Perspectives on Applied Linguistics in Language & Literature

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Foreword

This is a nearly — 500 — page book; yet its contents are only a selection from the numerous papers presented at an international conference whose theme is the title of this work. It is a laudable feshschrift in honour of Retired Professor E. E. Ubahakwe of the Faculty of Education, University of Ibadan. Each of the forty-one authors is an academician in his or her own right, but because some of them have paired up in paper-presentation, there are altogether thirty-eight papers in the book. The Editors, three of them, have done a good job in organizing the papers into eight sections and the captions given to the sections together make clear the comprehensiveness of the coverage of the chosen theme.

The Keynote Address by Professor Echeruo is very stimulating; one hears in it the voice of a master handing down critical admonitions and historical as well as contemporary facts on language-teaching in Nigerian Universities and on the development of metalanguage in Yoruba and Igbo.

The highlights in the rest of the book are many but there are a few defects. On the whole I have enjoyed reading the manuscript and I have found it informative, nay educative. I thank the honorand, Professor Ubahakwe, for giving me the honour of writing this foreword to the book.

In the Section captioned "Linguistics and Language Functions "I recognise the following as the star outputs: assessment of the state of the art of applied linguistics programmes in Nigeria; the importance of linguistics in second language learning; an investigation into whether the Igbo language is related to the Hebrew language; and a syntactic description of Wole Soyinka's style in his poem "Idanre".

In the Section devoted to Sociolinguistics Perspectives on language and Education, I see the highlights as follows: a revaluation of the choice of English as the official **lingua franca** for Nigeria; a proposal of measures for making the English Language more communicatively effective in Nigeria; a sociolinguistic study of aspects of Edo (Benin) proverbs; the implication of language in the head for the choice of language of instruction for a Nigerian primary school; and an investigation of the influence of culture and environment on students' comprehension of English poetry in Nigerian secondary schools.

In the Section with the heading "Literacy and National Development", we have: factors responsible for generally low literacy level in Nigeria and measures towards achieving truly vibrant literacy in the country; and the challenges facing Nigerian languages as media for computer literacy and how the demands should be effectively met.

In the Section titled "The Language Curriculum and Instruction Materials "the highlights, as I see them, are these: a demonstration of the practical constraints against mother tongue education in the lower classes of primary schools in the Federal Capital Territory; and a clarion call on Igbo-speaking states' governments to establish more centres for the coordination of Igbo Studies and to increase appropriately the funding of the existing Centre for Igbo Studies at Imo State University in Owerri.

In the Section devoted to Teaching and Evaluation of Language and Literature: Principles and Challenges, I single out for mention a proposal of the eclectic method for teaching the Arabic language in Nigerian Secondary schools. I find this to be a Section marred by carelessness of authors in the use of the terms 'Language' and 'Literature' when what is really intended is "English Language and Literature". Another contributor errs in making the following statement: 'For the purpose of this paper, our literature refers to any written text'. The error is in the omission of the language of the written text involved, i.e., English. The author has overlooked the fact that there are written texts in other languages, not least African languages. Another contributor writes as the title of his paper "Challenges of the Teaching and Learning of Literature in Nigerian Schools". Instead of Literature simpliciter, the author intended 'Literature in English'.

The Section headed "Language in the Classroom: Practice, Problems and Prospects" features the following bright lights: the recommendation of Process Writing approach for teaching composition writing in English to students in tertiary educational institutions; a recommendation that the process of scoring written composition in English for school certificate public examinations should be such that will involve a pre-scoring activity-oriented training of all the scorers (examiners) since this will help to reduce subjectivity in scoring and so improve reliability in scoring; and proposal of techniques for teaching 'been' and 'being' in English Language lessons in Nigerian secondary schools (a second language situation).

In closing I heartily recommend this book as a must-read to students and teachers in the discipline of Education. All will find the book both interesting and highly educative.

Dr. Adeboye Babalola
Professor Emeritus of Yoruba Literature
University of Lagos.

25 September, 2002

Preface

This book is a child of the intricate, metaphysical interplay of love and knowledge – the love of knowledge and the knowledge of love — with Professor Ephraim Ebolinye Ubahakwe as locus and focus. It started vaguely as an inkling which brought the cream of Professor Ubahakwe's former students together in a semi-formal talk-shop at which the need to celebrate our retiring but untiring tutor and mentor was roundly acknowledged. Against the landscape of our local history, we had a tall tripartite dream - to organize an international conference, form a National Association of Language Educators as a follow-up and then cap it with a befitting book, all in honour of our icon of tutelage and to the glory of God for a full and fulfilled scholarly career. I have had the rare privilege of residing beside this noble dream and presiding over its actualization.

On April 19 and 20, 2001, we had a highly successful and stimulating conference on "Perspectives on Applied Linguistics in Language and literature" at the University of Ibadan, Nigeria, immediately after which the Nigerian Association of Language Educators (NALE) was formed. This book is the product of a critical review of the seminal interactions at the conference, and a restrictive selection, based on quality and relevance from fifty-seven (57) papers presented and critiqued. This, therefore, is not just another commemorative book or mere conference proceedings, but a fitting climax in a mellifluous drama of love and learning.

The book's 38 chapters are divided into eight (8) sections based mainly on the criterion of convenience, as all the chapters are interconnected through the motif of a functional methodology which seeks to channel linguistic forms, features and tenets towards practical, utilitarian and heuristic ends. Section One which contains only one article – the thought-provoking keynote address by Professor M. J. C. Echeruo – is preceded by a selection of Tributes to Professor Ubahakwe by his long-standing academic colleagues and professional associates, including Emeritus Professors Ayo Banjo and Ayo Bamgbose, Professor Chris O. Udoh (the then Dean, of the Faculty of Education, University of Ibadan), Professor C. Ochapa Onazi (Pro-Chancellor and Chairman of Councils, Ado Bayero University, Kano and Benue State University, Makurdi), Mr. Nicholas S. Law (Director-General, International Biographic Centre Cambridge, England) and Sir Ian Gourlay of UWC International Development Office, London.

Section Two introduces "the book proper" with articles of general and exploratory perspectives on "Linguistics and Language Functions". Olaofe's paper establishes this purview with his incisive thesis on capacity-building in Applied Linguistics from the Nigerian perspective, while Obi Okoye in the next chapter re-visits the age-long debate on the applicability and applications of Linguistics in second language teaching and learning. In chapter 4, Lawal embarks on a recapitulatory exploration in theoretical linguistics with regard to the nature and dimensions of competence before proposing a model of communicative goals in language education. Using copious and relevant data from Igbo and Hebrew, Modupe Oduyoye raises in chapter 5 the plausible question of a possible distant genetic relationship between the two languages in spite of some well-known phylogenetic taxonomies which may not readily support this. Kolawole's article, the last in this section, attempts a stylistic study of the syntax of Wole Soyinka's "Idanre and other poems" by delving deep into certain syntactic peculiarities which may render some of the poems incomprehensible for the ordinary reader.

The third section examines in various ways certain sociolinguistic perspectives on Language and Education, with Ker re-opening in Chapter 7 the old controversial wound-the choice, or rather the dilemma of English as a national language for Nigeria. In his "revaluation," he submits pointedly that "it is difficult to drop English" which would continue to be used as "a world language and a language of intellectualization". Babatunde then presents in Chapter 8 the state of English in the Nigerian second language context. He concludes on the need to arrest the diversity and "confusion" in the use of English, "through informed and objective codification so that the English language development and use of learners can be realistically assessed and rewarded". In the next chapter, Omo-Ojugo and Uhunmangbo attempt a sociolinguistic analysis of aspects of Benin proverbs, while in Chapter 10 Onochie discusses the concept of "language in the head" and its sociolinguistic manifestations in listening, speaking, reading and writing activities before drawing implications for the choice of a language of instruction in the primary school. The final chapter by Ameh in this section underscores the facilitative role of culture in students' comprehension of poetry.

Section Four, which focuses on the interplay of "Language, [illegible]racy and National Development", opens with Olajide's article [illegible]racy of national development, by examining

Section four, which focuses on the interplay of "language, literacy and National Development", opens with Olajide's article on how "to link literacy to national development, by examining Nigeria's literacy policy, and identifying, analyzing and proffering solutions to the problems that beset literacy work in the country". In the next chapter, Jiboku goes further to explore the interface of literacy education and language education in relation to national development in multilingual contexts as found in Nigeria, while the Okwudishus critically examine the potentials and limitations of local languages as literacy media in a world drastically reduced to a cyber-village by the computer and internet revolution.

"The Language Curriculum and Instructional Materials" is the sub-theme uniting the five articles in Section Five which opens with Obanya's seminal and stimulating article on 'Curriculum Overload in Language Education Programme for Basic Education". Relying on his wealth of pedagogical, research and technocratic experiences in the field of language curriculum development, he offers useful and far-reaching suggestions on how the problem of curriculum overload can be gainfully converted to the potential of curriculum enrichment. Ohia and Adeosun then undertake in chapter 16 a pedagogical evaluation of the facilitative potentials of ESL course books for learners' self-instruction, before Lasisi's exploration of the values of the newspaper as enrichment materials for enhancing the performance of students in several aspects of the English language. Araromi's paper discusses issues in planning reading improvement in secondary schools. He sees as inadequate the "occasional and incidental" reading instructions during comprehension and literature classes. He suggests the inclusion of reading instruction on the timetable and not just as part of English language instruction and that this should cut across content areas of the arts, the social sciences and sciences. The last chapter by Opeke in this section attempts a critical appraisal of the presentation of sex-role stereotypes, i.e gender bias, in the context of English language textbooks and submits a verdict of "unequal chances", to the detriment of positive female roles.

"The development and use of indigenous languages" is the common thrust of four independent contributors in Section Six of this book, with Odumuh's opening chapter critically assessing the state of the art of mother-tongue education at the all-important, foundational level of the lower primary school. In Chapter 19, Maisamari takes a more positive look at the

implications of mother tongue education for the teaching and learning of English, in which would seem to be a balanced departure from the obsessive focus on interference by many ESL teachers. While Bassey's Chapter 22 critically appraises the place of indigenous languages in public health education programmes in Nigeria, Ezikeojiaku's Chapter closes this section with a report on a micro-study of Igbo-speaking states as an empirical illustration of the level of government's initiative in indigenous language development in Nigeria.

The penultimate, ten-chapter section focuses on the broad sub-theme of "Teaching and Evaluation of Language and Literature: Principles and challenges". In Chapter 24, Onukaogu presents some deep, thought-provoking reflections on the minimum requirements for successful literature-based English curricula in Nigerian schools and colleges, while in the next chapter Oladosu reminds us of the pedagogical wisdom in methodological eclecticism, which he then applies to the currently parlous state of Arabic Education in Nigerian Schools. Ogunnaike's Chapter 26 analyses the challenges of teaching and learning of English in Nigerian secondary schools before Aliyu's suggestions in Chapter 27 on principles and practical steps to follow in enhancing the teaching and learning of English in these same schools. In Chapter 28 Adegbile and Igweike report a study of the relative effects of teachers' length of service and attitudes to English teaching on students' achievement in English language, stressing that teachers' attitudes contributed significantly to students' performance, but teachers' experience did not. While Ezeokoli's Chapter 29 reports an empirical study which attempted to establish distinguishing features of classroom interaction patterns of "effective" and "ineffective" teachers of English in selected schools in Ogun State, Okedara and Oden focus in Chapter 30 on the values of the process writing approach in the context of modern trends in composition instruction at the tertiary level of the school system. In chapter 31 Umoh pinpoints the curriculum implications of the trends and practices in language assessment at the secondary school level in Nigeria and finally suggests the need to project into the future.

Isiugo-Abanihe's article, Chapter 32, is a report on a qualitative evaluation of reading instruction in primary schools in Abia State in which she found a prevalence of the text/ approach. She has thus suggested the need for would incorporate

meaning-driven strategies. Oyetunde's effort in Chapter 33 complements Isiugo-Abanihe's concern, by investigating the psycholinguistic strategies which secondary school students in Jos employ in processing print. His major finding, which also has crucial implication for reading instruction, has to do with students' poor reading strategies and these have been attributed to a low level of English language proficiency and poor instructional practices in the schools. In Chapter 34, the final one in this section, Okpala and Odinko report their findings in a highly informed study of the effects of activity – oriented scoring seminar on reliability in scoring of written composition in English, giving practical suggestions on how to achieve the "ultimate goal of over-coming the problems of subjectivity/ unreliability in the scoring of written composition in English.

The book ends on the note of the pragmatic imperative to integrate theory and implementation, and fuse principles with classroom practices. The last section thus examines "language in the classroom", focusing on specific instructional and learning strategies, problems and prospects. In Chapter 35 Jimoh examines the problems and prospects of translation instruction in Nigerian Colleges of Education, using FCE Abeokuta as a case-study, while Ekere discusses in Chapter 36 the English diphthongs as learning task for Ibibio learners. Afangideh carries Ekere's concern for learners' difficulties into the syntactic sphere in Chapter 37 through a detailed analysis of the present tense errors of Ibibio learners of English. Chapter 38 by Okon and Ansa ends the book by offering special tips and suggestions on the teaching of the problematic phono-syntactic distinction between "been" and "being". This thus underscores the deliberate sequential arrangement of the sections and chapters of the books, which starts off with broad theoretical and speculative issues, proceeding through those requiring application and integration of theory into practice, and finally to issues of specific, practical classroom strategies and activities.

It is our fervent hope that students and teachers of language, literature, communication and their common border – the rather nebulous discipline of Applied Linguistics – would find this book stimulating and inspiring both for pedagogical purposes and in the knowledge – generating process of research.

Adebayo Lawal
Ilorin, December 27, 2001

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12 Revitalizing the Nigerian Literacy Environment

Billy Stephen Olajide

Literacy: A Panoramic View

Literacy is one subject that cannot be easily defined because it is different things to different scholars. Hillerich (1978) considered it to be the demonstration of competence in communication skills which enables the individual to function appropriate to his/her age, independently in his/her society, and with potential for progress in that society. This view appears strong for allowing for individual difference in a collective task of socio-economic and political dimensions. Uzodinma (1993) also identified many types (concepts) of literacy, from 'preliteracy', through 'dysfunctional literacy', to 'computer literacy', all of which he considered to be united in purpose, function, and significance. While Postman (1978) advanced that literacy should be tied to a nation's aspirations and efforts to liberate the individual, Smith (1978) emphasized that it should guide the thought of the individual, as he or she seeks to be critical, creative and participatory. That literacy programmes drawn up by bodies and governments are repressive and suspect has been hotly argued by leftist scholars like Friere (1972) and Postman (1978). Despite the divergent views held about literacy, most scholars are agreed that it is an essential ingredient for individual and national development. Hence every serious teacher of language ought to identify the literacy level required by the society and decide what he intends to contribute towards attaining and sustaining that level. Genuine literacy efforts must empower the individuals to cause further positive change in their environment.

However, since the last half a century, the world has been struggling to attain the much desired level of literacy. Regardless of their degree of industrialization, nations have suffered illiteracy, although the developing economies are the worst hit by the (UNESCO, 1965). Economic situation of a nation, income affects a nations's level of

nation's literacy attainment. UNESCO (1978) observed that socio-economic development does not produce literacy; rather the latter is part of the former. It is difficult to determine how many illiterates a country contains, but it appears that the entire world may be far from attaining full literacy.

It is not easy to determine who an illiterate is, just as it is almost impossible to peg a final point at which illiteracy starts or ends. Hillerich's (1978) view of an illiterate person as one who is unable to read and write well enough to perform social functions successfully seems attractive. Yet, literacy goes beyond merely performing social functions; it entails the abilities to use numerals wisely, undertake risks, and project adequately for the future. Educational definition of literacy, such as that of Hillerich (1978), may not be adequate because formal certification alone does not guarantee that the recipient will always be able to cope with his socio-economic needs or engage relevantly in societal functions. Unoh, Omojuwa, and Crow's (1983), and Oyetunde and Umolu's (1991) observation of illiteracy among the ostensibly educated Nigerians tends to show that formal education with professional standing should not be regarded as an absolute weapon for stamping out illiteracy. The implication is that classroom teaching of reading and writing can not be useful unless it links the learners with the real tasks they would perform outside the school system. The goal of reading and writing should be tied to a nations's aspiration, and must not only liberate the individual as posited by Friere (1972) and Postman (1978), but also guide him or her in taking rational decisions about himself/herself in a constantly changing environment. Literacy is a matter of aim and population.

In Nigeria, illiteracy is as high as the nations's level of poverty (Uzodinma, 1993), but with the support of powerful world bodies, especially the United Nations, and the Reading Association of Nigeria (RAN), the country has mounted quite a number of literacy programmes that could enhance national prosperity. Since the last quarter of the twentieth century, successive Nigerian governments seem to have seriously given thought to UNESCO's (1965) Teheran observation that only a changed socio-economic and political order can reduce a nation's (thus the world's) illiteracy, and increase her chances of prosperity.

Literacy as a Component of National Development

Development takes place in a nation when her citizens enjoy the benefits of structural and technological leaps occasioned mainly by indigenous efforts. Such efforts

who is functionally illiterate. Hence, UNESCO (1978) views functional literacy as the possession of knowledge and skill in reading, writing and numeracy by which the individual is able to act independently and desirably, in group ways, at all times.

Describing the low level of literacy among the primary school teachers and their pupils in Nigeria, Oyetunde and Aboki (1998) maintained:

> *No nation or individual can really advance in our modern society without literacy. Literacy has long been recognised as essential to efficient functioning at an individual level, and to scientific and technological growth at national level (p. vi).*

The awareness of the development potentials of literacy probably made the Federal Government of Nigeria to declare the Year 2000 as target for attaining full literacy in the country. Thus the nation launched the Mass Literacy Campaign in 1982, and established the Centre for Adult Education in Kano in 1985. Government also launched the International Literacy Year in 1990, and set up the National Commission for Mass Literacy backed with Decree (No. 11) the same year. Unfortunately however, the much targeted year is past, and Nigerians remain largely illiterate!

Problems and Prospects of Effective Literacy Work in Nigeria

The recognition that the past and present governments in Nigeria seem to accord literacy notwithstanding, literacy work has hardly progressed among the people. A frightening proportion of the population is still battling with illiteracy. The tragic situation explains why the nation is yet to be out of the woods.

One factor responsible for the low level of literacy is that the people have not been able to control their population. Increased population without commensurate increase in productivity is bound to produce unbridled poverty. Not that governments and interested (inter) national bodies have not addressed the issue of population control with adequate national planning, but the unpredictable political terrain, religious bigotry, economic downturn, and socio-cultural constraints tend to make, permanent mess of the genuine efforts.

Also, the nation is yet to evolve quite stable and development-oriented educational policies. Although the National Policy on Education (FGN 1999, revised) stressed education for self and development, the implementors of the policy seem to have [illegible] the scenario, teachers across the rungs [illegible]pped, disorientated and

dejected; research that would have rekindled literacy drives, and ginger national development and integration seems abandoned or haphazardly carried out. Nobody appears to care about education being the capstone of self-determination and good progress. Even when grants are given to institutions for research projects, the grants are either misallocated or diverted. Educational policy makers emphasize the sciences, engineering and medicine to the detriment of crucial disciplines like applied linguistics, reading, literacy, and language education. If any nation thinks there can be scientific and technological breakthroughs without appropriate arts and humanities to back up, such a philosophy is as good as saying that there can be man without a brain!

Even if Nigeria sinks all her revenue into promoting literacy, the question remains, where does she obtain the right personnel? Literacy and literacy-related courses are hardly distinctly taught in the Nigerian school system. Teachers tend to make literacy and reading subservient to language and literature. And government's incentives for those studying Adult Literacy and Education seem to have been withdrawn long since.

The external aids from international bodies interested in literacy development hardly spread to the right quarters. Apart from the quantitative inadequacy of such aids, they often have serious foreboding in-terms of national security and orientation. Afterall, he who pays the piper dictates the tune.

The Nigeria's media policies do not seem literacy - friendly. Media services that should have been supportive of pre-literacy, literacy, and post-literacy causes are not fully available. The good old role mentioned by UNESCO (1978) seems abandoned for now. The activities of the African Adult Education Association (AAEO) based at Ahmadu Bello University Zaria, and the literacy studies and courses organised at the University of Ibadan which the media ably projected to the favourable mentioning of UNESCO (1978) seem to have waned. Eminent Nigerian leaders and philanthropists that should have endowed funds to sustain and boost such activities have focused on other areas of national life.

Religious interest in literacy development has vanished. Clerics favour individual, rather than national prosperity. As such, the literacy initiative made by older spiritual leaders like Bishop Crowther and AL Maghili constitute mere stories.

Again, the Nigerian setting is multilingual, leaving English to dominate communication tasks at official and many informal levels. Whereas the child, like the adult, learns best in his/her mother tongue (Olajide, 2000), the Nigerian child is compelled to learn in English (although (s)he, may offer the mother tongue as

a subject) after the lower primary school. Moreover, the Nigerian elite does not seem generally committed to the implementation of a literacy programme aggressive enough to emancipate the masses. Otherwise, the various literacy programmes of the government already enunciated should have considerably impacted on the polity. Perhaps, the feeling is that full literacy for the country could threaten the elite's grip on the economy. Hence, illiteracy is still prevalent in the country, especially among women, although it appears to have increased fairly among adults generally (Uzodinma, 1993). Nigeria's pattern of literacy is hardly different from the global pattern observed before the Teheran Conference (1965).

Another problem of literacy is that it is almost impossible to determine at what level literacy is most visible and assessable in the country. Many individuals who are termed "literates" do not reach a level of independence in their skills, and can not put the skills to constant use. As a result, the skills deteriorate. This may be why highly formally educated Nigerians relapsed to illiteracy as observed by Unoh, Omojuwa and Crow (1983) and Oyetunde and Aboki (1993).

However, aggressive and steady literacy work in Nigeria would liberate and sensitize the masses. It would reduce and remove poverty among them. Effective literacy policy would also improve the citizen's aesthetic and civic qualities, and domestic life would also be considerably enhanced. Moreover qualitative and quantitative literacy would harmonize and sharpen Nigerians impressions of themselves and the rest of the world; they would become culturally more aware, and better prepared for international living. Dynamic literacy is capable of turning the economy around as it can place the nation above the charge of over-dependence on oil.

Strategies for Revitalizing Literacy in Nigeria

Government has the greatest stake in literacy development. Without appropriate political resolve, illiteracy can not be most effectively tackled in Nigeria. According to UNESCO (1978), any government that tackles illiteracy with total commitment has set a precondition for favourable social change. Government must seek all avenues to ensure the right level of literacy development. In doing that, it should seek and obtain international support and cooperation, although international interests must be prevented from stifling the nation's initiative on literacy. Nigeria should [illegible] partnership with interested foreign bodies, rather than [illegible] the bodies. National development can not be truly

national unless Nigeria relies on herself in the efforts to create a fully literate Nigeria. External aid alone cannot guarantee a healthy, secured, and dynamic literacy environment. Government should encourage literacy - related exchanges of people (especially intellectuals), ideas and information with the rest of the world. Experiences of one nation in literacy matters can always be useful to another country.

The nation also needs education - (any literacy -) related industries that would produce paper, books, teaching equipment locally and massively, and prevent the wasteful and dangerous importation of such items. Again, external involvement must be prevented from competing with potential national production. The provision of needs for literacy work should be multilateral rather than central, so as to induce local productive and improvisational initiative. Multilateral aids should be used to finance local academic fellowships and salaries of indigenous literacy specialists. Only Nigerians can best determine and meet Nigeria's literacy needs.

Government should view investments in literacy as long-term affairs. There should be no hurried foundation and implementation of literacy programmes, otherwise, the programmes would wind up too soon. Every succeeding government should respect and uphold the literacy perspective opened up by a previous government to ensure consistency and continuity in the struggle to attain a fully literate society.

Besides, literacy should aim at making the literate join others most meaningfully in nation-building (Okam 1996). Citizenship values, especially nationism, nationalism, and commitment to the rule of the law, should continue to be fostered in Nigeria's literacy policy. Since egalitarianism is the desire of Nigerian education (FGN, 1981) literacy workers should aim at producing literates with egalitarian dispositions.

There is sufficient evidence that literacy is most functional when given and received in the mother tongue (Abiri 1983; Hillerich 1979; Olajide 2000; Oyetunde 1999). Therefore literacy programmes in Nigeria should entail the use of the mother tongue. The school system should not ignore literacy in their curricula as it qualifies to be taught separately. They should evolve good modes of evaluating literacy performance, and mainly situate learning tasks in the environments of the learners. Literacy workers can translate from the mother tongue to the target language and vice versa (as advocated by Okeke, 1997 and Oyedeji, 1997), especially when dealing with children and adult illiterates. And, at the advanced level of learning, cognizance

should be taken of the subject of specialization in selecting and implementing literacy materials (Olajide 1997).

Parents, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) - particularly the Reading Association of Nigeria, opinion leaders, and philanthropists should consider full literacy for Nigeria as an urgent and non-negotiable matter. They can endow university chairs on literacy, institute prizes for the outstanding teaching and learning of literacy, and donate libraries and literacy-related materials to Nigeria's institutions of higher learning. They could sponsor media programmes that would motivate the pre-literate and help literacy as well as post-literacy work. From world's experience (UNESCO 1978), literacy thrives significantly when backed up with appropriate media coverage. If the Nigerian media encourage the development of literacy, they would be saved of the stress they undergo in locating and reporting incidents of ignorance, poverty, and underdevelopment for which the advanced world pity Nigeria.

Conclusion

Literacy is a vital tool of national development and integration. It is many things to many people, and it is hardly possible for any society to attain absolute literacy. The advantages inherent in sustainable literacy have impelled Nigeria to embark on quite a number of literacy-related programmes in the last fifty years. However, the nation's level of literacy remains worrisomely low. Many factors are responsible for the mismatch between the nation's literacy development efforts and the obtained results. Unstable political climate, weak socio-economic base, the apathy among the elite, society's misplacement of values, individual's lack of motivation for the attainment of truly vibrant literacy, poor educational goals, and the slippery nature of literacy itself have been responsible for the unimpressive literacy environment in Nigeria. In order to revitalize the environment for better national development and integration, the nation must look inward most sincerely, and cautiously reciprocate whatever can be raked from the outside world.

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