Achieving Sustainable National Security And Development In Nigeria Through French Language

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ABSTRACT
From all indications, security is a big challenge to all countries of the world. Nigeria as a country is not left out. Though as a nation Nigeria, was formerly viewed as the ‘Regional Police’, stemming insecurity in West African States and restoring Peace and Order. However Nigeria has now turned out to become a peculiar security case. The increase in Nigeria’s insecurity today, is affecting its development as a nation. In order to overcome this hydra-headed phenomenon called insecurity, successful governments, both military and civilian, have severally proffered seemingly workable solutions, yet this challenge still raises up its ugly head. One is therefore disturbed why insecurity is almost becoming an insurmountable challenge in present day Nigeria. The thrust of this paper therefore, is to examine the roles French Language can play in achieving sustainable national security and development in Nigeria. Literature was reviewed and also suggestions were made as to how French language as the second official language in Nigeria can be looked into, in order to assist in the fight against insecurity to attract sustainable development in the country.

Keywords: National Security, Development and French language.

INTRODUCTION
Insecurity has become a reoccurring decimal in international politics today. As it has always been the case, matters concerning National security or insecurity often snowball into global concern. Similarly, various solutions have been proffered to overcome this challenge, yet it still persists. Most nations around the globe are however, very determined to safeguard their national security and corporate existence. In order to achieve this, they employ different measures or dimensions and connections to re-strategize, cooperate, network and as well share intelligence on a daily basis. In doing this, these nations enter into strategic security partnership with other nation states to engage one another in mutual defense for the purpose of riding their territories of threats to national security and development.

Since Nigeria as a nation is not exempted from these perennial security challenges, it is therefore reasonable that in its continuous effort to stem the issue of insecurity, Nigeria needs also to adopt this dimension of strategic security partnership with other nations. To achieve this course of strategic security partnership and mutual defense cooperation with other nations, geographical neighbours are of utmost importance. This then, brings us to the importance of language.

It would not be disputed that language plays a paramount role in communication in all human activities. As such, without communication that is powered by a common language, Nigeria cannot come to gain the knowledge, awareness as well as information needed to strengthen the strategic security partnership and cooperation noting well the country is strategically located among francophone countries.

To guide us properly on this paper, attempts have been made to clarify some basic concepts central to this discourse such as; National Security, Development, National Development and French language.
National Security
The term ‘national security’ has no single universally accepted definition. There are however, various definitions providing an overview of the usages of the concept. Some of these definitions will be examined for the purpose of this discourse.
National security is seen by Morgenthau as something that is equivalent to national interest. To him “national security is predicated upon economic, security, energy, environmental security, food security, among others.” (qtd. in Sheriff & Ajayi 3). A concise working definition by Premarathe that paraphrases the aspects of the definition by Harold Brown and Paleri views national security as “safeguarding the sovereignty, territorial integrity, citizenry and socio-economic functionality of a nation from an aggressor intent on undermining a particular valued aspect of a nation through violent or unjust means” (par. 9). Still for some others like Okorofor, Ejike, Nzenmwa, Batholomew and Oti, it can be described as “the sum of efforts, energy, intelligence, communication and the use of institutions (and their products) to enforce and ensure adequate protection of interest, people and properties of a nation. It also involves the overall protection of a nation’s integrity and sovereignty through the use of economic resources, diplomacy, power projection and political power” (qtd. Sheriff et al. 4).
Put together, one can therefore see national security as a concept that encompasses the totality of what a nation, its government along with the parliament do in order to safeguard itself as a sovereign entity, as well as ensuring the protection and wellbeing of its citizens, institutions, interest, development plans, economy, national image, among others through variety of power projections such as political power, diplomacy, economic power and military might.

Nigeria’s Security Problems
Nigeria is a country situated on the West Coast of Africa. It was colonised by the British and gained independence on October 1st 1960. Nigeria is a nation that is richly blessed with natural resources and also endowed with different ethnic groups. It has been referred to as ‘the giant of Africa’ surely because of its population and large economy. However, in a discourse on ‘Security challenges in Nigeria and the Implication for Business activities and sustainable Development’ Ubong King pointed out that “Nigeria-now Africa’s largest economy-continues its downward trend and falls seven times this year because of weaken public finances as a result of lower oil exports and the security situation” (1).
Nigeria as a nation has indeed in recent times witnessed an unprecedented level of security challenges. Akande during a dialogue session, opined that “in recent years the country has been grappling with security issues bordering on terrorism, religious and ethnic crisis, attacks on oil installations, kidnapping, armed robbery, attacks by herdsmen and the likes”. (par. 3). In addition to the security challenges mentioned above, Nigeria is experiencing other challenges such as increase in cross-border crimes, lack of development, poor security network, Niger Delta militancy and the Boko Haram group that changed content, context and texture of national security. While the militants in Niger Delta operated mostly within that region, the Boko Haram has earmarked the whole country as terrain. However, most of their operations have been in the Northeast Nigeria (Sheriff et al. 8). The dangerous dimension of this group is has been its incessant moves into some neighboring countries like Cameroun, Chad, Niger and Mali. The Boko Haram group is said to have erected bases in these countries where they coordinate their activities (Newsrescue.2)
Since Nigeria is immediately surrounded by these Francophone countries, it makes things easy for them to have this external influence and collaboration. These menacing trends constitute a serious threat to Nigeria’s security. This is where security partnership with neighboring countries both immediate and distant comes into consideration in order to overcome Boko Haram and other Terrorist element by sharing military and intelligence resources with them.

Development
Development as a concept has different definitions. However, we are going to consider only some in this study. According to Gboyega, development is “an idea that embodies all attempts to improve the
conditions of human existence in all ramifications. It implies improvement in material and well-being of all citizens not the most powerful and the rich alone in a sustainable way, such that today’s consumption do not imperil the future” (qtd.Tolu& Abe237). Chrisman views it as a “process of societal advancement, where improvement in the wellbeing of the people are generated through strong partnership between sectors, corporate bodies and others in the society” (qtd.Tolu & Abe 239). Shelly Sham believes development to mean development in a country’s economic and social conditions more especially improvements in a way of managing an area’s natural and human resources in order to create wealth and improve people’s lives(par. 1)

It is therefore reasonable to know that development not only mean an economic exercise but also involves social-economic, political issues and all aspects of societal life.

National Development In Nigeria
The Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English defines National development as a “phenomenon that embraces a whole nation”. In line with this definition, national development can therefore be described as the overall development or a collective socio-economic, political and religious advancement of a nation. Development is critical and essential to the sustenance and growth of any nation because a country is classified as developed when it is able to provide qualitative life for its citizens. Sustainable development can be achieved through development planning, which can be depicted as the country’s collection of strategies mapped out by the government. One of the viable strategies needed to achieve sustainable development in Nigeria is to tackle the security challenge in the country because security is central to development. In order to prioritize developmental efforts, Nigerian government needs as a matter of urgency to address the security situation in the country because the impact of these security challenges on business is phenomenal (Akande. 4). The actual state of Nigeria’s insecurity situation is having negative toll or impacts on organization’s business activities. It is contended that when there is widespread insecurity, it could affect business investment because investors’ confidence could be damaged. On the other hand, the absence of any real threats to the security in a country makes it secure and this builds investors’ confidence. Expenditures on security could also be reduced meaningfully allowing national and local governments to channel resources to other public goals to improve the quality of lives of the people. Since security is central to development, there is need therefore to proffer workable solutions to overcome the menace of insecurity ravaging the country so as to create an enabling environment where business organisations would feel free and secure to achieve their full potentials and ensure sustainable development in the country. This no doubt calls for a new approach that will be founded on credible intelligence gathering and sharing (Ubong King 5).

French Language In Nigeria
Overcoming the security challenges in Nigeria truly calls for the new approach and will be founded on credible intelligence gathering and sharing. This can be achieved through the adoption of strategic security partnership with other nations to be able to work together on military and intelligence sharing especially with the immediate neighbouring countries.

This therefore, demands the knowledge of French Language. As we all know, Nigeria as a nation is geographically located in the milieu of Francophone countries. This is where the knowledge of French comes in. To be able to work with our immediate Francophone countries, Nigerians need to acquire the knowledge of French to make communication between both countries easy and without a barrier. Nigeria as a country has different indigenous language (Hausa, Igbo, Yoruba, etc.) besides English language which is the official language. However, global challenges in different terrains like academy, business, security, social, economy and political along with the growing need to interact with the Francophone neighbours demand the knowledge of more than just English Language as the only official language in the country. This was the brain behind late General Sanni Abacha’s, announcement of French as the second official language in Nigeria in 1996 as the then military Head of State. Although, there are other several languages like the Dutch, German, Greek, Italian, Russian, Spanish etc. being used
as official languages worldwide for business, politics and diplomacy, French is the most appropriate as a second official language in Nigeria not only because of Nigeria geographical location, but also that it is the largest language after English and also the only language after English spoken in all five continents of the world (Iyang. 6).

The awareness to learn French started long ago in Nigeria with the need to interact with Francophone neighbours. It was officially included in the Secondary school curriculum in 1956 with Secondary schools like; Kings College, Lagos and Government school, Ibadan studying it. Later in 1960, it was included in the University curriculum (Timothy, Asobele. 8). Iyang opined that with the corporation of the French government, French centers like Centre for French teaching and documentation, Alliance française, Centre International d’ Etude Française and Nigeria French project were established to promote the language(7).

The knowledge of French language has been and is really needed in in Nigeria to enable easy communication with our immediate neighbouring Francophone countries so as to achieve successful strategic security partnership on military and intelligence sharing to tackle the security challenge in the country.

French Language For National Security And Development In Nigeria

The pride of any government of a country is the attainment of higher value level of development in such a way that its citizens would derive natural attachment to government. However, for a nation to be in phase of development there must be some pre-requisites (Tolu& Abe 237). These pre-requisites include security and development stability.

To achieve developmental stability in Nigeria, there must first of all be security stability because security is central to development. Where there is no security, there can never be development. This is because investors (both potential and existing ones) would not feel free and secured. Ubong King noted that “The implication of insecurity situation in Nigeria for business activities can be viewed from two broad perspectives, viz the perspective of potential business investment and the perspective of existing business enterprise” (8). Potential investors feel discouraged because of insecurity feeling that the situation might increase the cost of running the business either through direct loss of goods and properties or the cost of taking precautions against business risks and uncertainty.

For the existing ones, the insecurity situation in the country can, and in many cases halted business operations during the periods of violence thereby causing the outright closure of many enterprises.

Generally, if there is no peace and security, it is extremely difficult for business to survive and where there is no business or investment, there can never be development. Therefore, in order to have a sustainable development in Nigeria as a nation, there must be national security. So, there is no better time to tackle the security problems than now.

The government has actually done a lot to curb the menace of insecurity in the country. A lot of efforts and progress have been made in restoring peace and security. One of such efforts is the step taken by government to harness the dimension of re-strategizing by adopting the strategic security partnership on intelligence sharing with France and other Francophone neighbouring countries.

To achieve result, President Muhammad Buhari paid an official visit to Paris, France following the invitation of François Hollande, President of France. This visit took place from 14 to 16 September, 2015 and while there, the two leaders discussed bilateral, regional, international and global issues. They reaffirmed their commitment to bilateral relations and tackling the issue of security/defense was one of the areas they agreed on to strengthen their partnership. To further illustrates their shared intention and determination to work towards Nigeria security stability, they made a decision to set up, between the two (France and Nigeria) ministries of defense, a high-level defense committee on operational, strategic, arms and defense.

To execute this, France and Nigeria decided to build on the Paris Summit for security in Nigeria which was held in May, 2014. The Paris summit was convened by France to enable Nigeria work hand-in-hand with its Francophone neighbouring countries in order to come out with appropriate modalities to combat
the terrorist group Boko Haram. The importance of regional and international cooperation was highlighted in order to eradicate this threat to national security. Following this, France promised to assist Nigeria and its neighbours in terms of intelligence sharing, training and logistics in their security partnership and cooperation to tackle and eradicate security threat in the region. Still in its continuous efforts to strengthen Nigeria’s efforts to find durable solution to security and development problems in the country, France also supported the International Forum organized by Senegalese government in Dakar (2015). They feel the forum will be an excellent opportunity to exchange views on the security challenges affecting Nigeria and other countries in Africa and plan ways to resolve them.

Considering this, one can clearly see how France which has French language as its first and official along with other Francophone neighbouring countries are planning with Nigeria through cooperation and partnership on appropriate modalities to eradicate insecurity in the country. This now brings us to the topic under discussion. ‘French Language for National Security and Development in Nigeria’.

To effectively work together with France and the other Francophone neighbouring countries on this dimension of strategic security partnership and cooperation on intelligence sharing, training and logistics as promised to be provided by France, there will be need for communication. For interaction to take place between Nigeria and these countries, there must be communication and communication is powered by a common language. Therefore, language plays a vital role in tackling and eradicating insecurity. The interactions with the other countries involve the use of language. So, since we are virtually surrounded by French speaking countries and these countries are our kith and kin as opined by late General Sanni Abacha in 1996 (qtd. in Bello & Ayelaabe 25), Nigeria as a nation needs to integrate French language into the strategic security partnership of intelligence sharing. It should be our interest as Nigerians to learn French language in order to facilitate effective and easy communication between Nigeria and these Francophone countries especially with France which has promised to assist in terms of intelligence sharing, training and logistics. We need the cooperation of our Francophone neighbours in its totality so as to create or form a strong force to tackle and overcome the threat to security and sustainable development in Nigeria. This can only be realized if we are able to speak and understand French language which is their first official language and fortunately Nigeria’s second official language.

In a similar way, regional cooperation is also very important to avoid crisis and sometimes to resolve issues such as; border disputes, Trans- border smuggling and other crimes. This cannot be achieved without bilateral talks between the affected countries. It will be a problem of both parties to discuss and may not understand each other because of the barrier created by language. This can lead to disintegration and complication of issues that could cause threat to national security and development. For instance, Nigeria peacefully settled and conceded some of its land around Bakasi area to the Cameroonians because both parties understand each other. Peace keeping missions and conflicts resolution become problematic and impossible and regional cooperation becomes truncated without the knowledge of French language (qtd. in Bello and Ayelaagbe 26).

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

This paper recommends the following with the hope that they will serve as panacea for solving the problems of insecurity in Nigeria.

i. The law enforcement agents should be trained in francophone countries to enable them speak and understand French language at various borders.

ii. Nigerians should be better educated and informed on the need to encourage the learning and speaking of French at all level of education and in fact across disciplines.

iii. The government should assist in the importation of French books, journals, magazines and this will enable the literates to be aware of the security and culture of the Francophone countries.

iv. French should be introduced as course in the training programs of all security organisations.

v. French language should be declared a language of security in Nigeria.
vi. French language should be made compulsory for all students up to Senior Secondary School in Nigeria so as to start, sustain and perfect its learning.

vii. In order to attain the knowledge of French language in Nigeria, it should be made compulsory and be used alongside English in preparation and publication of various official documents. Its usage should as well be enforced in the media (television radio stations), hospitals, banks, ministries etc.

viii. French teachers should be encouraged to stay on the job by giving them incentives, better remunerations, sponsorship to seminars and workshops.

ix. Government should endeavor to set up a monitoring committee to monitor the implementation of the educational policy on the teaching and learning of French in Primary and Secondary school levels.

CONCLUSION
The paper has in its discussion examined the concepts of National Security and Development as well as Nigeria’s Security Problems. It also discussed the need to learn French language in Nigeria in order to enhance effective and easy communication between Nigeria and the Francophone countries. This is vital because the total cooperation of these countries are needed in order to form a strong force to tackle and eradicate threats to national security and development.

REFERENCES


