



TEACHER TRAINEES' PERCEPTION OF EFFECTS OF LANGUAGE AND SOCIAL MEDIA ON INSECURITY IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

Insecurity in the country has disrupted the peaceful existence of the citizenry while replacing it with anxiety and stagnation across different spheres of the nation's development or economy. It has been argued in scholarly works that English Language and Social media play effective roles in National Security. This paper aims to prove to what extent through the views of Teacher Trainees, the English Language and the selected Social media platforms, Twitter, Facebook and Instagram affect insecurity. The study used a quantitative research method through questionnaires to determine this. The study found that Nigeria's insecurity challenge is not caused by the English Language but the three social media platforms. As a solution, it was discovered that the English Language and the selected platforms can proffer solution. It is recommended that the English Language and selected Social media platforms be used to solve the insecurity challenges.

Key Words: Teacher trainees, Perception, Insecurity, Social media, Language

Introduction

In a multilingual society like Nigeria, the English Language and social media platforms like Twitter, Facebook and Instagram serve various functions but to

determine the extent of the role both play on insecurity in the country, the viewpoint of Teacher Trainees is pertinent. As independent tools they contribute to the economy of a nation by improving

individual earnings and professional mobility (Brooker, 2018). However, insecurity that affects people of all classes in the country is hydra headed and it impacts greatly on economic activities (Louis & Hiikyah, 2018). Educational activities as an integral part of the economy due to its role in human capital development (Kuwar, 2021) are affected by insecurity of which teachers and students are principal stakeholders. Teacher trainees as students and future change makers as affirmed by Down (2011) contribute to nation building. Understanding their attitudes and behaviors towards the role of the English Language and the Social media in combating insecurity is therefore important.

Despite their valued views, the roles these two aforementioned concepts play regarding insecurity require rigorous exploration. Nsude & Onwe (2017) aver at this point that, since the Nigerian civil war, armed robbery, kidnappings, communal and religious crisis, had become a frequent occurrence. However since 2009, it has been in epic proportion with the inclusion of Boko Haram and Fulani herdsmen attacks, banditry, amongst others. Contentiously, the English Language and the stated social media platforms have played chief roles. Obun-Andy, Aluko & Abdulqadir (2021) affirm that social media impacts negatively on the insecurity situation in Nigeria through the demonstrations of extremist ideologies. Walker (2012) also alleged that language barrier between a group of young men and some security forces led to the killing of influential former Boko Haram leader, Muhammed Ali. Particularly, on the issue of social media, Chukwere & Onyebukwa

(2018) differ from the submission of Obun-Andy, Aluko & Abdulqadir (2021). To them, Social media platforms like Facebook and Twitter are no threats to Nigerian security. These different views and more raise pertinent questions on what role the English Language and Social media play in ensuring security in Nigeria, thus calling for more scrutiny.

Statement of the Problem

The civil war between 1967 and 1970 credited for tribal intolerance among other things has weakened the security structure of the current democratic state in Nigeria. This flawed system is characterized by several crises and appear to have played into extant conflicts (Okeke, 2012). The reason for this is attributed to language and social media. According to Ogundepo, Oladeji & Adebajo (2017), language is capable of inciting violence while also limiting it. In a multilingual society like Nigeria, the propensity of English Language becoming a weapon for instigating insecurity is thus possible.

Similarly, Obun-Andy, Aluko & Abdulqadir (2021) affirmed that social media makes and mars security in Nigeria. In fact, they stated that WhatsApp and Facebook led among other platforms as tools in propagating insecurity in the country. The dual nature of the English Language and social media in inciting or curbing insecurity is thus worthy of rigorous investigation for effective solution. Seeing as some of these studies did not consider student teachers who are pivotal to national development, this study therefore explores their view to ascertain if the English Language and the social media

have similar effects as discovered in the aforementioned studies.

Aim and objectives of the study

The aim of this study is to investigate the contributions of the English Language and social media platforms like Twitter, Facebook and Instagram on the security status of Nigeria through the standpoint of Teacher Trainees. To achieve this, the following are the objectives:

- I. To determine the effects of the English Language and social media platforms like Twitter, Facebook and Instagram on the security status of Nigeria; and
- II. To explain how the English Language and social media platforms like Twitter, Facebook and Instagram can become instrumental in solving the insecurity challenge in Nigeria.

Research Questions

- I. What are the effects of the English Language and social media platforms like Twitter, Facebook and Instagram on insecurity in Nigeria?
- II. How can the English Language and social media platforms like Twitter, Facebook and Instagram solve insecurity challenges in Nigeria.

Review of Related Literature

Conceptual framework

Teacher Trainee

A Trainee-teacher is one who is enrolled for the professional degree of Education (Saroj, 2015). This can be a Bachelor's degree or a Professional Diploma. Such a student would have to regularly attend classes that are preparatory towards practice, preparation and teaching leading to a well-planned, and effective lesson. Students after graduating ought to be able to evaluate critically different teaching methodologies to extend their teaching repertoire and develop more profound understanding of the teaching process (Franke & Dahlgren, 1996; Zanting, Verloop & Vermunt, 2001). A lot of responsibility is placed on teacher trainees. They should demonstrate cognitive psychological view on learning and teaching by being active, constructive and self-directed while constructing personal knowledge and comprehension for their own philosophy to teach (Soininen & Merisuo-Storm, 2014). This makes them pivotal to nation building as they have been equipped to deal with different challenges and situations at different times. More so, the values that they imbibe and how they go about their duties professionally can be modeled by students they teach or inspire in those students certain attitudes and behaviours. This role they occupy thus makes being acquainted with their views integral to curbing insecurity.

Insecurity

Through terrorism, banditry, kidnappings, ethno-religious violence, and others, insecurity has become common in several parts of Nigeria. Achumba, Ighomeroho & Akpor (2013) define insecurity first, from the condition of being open or subject to danger, susceptible to harm or injury and secondly from being exposed to risk or anxiety which is a vague unpleasant emotion experienced in anticipation of some misfortune.

English Language and Social media

Solving the scourge of insecurity linguistically hinges on the centrality of language in all human affairs. Finegan (2012) opines that people use language to do things like request a favour, make promises, give directions, offer greetings, seek information, and request help among others. All these empower members of the society in a bid to achieve national growth. It is a viable tool that humans use to communicate and deal with challenges faced in the environment. As noted by Odebunmi (2016), it activates the functioning of the human society. In Nigeria, English language serves many purposes. With the national acceptability, mutual intelligibility and social neutrality, it is in a central position to bridge the different ethnic/linguistic and cultural groups while merging with mainstream national culture (Echezona, 2013).

Social Media is defined as an internet-based service which allows people connect with

the public thus having an understanding of what others do and think (Trottier & Fuchs, 2014). As a communication tool it facilitates connections and forming of new friendships, society, personal and corporate connections while maintaining extant ones (Chukwere & Onyebukwa, 2018). There are several social media networking platforms available to Nigerians, such as Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp, Snapchat, TikTok, Instagram, among others. Facebook is among the most used and mentioned of all social networking platforms, followed by WhatsApp and Twitter (Cann, 2011). In Nigeria, some of these social media platforms have empowered users to be social communicators and content originators (Nsudu & Onwe, 2017). This then leaves room for promoting both the good and bad contents that endanger lives and properties.

Theoretical Framework

The study is built on the Mediamorphosis theory. The proponents of this theory assume that unsatisfied communication needs or gaps are potent enough to alter the means and channels of communication. (Alakali, Faga & Mbursa, 2017). To corroborate this, Fidler (1997) contends that the social media platforms did not arise spontaneously and independently but instead emanated slowly from the shortfalls of older mass media means. This emergence is necessitated by the perceived shortcomings of the older media means and denials of opportunities to citizens and their pressing need for participation in the communication process and shape social phenomenon. It is on this basis also that Ayih & Shem (2020) state that the failure of older media

platforms like radio, newspaper, and television to holistically gratify the communication needs of its audience brought about the invention of the new media platforms such as Facebook, WhatsApp, Twitter, Instagram and so on.

In line with the subject of this research, the mediamorphosis theory proves that the lapses of the older media platforms liberated different individuals to spread messages that hitherto could have been sanctioned. As mentioned by Obun-Andy, Aluko & Abdulqadir (2021), the inability of the traditional media to freely allowed citizens disseminate information as well as interact privately and interpersonally or in social media groups. With this freedom, the invention and opportunity offered by usage of the new social media platforms is often used by users to share a lot of information that are inimical to the peace of the nation and raising security concerns.

Empirical Review

According to Obun-Andy, Aluko & Abdulqadir (2021), social media affects security in Nigeria negatively. In their study, they used a survey research design to collect empirical data from a sample of 200 social media users all over various platforms. The responses from the questionnaires proved that fake information and extremist ideologies were spread through these platforms. Besides, WhatsApp and Facebook were both found to promote insecurity in the country. Furthermore, Chukwuere & Onyebukwa (2018) attempted a study on the role of social media towards the challenges of insecurity confronting the northern and south-eastern regions of

Nigeria. They employed a quantitative research using online questionnaires to determine the impacts of Facebook, Twitter and WhatsApp as Social media tools on insecurity confronting northern and south-eastern parts of Nigeria. It was discovered that Nigeria's security climate is very abysmal and Social Media does not threaten Nigeria's national security. Similarly, the respondents remained undecided on if Facebook, Twitter and WhatsApp increased insecurity in the northern and south-eastern parts of Nigeria amongst other issues.

Methodology

Research Design, Sampling and Data Collection

A quota sample size of 60 respondents of teacher trainees as a reasonable size was chosen because they; that is, 100 and 200 level students are all trained to become trained teachers and would embark on Teaching Practice. This implies that due to the courses offered on the teaching profession, no different information may be obtained if more respondents were included in the sample size for the same information is likely to be obtained due to the homogeneity of the study population. Data for this study was obtained from primary sources. Questionnaire was used to obtain information on if English Language and the selected social media platforms had impact on insecurity in Nigeria and to what extent. Questionnaire as a quantitative tool aided this study because the information required from this study concerned Teacher Trainees and thus were randomly sampled. With that, numbers, percentages and frequencies

valuable in quantitative research designs are needed for analysis and interpretation.

Data Presentation and Analysis

Data generated from the questionnaire administered to NCE students of Federal College of Education (Special) Oyo were presented and analyzed below. A total of sixty (60) copies of questionnaire were distributed but a total of fifty-eight (58) copies were retrieved from the respondents, out of which fifty-three (53) copies were properly filled and found usable for the study. Two (2) copies were roughened while five copies were improperly filled by the respondents. This gives a response rate of 88.3%. Therefore, the analyses presented below were based on the fifty-three relevant copies.

Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

From Table 1, the demographic profile of the respondents is presented. The principal participants are males (56.6%) with the other participants, females (43.4%). The major participants are from 100 level (60.4%) while the 200 level are (39.6%). These stated bio-data were deliberate to improve the reliability of data generated for this research. The gender disparity had no infringement on data received because the facts are not gender dependent. It is rather an indication that the focus of the study is all-encompassing and not a gender-skewed process.

Table 1. Demographic characteristic of respondents

Item		Frequency	Percentage
Age of respondent	16 – 25 years	41	77.4%
	26 to 30 years	12	22.6%
	31 – 35 years	Nil	
	36 – 40 years	Nil	
	41 above	Nil	
Sex of respondent	Male	30	56.6
	Female	23	43.4
Level	100	32	60.4%
	200	21	39.6%

N = 53. Source: Field Survey, 2023

Effect of English Language and Social Media on Insecurity

In a sample of 53 respondents, a total of 22 respondents who represent 41.5% opine that the use of English Language contributes to

kidnappings and rituals whereas, 31 who represent 58.5% of the respondents hold that usage of English Language does not contribute to kidnappings and rituals. More so, of the 52 total respondents, 25 of them

constituting a percentage of 47.2% agree that lack of proficiency in English Language aids banditry and terrorism while 27 of them constituting a percentage of 50.9% disagreed with the statement thus leaving one respondent who represents 1.9% that did not respond. In addition, of the 53 sample size, 23 respondents comprising 43.4% agree that using English Language to discuss banditry and terrorism spreads insecurity compared to 30 respondents comprising 56.6% who do not concur with the statement. Besides, of the 52 sample size, 22 respondents who constitute 41.6% support the statement that usage of English language in news media worsens insecurity whereas 30 respondents who constitute 56.6 % disagreed with the statement and just one respondent with a percentage of 1.8 gave no response.

Of a quota sample size of 52 respondents, 32 respondents representing 60.4% agreed that Twitter was a major means of spreading insecurity in Nigeria, 20 respondents representing 37.7% disagree while one respondent representing 1.9% gave no response. In addition, of the 52 respondents for this statement, 37 respondents representing 69.8% advocate that Facebook is a major means of spreading insecurity in Nigeria, 15 respondents representing 28.3% disagreed while one respondent representing 1.9% gave no response. Out of the 52 respondents who shared their view on Instagram as a major means of spreading insecurity in Nigeria, 29 respondents representing 54.7% were in support, 23 respondents representing 43.4% disagreed while one respondent representing 1.9% gave no response. Furthermore, for the statement that Twitter was a major means of

exposing the activities of insecurity in Nigeria, 31 respondents representing 58.4% backed this and 22 respondents representing 41.6% opposed it. Similarly, for the statement Facebook is a major means of exposing the activities of insecurity in Nigeria, 33 respondents representing 62.2% backed this and 20 respondents representing 37.8% opposed it. Also, for the statement; Instagram is a major means of exposing the activities of insecurity in Nigeria, 35 respondents representing 66.1% backed this and 18 respondents representing 33.9% opposed it.

Mitigation of Insecurity in the Country

For the statement “English Language and social media provide income that reduces insecurity challenges”, 38 respondents representing 71.6% backed this and 14 respondents representing 26.4% opposed it. For the statement “English Language and social media can be used to reorient Nigerians on the ills of insecurity in Nigeria”, 32 respondents representing 61.5% backed this and 20 respondents representing 38.4% opposed it while one respondent representing 1.9% gave no response. Out of the 52 respondents who shared their views on if English Language and social media can aid investigation that lessens insecurity in Nigeria, 33 respondents representing 62.3% were in support, 19 respondents representing 35.8% disagreed while one respondent representing 1.9% gave no response. Out of the 52 respondents who shared their views on if English Language and social media are major means of untangling security challenges, 30 respondents representing 56.6% were in support, 22 respondents

representing 41.5% disagreed while one respondent representing 1.9% gave no response.

Discussion of Findings

This study was carried out to investigate the effect of the English Language and Social media on insecurity in Nigeria. Respondents' answers from the questionnaire and critical review of literature are what this study hinges on. Below are the findings discussed in line with the stated objectives.

Research Objective One: To determine the effects of the English Language and social media platforms like Twitter, Facebook and Instagram on the security status of Nigeria.

Findings from the analysis carried out demonstrated that both tools played divergent roles in insecurity in Nigeria. As for English Language, the result revealed that English Language has no way of contributing to kidnappings and rituals. Also, as part of the prevailing insecurity instances, the result showed that in terms of banditry or terrorism, lack of proficiency in the English Language does not aid these forms of insecurity challenge neither does the use of the language in discussion spread insecurity. Equally, the findings revealed that the English Language were not in support of the statement that use of the language in news media worsens insecurity. These findings differ from the submission of Ogundepo, Oladeji & Adebajo (2017) and Walker (2012) who opined that English

Language contributes to the state of security in Nigeria. This implies that the role played by English Language in the pervasiveness of insecurity in Nigeria is not about the language itself but in the way the users of the language employ it.

On the other hand, the respondents supported the assertions that the selected social media platform aided insecurity in the country. From their responses, majority of them supported the statement that Twitter, Facebook and Instagram are a major means of spreading insecurity in Nigeria with Facebook and Twitter regarded highly in the spread of insecurity. Furthermore, on the view that these social media platforms are means of exposing the activities of insecurity in Nigeria, the respondents also acclaimed that they were instrumental. In fact, just like for the spread, Facebook and Twitter were regarded highly. These findings align with the findings of Obun-Andy, Aluko & Abdulqadir (2021) affirm that social media impacts negatively on the insecurity situation in Nigeria. This implies that the means of communication which can accommodate various forms of language use are more instrumental towards the spread of insecurity in Nigeria.

Research Objective Two: To explain how the English Language and social media platforms like Twitter, Facebook and Instagram on solving the insecurity challenge in Nigeria.

To proffer solution to the gaping insecurity challenge in the country, the respondents were asked if these same concepts; that is, the English Language and the selected social media platforms could prove effective. From

the analysis of the data, it was revealed that they are quite effective in solving the insecurity problem. This is because the respondents agree that English Language and social media provide income that reduces insecurity challenges. Also, as another solution, they consented that English Language and social media can be used to reorient Nigerians on the ills of insecurity in Nigeria. This aligns with the findings of Babalola (2019) who advocates for the use of English Language in Peace education as through them concepts like peace, friendship and mutual understanding can be promoted. Moreover, the respondents also established that English Language and social media can aid investigation that lessens insecurity in Nigeria while untangling security challenges. From these responses, it can be inferred that the conclusion of Ogundepo, Oladeji & Adebajo (2017) is in tandem with the findings of this study.

Conclusion

This paper examined the effect of the English Language and selected Social media platforms like Twitter, Facebook and Instagram on insecurity challenges in Nigeria. Despite less emphasis on the views of teacher trainees, their role in nation building cannot be overemphasized.

One principal empirical results of this paper is that there is no correlation between the English language in spreading insecurity in Nigeria. However, the selected platforms are sources of security threats to the nation. Despite the differing findings, it was revealed that both are useful in the fight against insecurity.

Recommendations

1. Both the English Language and social media platforms should be deployed to solve the insecurity challenges.
2. The issue of insecurity can better be addressed through effective use of the Nigeria's official language because what is being experienced is a result of ineffective language use.
3. Also, policies should be put in place by the government to ensure that any means used to spread fear and insecurity must be curtailed while erring individuals be brought to book.

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