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## **The English Language as a Panacea for National Integration, Security and Development in Nigeria**

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### **Abstract**

*In a multi-lingual and divergent ethnic country like Nigeria, social interaction, mutual trust and patriotism are usually very difficult to achieve. In such a pluralistic linguistic and cultural setting, there is always inevitable necessity for people of diverse tongues to interact and operate smoothly in social, political, economic, educational and cultural settings or institutions. If these social interactions are to yield positive and visible results, culminating in growth and development of the individuals and the nation in general, they must be done via a language devoid of mutual suspicion, distrust, hatred and insecurity. To this extent, the English language, which is the only language in Nigeria that possesses the capacity to unify the babel tongues of the various ethnic and linguistic groups, provides intelligibility in inter-personal and group communication in the operation of social structures.*

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*This paper therefore, traces and provides sufficient evidence to prove that the English language alone holds the key to national integration, security and development through the provision of level playing group and platform for various divergent linguistic groups to contribute their quota to the growth and development of the geographical entity called Nigeria.*

### **Introduction**

Nigeria as a multi-lingual, multi-ethnic and pluralistic cultural nation faces a number of social, political, economic, linguistic and religions problems. For example, the people in the Nigerian federation speak several languages, ranging from the major ethnic languages of the Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba to the diverse languages of the minorities of Efik, Ibibio, Ijaw, Mumuye, Kanuri, Fulfude, Tiv, Gwari, Igala and Idoma to mention but few.

In this kind of divergent linguistic setting, human interaction and relationship amongst the various distinct groups would be difficult if not impossible, without an independent and neutral language which many people can speak and understand freely and effortlessly. Ordinarily, because of the monolingual propensity of different actors in various fields in Nigeria, there would be mutual distrust and suspicion among the operators of national assignments leading to hatred and gross insecurity, if there is no language which each of the divergent linguistic/cultural groups can speak and write. For example, while the three major ethnic groups will be suspicious of one another, the vast minority ethnic groups would be suspicious of the three major languages and political groups as forming unholy alliance against them. The obvious mutual distrust among these groups would naturally have a devastating impact on the overall development of the geographical entity called Nigeria.

The above socio-cultural cum linguistic scenario would naturally impede negatively on national integration, security and development.

To overcome the above envisaged problems, a language that possesses the characteristic features of national acceptability, mutual intelligibility and social neutrality needs to be put in a central position to act as a bridge through which all the different ethnic/linguistic and cultural groups can cross into the mainstream of the national culture. And the only language that can step into the big shoes painted above is the English language.

The above view is accentuated by the fact that none of the different language groups would tolerate any imposition of any ethnic or group languages on the citizens of the nation under any guise. In this perspective, the vehemence of Anthony Enahoro, a renowned statesman to the idea of ethnic language imposition on Nigerians is noteworthy. In a paper entitled: “Towards a New Constitutional Order,” he argues that:

All the languages of Nigeria have equal validity or if you please equal lack of validity, before the law and under the constitution. No linguistic group has the right—moral or constitutional right to impose his language on any other linguistic group in the country ... Any attempt to impose any particular tribal language or languages on the country is fraught with grave danger for the peaceful development of the federation. Government should not confer on some Nigerian languages the potentiality of instrument of domination over other Nigerian groups (online).

The feelings of Anthony Enahoro are not only the feeling of the minority linguistic groups in Nigeria but that of even the so- called major ethnic-linguistic groups. The subsequent part of this introductory section gives definitions of the key terms in the topic to limit the scope of semantic application of the terms.

### **Definition of Terms**

**The English Language:** By definition, (which is often restrictive and grossly limiting) *the English language* in our context refers to the vernacular or mother tongue of the British people, who ruled almost three quarters of the world countries through the instrumentality of colonialism, neo-colonialism and imperialism. It is the official or second language used in most of the countries formerly ruled by Britain under the auspices of Common Wealth of Nations. It is the language of politics, education, commerce, trade, religion and sports in the aforementioned countries.

**Security:** The word security is a noun got from the English verb secure, which implies a feeling of safety and protection, devoid of any individual or organized molestation, harassment and intimidation either in one’s area of

abode, sojourn or movement under any guise. It is the feeling of being free from fear or any form of anxiety where one is living, when one is traveling and when one is congregating with other people for whatever social political cum-economic reasons.

**Integration:** Integration is a noun from the verb ‘integrate’, which means to combine; to form a whole or unity or make or be accepted as part of a group or whole. It conveys the idea of being a functional part of a system or an organized body parts that function together to achieve common and unified goals or objectives.

**Development:** The word development on the other hand, is a noun formed from the verb root word develop, which involves the idea of making something or somebody more mature or advanced in all ramifications.

National development therefore refers to the idea of making Nigeria, Nigerian economy, education, politics, religion, sports and games, and other social structures to be more mature and/or advanced in all respects.

**Panacea:** The word panacea is a word that conveys the idea of a solution to or remedy for a problem.

Following from the definitions of the key concepts, the thesis of this paper is that the English language is to a large extent a solution or a remedy towards achieving national security, integration and development in various sectors in the geographical entity called Nigeria.

The subsequent parts of this paper provide sufficient evidence from reviewed literatures and statistical data to show that it is only the English language – the Nigerian official language or lingua franca – that possesses the capacity to help Nigeria and Nigerians achieve security, integration and development of both human and material resources, which God, in His infinite mercy, endowed Nigeria with. The paper also highlights instances of insecurity in Nigeria.

### **Scholarly Views and Legislations in Support of the Pre-eminence of English in Nigeria as a Unifying Language**

In the course of writing this paper, the researcher read a number of literatures relating to the functions or roles of the English language in a multi-ethnic, linguistic and cultural federation like Nigeria. Some of these views are

reflected in this paper in order to accentuate the arguments and points being made in this essay.

For example, *The National Policy on Education*, under a sub-heading – “The importance of language”, says among other things:

Government appreciates the importance of language as a means of *Promoting social interaction and national cohesion...* for smooth interaction with our neighbours; it is desirable for every Nigerian to speak French. Accordingly, French shall be the second official language in Nigeria. (9)

Now, whether it is an intentional omission, or craftiness, the statement did not state the *first official language* in Nigeria in the quoted *National Policy on Education*. However, it is evidently clear that the statement was based on the assumption that the English language is the first official language in Nigeria or what is popularly called lingua franca. However, whether it is stated, implied or assumed, as far as “promoting social interaction and national cohesion” is concerned, no other Nigerian language possesses the capacity and the neutrality to achieve the stated objectives except the English language.

Similarly, *the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria* 1999, paragraph 55, in appreciating the incontrovertible premier position and role of the English language in Nigerian says:

The business of the National Assembly shall be conducted in English, and Hausa, Ibo and Yoruba when adequate arrangements have been made therefore (29).

And, in a similar vein, the same constitution states in paragraph 97 concerning proceedings in the State House of Assemblies:

The business of a House of Assembly shall be conducted in English, but the House may in addition to English conduct business of the House in one or more other languages spoken in the State as the House may by resolution approve (97).

It is remarkable and interesting to study the *diction* or choice of words by those who drafted the National Constitution. They seem to realize the difficulty in using any other language for House proceedings of senate, House of Representatives and State Assemblies. That is why, for the National Assembly, it is “when adequate arrangements have been made,” that the Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba languages may be used and for the State Houses, the house “may in addition to the English language”, use any other language for House businesses but it must be through House resolutions. Nigerians are still waiting for the adequate arrangements.

In his own contribution, Adebisi Afolayan in an article entitled: “The English language and Development – Oriented Higher Education in Nigeria,” argued that:

It is the bilingual citizen who comes from a monolingual State within the Federation and whose second language (L2) is English who operates at all three stages of administration within the three-tier system (42).

Adebisi’s argument is that any Nigerian who possesses proficiency in or good knowledge of the English language has the extra advantage of being able to operate at the local, state and federal levels of governance.

In his own contribution, Bamgbose, a renowned expert in language studies in Nigeria acknowledges the importance of the English language as one of the lasting legacies of the colonial masters among the colonized people of Nigeria.

According to him:

Of all the heritages left behind by the British at the end of colonial administration, probably, none is more important than the English language. It is now the language of government, business, and commerce, education, the mass media, literature and much internal as well as external communications.

In a similar vein, Mahfouz Adedimeji, in a paper entitled: “The Unifying Role of English in a Multi-lingual Nation: The Case of Nigeria”, argued that:

English is the language of integration in Nigeria. Amidst the compounding complexities of Nigeria especially in relation to the language question, the only language that indexes the spirit of togetherness is English... the volatile Nigerian socio-political domain requires English now, more than ever before, to avoid disintegration and threat to its corporate existence. (online)

In a nutshell, Adedimeji is arguing strongly that without the English language acting as a formidable bridge through which diverse Nigerians can achieve mutual intelligibility, the geographical entity called Nigeria would gradually but steadily melt into extinction and oblivion. So for him, the English language is the language of national integration.

In his own contribution, Charles Nnolim, a renowned critic of African literature, in a paper entitled: *Morning Yet on Criticism Day: The Criticism of African Literature in the Twentieth Century*, appreciates the English language as the most important contribution of the colonial masters to the development of Africa in general and Nigeria in particular. According to him:

African contact with Europe has not always been an unhappy one. Nigeria under the British imperial hegemony became a subject people under colonial rule but *she gained a world language* that gave us shared heritage with Europe and the rest of the world (p.1) (Emphasis mine)

Nnolim's argument is that in spite of the negative impacts and features of colonialism, imperialism and neo-colonialism perpetrated by the erstwhile colonial masters – the British – the gift of the English language to the colonized people stands out as the greatest positive impact of colonialism on the natives. In fact, it is a worthwhile legacy.

In addition, David Jowitt, in discussing the attraction of the English language to Nigerian elites and their belief in the penetrating impacts of the language on professionals and professional development observes:

Positive attitude to the English language was generally shared by Nigerian elites – lawyers,

academics, leading journalists, bishops, army officers during the colonial and post-colonial era, as they hobnobbed at home and sometimes in Britain itself with their British counterparts in the same professions and acquired many of their prejudices and linguistic habits. They were practitioners of highly refined English style both in speaking and writing (15).

In the above excerpt, David Jowitt retrospectively reflects on the very proud and positive manner Nigerian elites, irrespective of ethnic group or language, received, learnt, spoke and wrote the English language. To them, then and perhaps now, the English language was/is perceived as a language of social class distinction.

The essence of the panoramic literatures presented here is to give a solid base to the researcher's argument in this paper. That is, that the English language is the only neutral language with the capacity to unify the diverse linguistic, political, cultural and religious/social groups that make up the federation called Nigeria, with a viewing to achieving national integration, unity, security and development.

### **The English Language, Ethnic Languages and the Unity/ Development of Nigeria**

The English language plays a major role in the affairs of this nation because of its premier and honoured position as a national language, official language or lingua franca. To this extent, other ethnic languages feel threatened and intimidated by the English language because of their limited influence in the unity and development of the nation.

For example, the Igbo language feels so threatened by the English language to the extent that scholars and opinion leaders in Igboland continue to express real or imaginary fears that at the rate the English language is influencing the Igbo people, it will be a matter of years when the Igbo language will go into total extinction. This fear is hinged on the fact that many Igbo men and women, children and adults cannot fluently express themselves in Igbo language – their mother tongue – because of the influence of the English language. Some who try to speak Igbo suffer obvious linguistic problems called code-mixing and code-switching. This paper does not intend to go into



examples of code switching and code mixing which produce what one may refer to as “English-Igbo.”

The point being made above is that the English language is so powerful and influential that ethnic languages feel greatly jeopardized and threatened by the English language.

For example, it is true that the average Yoruba man is very proud of his mother tongue – the Yoruba language – and he does everything to demonstrate this, yet he cannot be completely exonerated from the problem of code switching and code-mixing. Therefore, every effort is being made by curriculum planners and school administrators in Yoruba land to ensure that the Yoruba language is preserved, spoken and written by every Yoruba person.

For the Igbo people, an association called “Otu Subakwa Igbo” led by Prof. Pita Ejiolorun is formed to counter the effects of the English language on the Igbo language and the people. The campaign for the revival and survival of the Igbo language is intense and ongoing.

The Hausa, among the three major ethnic groups in Nigeria, are the most proud in terms of using their language. In respect of this, a dangerous sect that calls itself Boko Haram, feels so much threatened by the English language in particular and Western education in general, that it has embarked on a “twenty first century Jihad” and blind genocide through suicide bombing of Christian churches, federal government establishments, private and public buildings and media houses, with a view to stopping the use of the English language and the influence of the West in Nigeria. This sect suffers from what we may call “Westphobia” (Fear of the West) and English-phobia (fear of the English language).

The picture above shows that every ethnic and linguistic group in Nigeria is doing everything possible, (legal and extra legal in some cases) to preserve its language or mother tongue. Ironically, these Nigerians with diverse languages often congregate as members of the nation called Nigeria (an indivisible and indissoluble one), where they are expected to communicate intelligibly in schools, colleges, universities, hospitals, the judiciary, army, navy, legislature, civil service, banks, air force among so many other areas of human activities as Nigerians.

In the face of the mentioned obvious ethnocentric and linguistic nationalism and parochial patriotism, there arises, a great need to have in place, a language that is both neutral and universal, which every member of the federating states and language groups would trust and use in the midst of other distinctive linguistic groups in the federation.

And the only language that transcends all ethnic, clannish and parochial sentiments and provides mutual intelligible communicative level playing ground for all Nigerians is the English language. It is the only language that would not receive blows or bruises in the course of performing the onerous task of uniting and unifying the Babel tongues of Nigerians.

The argument is that since other ethnic languages feel threatened and insecure in the face of the English language, it is only this language that is feared by all the groups that can unite them as a nation since imposing any ethnic language in Nigeria will be impossible and impracticable. At this point, the experience of the researcher during his National Youth Service year (NYSC) is worth sharing here to show the extent one could feel insecure and unintegrated among a group that speaks a language one cannot understand. For example, when the researcher was performing his National primary assignment as a corps member at College of Education Jalingo (former Gongola State) he witnessed a disturbing scenario where, in the department of English of the College, Academic Board meetings were predominately held in Hausa language, without minding the multi-lingual constitution of the staff members. The researcher felt most unsafe, unwanted and unintegrated in the midst of the staff strength that was generally Hausa speaking. If the discussions in the Board meetings were held in the English language the researcher would have contributed more to the topics and would have added more to the intellectual development of the department and College.

### **Statistical Evidence of Insecurity in Nigeria**

The thesis of this paper and indeed its essence is to show that there is insecurity in Nigeria as the statistics below shows but that the rate of insecurity will seriously skyrocket to a point of national disintegration and overall regression in diverse sectors of the polity, economy, religion, education and family, if a neutral means of mass communication for mutual intelligibility amongst the various ethnic/cultural groups such as the English language is not given the prominent and indispensable place it deserves in the

Nigerian Federation. Let us glance through instances of high level of insecurity within a given period.

For example, “The Nation Newspapers” of 18th May, 2012, reported the Minister of Police Affairs, Navy Captain Caleb Olubolade (rtd) as saying:

In 2011 alone, the Nigeria Police reported that the fundamentalist Islamic group – Boko Haram – launched 118 terror attacks in Nigeria, killing 308 people in six states in the North central Nigeria, plus the Federal capital, Abuja (online).

It is on record that the Boko Haram sect is fighting against Western Education and Western civilization, whose nucleus is the English language through which Western discoveries in arts, science and technology are distributed throughout the world. Therefore, a fight against Western civilization is a fight against the English language and a fight against all forms of unity, integration, security and development in Nigeria. Apart from the specific figures of evidence of insecurity given above by the police, the researcher went ahead to gather more statistics to show how insecure Nigeria is and how more insecure it will be in the absence of the English language.

What follow are frightening headlines on the high level of insecurity in Nigeria which the researcher gathered from the internet sources and which are read all over the world to the disadvantage of Nigeria as a nation. The statistics of the deadly headlines on the high rate of insecurity in Nigeria does not include those on high profile kidnappings and killings in various states of the Federation.

#### **Statistical Headlines on the High Level of Insecurity in Nigeria via Boko Haram Activities**

- Brock, Joe (2012-01-12). “*Nigeria sect Leader defends killings in video*”. Retrieved 24-01-12.
- AFP (2 January 2012). “*Boko Haram Issues Three-day Ultimatum to Christians*”. The Vanguard (Lagos) (Vanguard Media Limited). Retrieved 14 March 2012.
- “*Nigeria Policemen in Court Trial for Boko Haram in Nigeria*” BBC News. 07-13-2011.

- *“Boko Haram: Rocking the Nigerian Boat”*. France 24. 12-27-2011.
- *“Dozen killed in Nigeria Clashes”*. Aljazeera. 2011-12-24 Retrieved 12-24-2011.
- *Deadly Attack on Nigeria’s Bayero University*. Retrieved 5 May 2012.
- *“Terrorism in Nigeria: A Dangerous New Level”*. The Economist. 09-03-2011 Retrieved 09-07-2011.
- *Dozen killed in Nigeria Clashes*. London, England: BBC. 2009-07-26. Retrieved 01-02-2010.
- Sani, Sani Muh’d. *“Attack on Bauchi Prison – Boko Haram Frees 721 Inmates.”* All Africa.com. 8 September 2010. Retrieved 31 May 2011
- *Many dead in Nigeria Market Blast – Africa – Al Jazeera English*
- *More Bombs Follow Nigeria inauguration* UP, May 30, 2011
- Brock, Joe (2011-06-17). *“Nigerian Islamist Sect Claims Bomb Attack: paper”*. Reuters. Retrieved Mark, Monica (Sunday 22 January 2012). *“Scores dead in northern Nigeria as Islamist militants terrorize the country”*. The observer.
- *Update 1 – Bombs kill 25 at Nigerian drinking spot – sources*, Reuters 26-06-2011
- *Bombing of Nigerian Beer Garden Kills 25”*. Somali Press. 26 June 2011.
- *University of Maiduguri Shut Down As Boko Haram-Linked Killings Increase/Sahara Reporters*
- BBC (26 August 2011). *“Abuja attack: Car bomb hits Nigeria UN Building”*.
- *Nigeria: Boko Haram attack ‘kills 63’ in Damaturu”*. BBC News. 11-05-2011.
- *“Nigeria Boko Haram Suicide Attack Killed Dozens”*. The Huffington Post. 2011-11-05. Retrieved 12-25-2011

- *“Nigeria churches hit by blasts during Christmas prayers”*. BBC News. 25 December 2011.
- *“Christians flee attacks in northeast Nigeria”*. Reuters. 7 January 2012.
- *“BREAKING NEWS: Boko Haram Claims Responsibility for Kano Attacks:.”* Daily Trust. 20 January 2012.
- *“Nigeria: Boko Haram Claims Kaduna Army Suicide Attack”*. BBC News. 02-08-2012.
- *“Nigeria: Kidnapped German, Six Gunmen Killed as JTF Invades Boko Haram’s Den”*. All Africa. 1 June 2012.
- *“Nigerian Islamist Attacks Spread”*. BBC. 07-27-2009.
- *“Over 100 dead in Nigerian Clashes”*. RTE 07-27-2009.
- *Nigeria killings Caught on Video – Africa – Al Jazeera English Bartolotta, Christopher (September 19, 2011).*
- *“Terrorism in Nigeria: the Rise of Boko Haram”*. The World Policy Institute. Retrieved 22 January 2012.
- *Boko Haram Strikes Again in Borno, kills 4*
- *U.S. House of Representatives, Committee on Homeland Security, “Boko Haram: Emerging Threat to the U.S. Homeland,” Report of the Subcommittee on Counterterrorism and Counterintelligence, November 30, 2011*
- *BOKO HARAM FUNDING: Nigeria May Face International Sanctions. Security beefed up in Benue as Boko Haram gives notice to strike*. Nigerian Tribune. 21 May 2012.
- *“Why we did not kill Obasanjo” - Boko Haram Leader”* 2012-01-23. retrieved March 20, 2012.

These headlines show the level of insecurity in Nigeria and the positive roles the English language is still playing in uniting and unifying the majority of Nigerians outside the Boko Haram fold.

## **The Indispensable Roles of the English Language in Achieving Nigerian Unity, Security, Integration and Development**

In this part of the discourse, the researcher looks at the specific areas in which the English language plays inevitable and indispensable roles in achieving national unity, integration and development.

### **(A) *The English Language and Education in Nigeria***

The development of any nation depends highly on the quality of its educational system and the education of every nation relies on a language for the teaching of its curriculum to its citizens. From the multi-lingual nature of Nigeria, education through teaching and learning encounters takes place via the English language. To this extent, whether it is at the primary, secondary or tertiary levels of education, the English language is used as a language of instruction, examination and evaluation. Nigerians from different language groups meet in State schools, unity or federal government colleges, colleges of Education, polytechnics and universities for purposes of teaching and learning under the guidance of teachers whose second language is often the English language and no nation can develop beyond the quality of its educational curriculum and its teachers. So it is the function of the English language to integrate Nigerians from divergent ethnic groups under a common school curriculum and under teachers who speak the language many Nigerians can speak, understand, write and trust. They can positively contribute to the development of the country in various sectors.

Discussing the central role of the English language in Nigerian educational system as the hob for national development, Adebisi Afolayan says:

The failure to assign an adequate role to the English language is fatal to the cause of achieving national growth and development through the National Policy on Education (39).

So Adebisi feels that the National Policy on Education does not assign *enough role* to the English language as a vehicle for national growth and development. According to him, language is the most decisive factor in the determination and production of an adequate orientation of a higher educational programme towards optimum growth and development. He argues that:

It is unrealistic for anybody in Nigeria today to think that national unity can be forged in the country without recourse to the utilization of the English language (39).

Afolayan concludes his proposition in the interwoven relationship between national development, national integration and the English language when he opines that:

The only way to achieve the desired development of the Nigerian nation through the instrumentality of the educational programmes is the assignment of a new development-oriented role to the English language within the educational programme of the nation. (39)

**(B)**      *The English Language and Law Making In Nigeria*

The purpose of making laws is to protect the rich and safeguard the weak. A lawless society is a Hobbesian society where there is the philosophy of the survival of the fittest. To eschew a lawless society, Nigerians make laws that guide the behaviour and activities of its citizens. In Nigeria, it is only the English language that is used in making laws that can be uniformly applied to all Nigerians irrespective of language, tribe, religion and culture. For example, *paragraph 55 of the 1999 constitution*, emphatically states that the business of the National Assembly shall be conducted in the English language. Similarly, *paragraph 97 of the same constitution* states that the business of a House of Assemblies shall be conducted in the English language. So law making in the various state Houses of Assembly, Federal House of Representatives and the Senate is possible with Nigerians coming from divergent cultural, historical, religious, political and economic groups because the English language stands firmly as a bridge through which the various tongues can communicate and understand one another. This is a very onerous but noble and indispensable task.

**(C)**      *The English Language and the Nigerian Judicial System*

In Nigeria today, civil and criminal cases are heard, judged and disposed of in a language which all lawyers, judges and justices can speak, understand and appreciate. In the Appeal and Supreme Courts, judges/ justices are

appointed from various ethnic groups but are expected to speak a uniform language in the court and give judgement in a language which majority of Nigerians can speak and understand. The only language that performs these functions without receiving blows and suspicious looks is the English language. This is possible because it possesses the characteristics of mutual intelligibility, obvious neutrality and unquestionable general acceptability. This role is recognized and approved by the 1999 Nigerian constitution.

So the unity, integration and development of the Nigerian judicial system is so much dependent on the existence of the English language as the country's lingua franca.

**(D)**     *The English Language and the Nigerian Commercial Sector*

The life of any nation depends so much on its economic or commercial activities. The demand for and supply of goods and services determine to a great extent, the rate of economic growth and development of a nation. These socio-economic activities are done through a common language which all operators of the system can speak and understand.

For example, activities in Commercial Banks, Finance Houses, the Central Bank and Capital Markets are carried out in the English language. Stock markets, insurance businesses and several other commercial activities in Nigeria are mainly done through the instrumentality of the English language. So without the English language, economic/commercial activities in Nigeria will come to a halt.

**(E)**     *The English Language, Politics and Governance in Nigeria*

Politics, to a great extent, is the life of every nation, whether it is completely civilian, quasi civilian or military. It is through politics that governance is achieved. In Nigeria, national political parties are formed beyond ethnic or cultural boundaries. Parties that have ambition to control the federal governance must possess obvious national outlook, constitution and characteristics. This means, membership of such a political party must cut across ethnic, linguistic, social and cultural boundaries. In such a cosmopolitan social gathering, people must speak, hear and understand one another without any iota of suspicion and distrust. The only neutral language that offers all the congregating persons from diverse linguistic, religious and cultural background is the English language.



In addition, the language of governance (official language) in Nigeria at the Local, State and Federal levels is the English language

Our argument is that in the absence of English language, national politics and governance would be a mirage because the discordant voices of Nigerians from different backgrounds would only produce pandemonium, endless polemics, culminating into physical confrontation as a result of linguistic confusion.

*(F) The English Language and the Development of Sports and Games in Nigeria*

It will be grossly incomplete to end this discourse without mentioning the role of the English language in the unification and integration of Nigerians through sports. For example, all Nigerian athletes, footballers and their coaches from different parts of Nigeria and beyond often communicate through the English language during practices and rehearsals. No ethnic language has the capacity to unify sports men and women more than the English language, because instructions are given and received in the language.

*(G) The English Language As The Heart Of Nigerian Military And Para-Military Establishments*

The establishment, functionality, growth and development of the Nigerian Army, Navy, Air force, Police, Customs, Immigration, Prisons, Road Safety, Youth Corps Service among others are fully dependent on the existence of the English language as a communicative vehicle, which is the heart of every organization.

There will be a total breakdown in communication, purpose and functionality of these organizations, the moment each ethnic group is allowed to interact in these establishments that symbolize the unity and oneness of Nigeria in its local languages and/or dialects.

In effect, this paper is saying that among other crucial functions, the English language acts as a pendulum which suspends and sustains all Nigerian military and para-military establishments.

### Conclusion

For Nigeria to remain one indivisible and indissoluble country and for Nigerians to interact freely in the area of Education, polity, economy, defence, legislation, judiciary, sports and games among other sectors, without any iota of distrust, suspicion and feeling of insecurity and poor integration, the English language provides a soft landing pad and a level playing ground for all Nigerians to mutually communicate and contribute their quota to the overall development of the geographical entity called Nigeria. This is because language is the symbolic life of any nation and indeed a source of power, unity, security and development. Therefore, without the English language, Nigeria would be a mere geographical expression.

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