings than hate-speeches. If we all condemn or desist from the use of 'hate-speeches, gradually, we will begin to nip language triggered violence, attacks and acts of terrorism in the bud. And, irrational behaviour elicited by language/hate speech will no longer ravage or deprive our communities/societies and the country at large of the anticipated economic growth and development.

Moreover, the government should enact laws that will strongly prohibit the use of 'hate-speech', and irrespective of any ethnic, political, religious, social group and other affiliations, defaulters should be well prosecuted to serve as determent to others.

Furthermore, better parts of our various religions should be emphasized in the school curriculum as well as public places. Of course, if language is properly harnessed, and it peradventure, society issues ensure among ethnic groups, religions, political parties, social ethnic groups, etc, dialogue could be employed resolving such issues.

The positive use of language will guarantee us a peaceful society, thereby yielding better socio-economic activities among the vast ethnic groups that make up Nigeria and a better economy will be accomplished.

References:

Ajileye, G. (2004), Language and Communication in Human Relations, In Ajileye, G. (ed) in Humanities and Human society. Owerri, Taurus Publications.

Olabanji, O. E. and Esu, U. (2014) Insecurity and socio-economic Development in Nigeria. Journal of Sustainable Development studies, vol. 5, Number 1, 40 - 63. 2201 – 4268

Ndubisi, J. I. (2007), Applied Linguistics. Abuja, Wilbert Educational Publishers.

Akinwule, O. S. (2015), Sociology of Education, Owerri Yommath Publishers.

Chomsky, Noam (1972) Language and mind, England ed. New York: Harcourt Brace Joranovich Publishers.

Fromkin, V. &Rodman R. (1993) An Introduction to Language 5th edition, Orlando: Harcourt Brace, Joranovich Publishers.

Crystal, David (1984) who cares about Usage? New York: Peguin.

Radio Nigeria News broadcast (2019)Replayed on 22nd June, 2019 at 7:19am.

Bamgbose, A. (1992), Speaking in Tongues: Implication of multiligualism language policy in Nigeria. Ibadan: Wemitse Press.

Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia (2018). Retrieved from http//en.wikipedia.org/wiki/

Economy. On November, 8, 2018.

Legal Dictionary.net/hatespeech (2019). Retrieved on 30th March, 2019.

Evans, V. and Green, M. (2006). Cognitive Linguistics - An introduction. Edinburgh, Edinburgh Press.

Crystal D. (2018) A Dictionary of Linguistics and Phonetics, 6th Edition, Blackwell Publishing.

Igbuzor, O. (2011) Peace and Security Education: A Critical Factor for Sustainable Peace and National Development. International Journal of Peace and Development Studies , 2 (1).7.

Oche, O. (2001) Democratization and the Management of African Society. In Akindele, R. and Ate, B. (eds) in Nigerian Journal of International Affairs, 13(1), Lagos, NIA.

Nnanegbo, C.J. and Odigbo, J. (2013). International Journal of Humanities and Social Science. 3(4). 285-291.

Chandler, D. (2007). The Security - Development Nexus and the Rise of Anti-Foreign Policy. Journal of International Relations and Development, 10,362 - 386.