



Scaffolding English Language for Averting Revolution Via Social Media in Nigeria: Its Pedagogical Implications

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the essential roles of the English language in averting revolution via social media in Nigeria. The fact remains that human beings cannot live independently without the support of one another. On the process of actualizing their communicative, creative and collaborative tendencies, they encounter frictions and factions as a result of their ideological, philosophical, cultural, educational, economic and religious divergences. In every society across the globe, there is socio-strata which enables all members of the same society to know their rightful placements. Within this cycle, there are governors and the governed. The gap that divides the duo is principally responsible for class clamour or conflict that breeds revolution. The class struggle or supremacy has endlessly thrived in most human societies for decades and the need to perpetually make every possible effort at embracing peaceful co-existence, the existing differences notwithstanding cannot be undermined. Language holds significant power in shaping societal dynamics, influencing political discourse, and facilitating communication across various sectors. Nigeria, as a diverse nation with numerous ethnic and linguistic groups, relies heavily on the English language as its lingua franca. In conjunction with this, technology has immensely fascinated ease, speed and tremendous output in information dissemination globally. Of course, the era of assessing both governmental and non-governmental propagandas and plans are no longer limited to rallies, symposia, workshops and conferences in halls or via tele-communication media. In this regard, this paper attempts to examine the significance of scaffolding English language in order to foster communication, promote understanding, and avert potential conflicts in Nigeria via social media (Facebook, Whatsup, Twitter, Instagram, among others). The author gathered the relevant data through both primary (questionnaire) and secondary (books) sources. The findings of the research reveal that English remains the dominant linguistic tool in social media that can be positively manipulated to make Nigerians strategise, re-strategise and 'de-strategise' so as actualize a NEW Nigeria; reduce inter-ethnic tensions and promote dialogue using the various social media platforms for information dissemination.

ARTICLE INFO

Article History

Received: October, 2024

Received in revised form: January, 2025

Accepted: February, 2025

Published online: March, 2025

KEYWORDS

English Language, Nigeria, Revolution,
Social Media, Socio-Cultural Context,
Ethnic Diversity

INTRODUCTION

The English language has been deeply embedded in Nigeria's history since the advent of colonial rule. Nigeria, with over 250 ethnic groups,

has faced significant political challenges since its independence in 1960. Ethnic rivalries, economic asymmetric condition, and governance upheavals have ceaselessly triggered evitable crisis in

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Nigeria (Olorunmade, 2012; Ekuwem, 2020 among others). However, amidst these daunting challenges, the English language has over time emerged as a unifying linguistic and a formidable force that has become the primary means of communication in governance, commerce, education, and inter-ethnic interactions.

The diverse linguistic landscape in Nigeria necessitates a common language to bridge the gaps between various ethnic groups, ensuring national integration and political stability. This paper aims to investigate the role of the English language in averting revolution in Nigeria by promoting understanding, resolving conflicts, and fostering national unity via the social media. It relates how such functions, based on the systematic functional linguistic construct of unit, structure class and system (Osisanwo, 1998) can be applied to the resolution of all sorts of conflicts ensnaring Nigeria. Though, as Boulton (1960:3) observes, a parrot or a mynah may talk in a fashion but it would be impossible to discuss any subject with a talking bird. As such, language is so pervasive that "our humanity depends and our capacity" for its use (Lawal 2004:25). Mere words, that language produces, can make and prevent wars, create understanding or inflame prejudice, form constitutions or destroy them, sell shoddy or superior ideas, justify man's worst actions or express his highest ideals (Birk and Birk, 1959: Adedimeji, 2004).

In connection with the above assertion, Adedimeji (2004) cited in Olorunmade (2019) observes that despite the tremendous advance mankind has made in the quest of making life much easier, humanity is still enmeshed in the whirl pool of greed, conflict, fear and spiritual despair crises, altercation, insecurity and wars have become more frequent and prevalent in the contemporary world (and Nigeria is a case study) more than any period in modern history. It appears increasingly more evident that the bestiality, ruthlessness and sheer cussedness of human beings are even more than those of the animals, despite the platitudes of, and sloganeering about the vague, elusive and amoebic concepts of civilization, modernity, development and techno-scientific advancement. Against the option that

mankind has to give itself a leave of humanity, a privilege it exclusively enjoys and on the basis of which it is different from the animals, human beings have often faded to justify the unique difference, the faculty of language, in properly addressing issues and functionality redressing conflicts.

This potent significance of language in every human society has made English emerge as a linguistic tool that can be manipulated to avert all forms of revolution that can cause needless setbacks in every facet of our nation's affair. It is a reality that every techno-scientific invention, language constitutes an explanatory tool that will make the prospective beneficiaries accept, approve and strategize its marketability. This has unveiled several ways of using technological gadgets to spread pieces of integrating or unifying information using English. Some of the popularly used applications and tools are social platforms like Whatsapp, Facebook, Instagram, Telegram, etc.

STATEMENT OF RESEARCH PROBLEM

There are numerous researches on the significance of English language in averting revolution using some linguistic theories. For instance, this section captures a few literature on English language and revolution aversion, focusing on relevant studies conducted in Nigeria or similar contexts. It explores arguments regarding the role of language in shaping political ideologies, enhancing governance, and fostering effective communication amidst socio-political tensions.

The role of English language in social cohesion and conflict resolution has tremendously aroused the attention of various scholars (Heine & Kuteva, 2005 Heller, 2007). In a heterogeneous nation like Nigeria, English is a common language that possesses a congenial and dynamic cord that allays the fear of all forms of linguistic dominations and, or prejudices. A study by Akindele & Adegbite (2005) highlights the significance of English in educational contexts, where it serves as a medium to acquire knowledge and skills necessary for national development. Adedimeji (1998; 2004a & 2004b) examines "humanities: providing antidotes

for societal maladies”; “language in guidance and counselling: a psychotherapy for combating anti-social behaviours in Nigeria” and “the unifying role of English in a multilingual nation: the case of Nigeria”. Olorunmade (2019 & 2023) works on English language as a veritable tool for conflict resolution in Nigeria: a functional linguistic approach and leveraging information and communication technology in English teaching and learning; a study of selected tertiary institutions in Zaria respectively; Thompson (2019) examines teaching students to critically read digital images; Prewsky (2010) works on teaching digital natives among others.

Aim and Objectives

The principal aim of this study is to examine scaffolding English language in averting revolution in Nigeria via social media, the study is ‘platformed’ on the following objectives:

1. to analyse the significance of the English language in social media in Nigeria;
2. to investigate how English language proficiency contribute to the conflict resolution among the plural ethnic groups in Nigeria;
3. to assess the perception of English as a tool for dialogue socio-politically in Nigeria
4. to reflect the historical instances where English was employed to avert violence and promote understanding among Nigerians regardless of their socio-cultural prejudices.

RESULTS

Data Presentation and Analysis

Table 1: Does English language perform a significant role in Nigeria’s linguistic terrain?

| Response | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|----------|-----------|----------------|
| Yes | 95 | 79.17 |
| No | 15 | 12.5 |
| None | 10 | 8.33 |
| Total | 120 | 100 |

The above data shows that out of the one hundred and twenty respondents, ninety-five constituting (79.17%) affirmed that the English language perform significant roles in Nigeria’s

Research Questions

The research is guided by the following questions:

1. What is the significance of the English language in Nigeria’s social media?
2. How can English language proficiency contribute to conflict resolution among the plural ethnic groups in Nigeria?
3. How accurate is the perception of English as a tool for dialogue socio-politically in Nigeria? I
4. What are the historical instances where English were employed to avert violence and promote understanding among Nigerians regardless of their socio-cultural prejudices?

METHODOLOGY

The data of this study were sourced from one hundred and twenty (120) respondents (English language users) from divergent linguistic backgrounds. The subjects were staff of Federal University of Education, Zaria. The respondents were randomly selected and had had series of experiences in composing and sharing information with others in English language using social medial platforms. The research instrument comprises a structured questionnaire. One hundred and twenty (120) copies of the questions were administered to the randomly selected subjects in order to ascertain the significance of scaffolding English language for averting revolution in Nigeria via the social media. These questions contained in the questionnaire were strictly guided by the research questions.

linguistic terrain; fifteen (12.5%) were on the negative side while ten (8.33%) were neutral. This implies that English language performs some

communicative functions that cannot be undermined in Nigeria's linguistic terrain.

Table 2: Does English language facilitate speedy and well disambiguated information dissemination via social media in Nigeria?

| Response | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|----------|-----------|----------------|
| Yes | 105 | 87.5 |
| No | 8 | 6.67 |
| None | 7 | 5.83 |
| Total | 120 | 100 |

From the above table, it is glaring that out of the 120 (100%) respondents, 105 (87.5%) admitted that English language facilitates speedy and well disambiguated information dissemination via social media platforms in Nigeria; 8 (6.67%)

remained negative while 7 (5.83%) were neutral. This portrays that English language facilitate speedy and well disambiguated information dissemination via the social media platforms in Nigeria.

Table 3: Does English language attract the necessary recognition and acceptance as a unifying language in Nigeria?

| Response | Frequency | Percentage |
|----------|-----------|------------|
| Yes | 88 | 73.33 |
| No | 18 | 15 |
| None | 14 | 11.67 |
| Total | 120 | 100 |

The data above reveals that, out of the 120 (100%) respondents, 88 (73.33%) agreed that English language has gained the necessary recognition and acceptance as a unifying

language in Nigeria; 18 (15%) said no while 14 (11.67%) were neutral. This means that English language is recognized and accepted as a unifying language in Nigeria.

Table 4: Can English language serve as a linguistic weapon for the propagation of peaceful co-existence via the social media in Nigeria?

| Response | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|----------|-----------|----------------|
| Yes | 92 | 76.67 |
| No | 18 | 15 |
| None | 10 | 8.33 |
| Total | 120 | 100 |

The above data unveils that, out of the 120 respondents (100%), 92 (76.67%) agreed that English serve as a linguistic weapon for the propagation of peaceful co-existence via the social medial in Nigeria; 18 (15%) responded

negatively while 10 (8.33%) were neutral. This reveals that English language constitutes a formidable linguistic weapon for the propagation of peaceful co-existence via social medial in Nigeria.



Table 5: Does English language provide the linguistic platform that allays all forms of prejudices among Nigerians when it is employed for information dissemination on social media?

| Response | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|----------|-----------|----------------|
| Yes | 90 | 75 |
| No | 16 | 13.33 |
| None | 14 | 11.67 |
| Total | 120 | 100 |

It is obvious from the above data that out of the 120 (100%) respondents, 90 (75%) affirmatively stated that the English language provides a linguistic platform that allays all forms of prejudices among Nigerians when it is employed for information dissemination on social

media; 16 (13.33%) negatively responded while 14 (11.67%) were neutral. This implies that the English language provides a linguistic platform that allays all forms of prejudices among Nigerians when it is employed for information dissemination on social media.

Table 6: Is English language used on the social media platforms by majority of Nigerians when publicizing information?

| Response | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|----------|-----------|----------------|
| Yes | 43 | 35.33 |
| No | 77 | 64.17 |
| None | 0 | 0 |
| Total | 120 | 100 |

The table above apparently shows that out of the 120 respondents, 43 (35.33%) agreed that English language is used on the social media by majority of Nigerians when publicizing information; 77 (64.17%) gave negative

responses while none (0%) were neutral. This reveals that English language is not employed by majority of Nigerians on social media for publicizing information.

Table 7: Does English possess the necessary sociolinguistic virtues that will trigger genuine dialogue on social media among Nigerians?

| Response | Frequency | Percentage |
|----------|-----------|------------|
| Yes | 64 | 53.33 |
| No | 56 | 46.67 |
| None | 0 | 0 |
| Total | 120 | 100 |

The above table reveals that out of the 120 respondents, 64 (53.33%) overtly agreed that English language possess the necessary sociolinguistic virtues that can trigger genuine dialogue on social among Nigerians; 56 (46.67%) gave negative responses while none (0%) were

neutral. This proves that English language possess the necessary sociolinguistic virtues that can trigger genuine dialogue on social among Nigerians which can ward off every sentiment that can potentially ignite crisis.

Table 8: Are there historical and, or indelible evidences that show that English had been employed for successful dialogues that truly averted violence in Nigeria?

| Response | Frequency | Percentage |
|----------|-----------|------------|
| Yes | 82 | 68.34 |
| No | 28 | 23.33 |
| None | 10 | 8.33 |
| Total | 120 | 100 |

The above table reveals that out of the 120 respondents, 82 (68.34%) overtly agreed that there are historical and indelible evidences that show that English had been employed for successful dialogues that truly averted violence in Nigeria; 28 (23.33%) gave negative responses while 10 (8.33%) were neutral. This affirms that English had been employed for successful dialogues that truly averted violence in Nigeria.

FINDINGS AND ITS DISCUSSION

The findings from this study will be presented in a descriptive and analytical format. Data will be analyzed in themes, exploring the role of the English language in political stability, conflict resolution, and national unity. The analysis will highlight specific examples of how the English language has contributed to averting revolutionary movements in Nigeria via the use of social media. Furthermore, potential limitations and challenges faced by the English language as a tool for averting revolution will be addressed. To this end, the findings of this research and its discussion are harmoniously organized in consonance with the principal research questions which were posed to guide the study and its synopsis is captured as follows.

1. **Cultural integration:** it is overtly revealed in the analysis that English plays a significant role in harmonizing diverse ethnic groups by providing a unifying linguistic platform that enhances inter-cultural interactions or communications in Nigeria.
2. **Linguistic Diversity:** The data analyzed indicated that the English language has a significant impact in generating and promoting information on social media that will persistently ward off all forms of unrest in Nigeria. However, the findings also reveal

that many language professionals maintain prejudiced notion about the linguistic supremacy that the English language has attracted through the recognized functions that are assigned to it. This suggests that the current dialogue between linguists and technologists is critical for maintaining linguistic depth and constructivism.

3. **Cultural Impact:** The analyzed data also revealed the fear of domination and extinction that the English language has posed to other Nigerian languages because of its (English language) involvement in publicizing series of uniting and goal-oriented information. But, this challenge will trigger intellectual curiosity that will enable more studied from scholars whose native languages have not been promoted via the activities of the social media.
4. **Conflict resolution:** This study shows that English proficiency plays a key role in conflict resolution, facilitating dialogues during crisis or any kind of upheaval.
5. **Perception of English:** The analysis portrays that English is not only a language of instruction but also a tool for empowerment and social mobility linking it to economic opportunity and national stability.
6. **Historical context:** This research has unveiled that there are historical instances such as the peaceful negotiations during Nigeria's transition to democracy in 1999 highlighted how English plays a pivotal roles in discussions that averted potential violence (Akindele & Adegbite, 2005).
7. **Communicative Ease:** Social media has enhanced ease in an unquantifiable manner. Before the advent, adoption and spread of the waves of the use of technological

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gadgets, the processes of communication were stressful to both leaders and the led. But, technology has in no small measure reduced the rigors and risks that were once experienced by leaders, teachers, learners, parents, etc. on the process of nation's building. Nigerians have the choice of anchoring and participating in the communicative activities from anywhere. The engagement of English enables Nigerians to make a choice of the social media platform that will be appropriate to convey their messages to the decoders (recipients).

8. **Collaboration:** Social media has measurelessly enhanced the accessibility of information using English language. In the same vein, it is possible for Nigerians to generate millions of constructive pieces of information across the globe as a result of social media's connectivity and collaborative tendencies. Currently, information dissemination is no longer limited by space as a result of the engagement of the English language on the social media which has debilitated every communicative impediment that exist among Nigerian who hail from different linguistic backgrounds.

Challenges of using English language on social media in Nigeria

There is no innovation that is not associated with its peculiar challenge(s). Some of the factors affecting the use of English language on social media for the aversion of revolution in Nigeria is interest. Some Nigerian do not have interest in any educational programmes even if they are offered scholarships. Financially, the resources of each Nigerian determines the sophistication of his or her education and technological gadgets (s)he will be able to buy and use for information generation and dissemination. Psychologically, the disposition of most Nigerians is unstable due to hunger, low social status or some life-threatening challenges. Philosophically, the way and manner at which Nigerians view technological advancement in general differs. Some embrace it while some are skeptical about it let alone its adoption. Politically, the

governmental policies can be a major constrain. The inability of the government to provide the necessary funds for the acquisition of qualitative education and technological gadgets affordably and as well formulate, implement and adjudicate policies in favor of the English language among Nigerians hampers information dissemination on social media in Nigeria.

CONCLUSION

This paper reiterates the influential roles played by the English language in averting revolution in Nigeria via the social media. It emphasizes the necessity of language as a unifying force in diverse societies and underscores the importance of language policies that promote inclusivity, integration, and effective communication. The study aims to provide insights and recommendations for policymakers, linguistic social media communicators, and researchers interested in understanding the complex interplay between language and political stability in Nigeria.

RECOMMENDATIONS

This paper recommends the following for consideration and implementation if English language is expected to be more effectively, efficiently, profitably and beneficially engaged to compose and dispatch constructive information on social media for the aversion of revolution in Nigeria.

1. The government should create an enabling environment for the viability that will enhance the promotion of education. This can be done by funding the building and the equipping ICT centers with computers and other gadgets that can be accessed by Nigerians at affordable prices.
2. The government and non-government agencies should make provision for scholarship for interested Nigerians (most especially, the less privileged) so as to motivate them to put in more profitable efforts in using technologies to encode and decode crisis-free and progressive information using the English language.



3. Nigerians should be oriented and compelled to orientate everyone around them on the need to comply with the use of technologies on the process of spreading information that paves way for national cohesion.
4. The parents should encourage their wards to make provision for the necessary motivation by providing for them basic needs that will facilitate information dissemination via social media platforms using the English language.
5. The society should create a peaceful atmosphere that will make all Nigerians including those in diaspora to persistently embrace and use social media for the dissemination of crucial information with the use of English language.

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