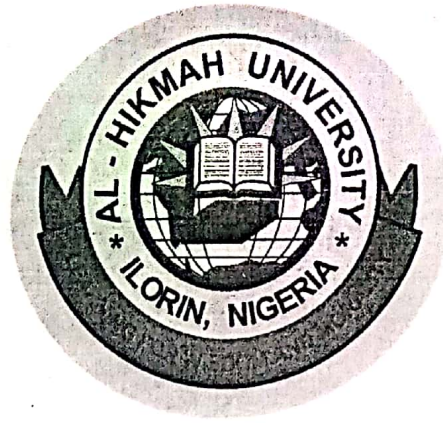




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ENGLISH LANGUAGE AS A TOOL FOR IMPROVED PERFORMANCE BY THE NIGERIAN THREE TIERS OF GOVERNMENT FOR NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Y. BELLO

Abstract

This paper focuses on English language as a social engineering factor for an improved performance by leaders to enhance national development. The coming of English language in Nigeria vis-à-vis its importance was highlighted, and that an enlightened society is a product of mass education for a society to be on the fast lane of development pursued by its leaders. The research questions were answered using Mean, Standard Deviation and Rank Order statistics while the research hypotheses were tested by using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient statistic. The population for the study is all the Federal, State and Local Government staffers in the six geo-political zones of Nigeria from where the target population of 2 Federal, State and Local government staffers each were selected using stratified random sampling technique making a total of 36 staffers as respondents. Researcher-designed 16 item questionnaire was given to two experts for its content validity. The experts' corrections and advice were effected in writing the 16 item questionnaire that was used for the study. The reliability of the instrument was carried out using Pearson r which resulted in 0.57 at 0.05 alpha level of significance. The findings indicated that the Calculated Mean of 2.71 is greater than Criterion Mean of 2.50 which is good enough and implies that there is a correlation between literacy and good governance. Also, there was a good correlation between literacy and national development in that the Calculated Mean of 3.16 is greater than the Criterion Mean of 2.50. The finding also revealed that there was a positive and high significant relationship between literacy and good governance since the calculated r value of 1.212 is greater than the critical r value of .325, as well, there existed positive and high significant relationship between literacy and national development as the calculated r value of 1.422 is greater than the critical r value of .325. Based on these, it was concluded that leaders should make access to quality education for all as a priority in that national development only thrives in an enlightened and literate society that is led by leaders whose leadership style transcends beyond being mere political leaders. It is also recommended that reading should be made a separate subject especially at the primary and secondary schools, and particular periods of the week should be allotted to school-wide reading by learners, teachers and other supporting staff. It is also recommended that leaders too must lead by examples; and as such, there must be a particular time set aside for them (leaders) to read texts apart from Newspapers which are always read on their behalf by their chief press secretaries, among other recommendations.

Keywords: English language, quality delivery, improved performance, Nigerian

Introduction

In Nigeria today, the English language, the medium of instruction in schools, is an instrument necessary for every individual, society and the nation as a whole. The use of English language is seen in contexts as where English language was inherited but it is neither the mother tongue (MT) nor the first language (L1) of the inheritors. One of the very nations

with this trait is Nigeria, where after contacts with the British (her colonial overlords) English language came to be widely used for different significant purposes. The advent of this world language, English, came through the Missionaries via trade, religion, education, administration and politics. The English language is used as the official language. It is also the language with which the nation conducts its business of government, formal education, science and technology, and communication (Bello et al, 2014).

The more complex a society becomes and the more socially and technologically sophisticated man gets, the more communication problems tend to emerge in language. Language (by implication, English) has not only mystified Nigerians for so many decades by the complexity of its structure, it has pre-occupied Nigerians with its capacity for communicative adaptability over the years. Because of English mystification, many people, even from other fields have been seen in the area of linguistic studies and research. This, then, implies that English language has gradually become part of Nigerian life, system and education. English language, the engine room or core of literacy enables one to read, write and compute as the case may be, just as Oxenham (1980) technically describes it as a code of visual representation of an aural/oral communication. In 1962, during the world campaign for universal literacy, United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) came up with the oft-quoted definition of literacy as: A person is literate (English language by implication) when he has acquired the essential knowledge of, and skills which enable him to participate in all those activities in which literacy is required for effective functioning in his group or in his society, and whose attainments in reading, writing and arithmetic makes it possible for him to continue to use these skills towards his own and the community's development, and for active participation in the life of his country. The emphasis on the effective use of English language for individual and national development, and governance naturally happens to be one of such areas in which the role of English language is invaluable and unmistakable.

Background Knowledge of English Language in Nigeria

A brief look at the advent and development of English in Nigeria reveals that the first set of British indigenes to step into Nigeria arrived about the middle of the 16th century. However, the real articulation and implementation of standard British English in Nigeria can be traced back to 1842 when the first school was established by the British missionaries in Badagry. This was followed by other mission schools where the missionaries trained indigenes to help in missionary work, while the colonialists later came to establish their own schools where indigenes were trained for civil service jobs, messengers, house helps and even interpreters. This British language (English language) began to grow over time in strength and later became a second language in the country, Nigeria (Bello et al. 2014).

Today in Nigeria, English language performs by and large communicative functions, just like any language functions in any community. Going by the speech-Act Theories of Austin, (1962), Searle (1969) and Bach and Harnish (1979) in Lawal (1994), one can identify various communicative functions of English language: it enables its users to assert, describe, promise, and react to other people through greetings, apologizing, arguing, among other usages. It also helps its users to give verdicts, exercise power, control and authority. In corroborating the above assertions, Alabi (1994) also contends that the scope of English in

Nigeria is very wide, and it should be noted that its functions relate to the roles it performed when it first evolved in the country, that it was used to trade, to spread Christianity, it was also used in administration and politics as well as in education. Not only these, English language today, is used for the official matters in the country (Nigeria). The constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1989 and 1999 implies this when it states that: the business of the National Assembly shall be conducted in English, Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba when adequate arrangements have been made thereof. But it is very important to note here that the high priority placed on English language made the Nigerian constitution to put it before the other three national languages of Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba. However, in practice, it does not seem till now that 'adequate arrangements have been made' for the three other languages and as such, English remains the language with which the nation conducts its legislative discourse. Based on this, English is used as the nation's official language in drafting constitutions, decrees and edicts. It is also used for office work and administration, in judiciary for writing proceedings, delivering judgments, and for keeping records.

In Nigeria, English is also the language of instruction in formal education, even at the pre-primary and primary school levels. This is in spite of the National Policy on Education, first established in 1977 and twice reviewed in 1980 and 81 stating that:

Pre-primary education

Para. 11 (3) Government will:

Ensure that the medium of instruction will be principally the mother tongue or the language of the immediate community...

Primary Education

Para. 15 (4) Government will:

See to it that the medium of instruction in the primary school is initially the mother tongue of the immediate community and, at a later stage, English.

In fact, if they exist at all, there would be very few pre-primary Nigerian schools where the mother tongue or the language of the immediate community is used. This implies that English language is still officially the language of instruction in our schools.

English Language and National Leaders

David (2002) posits that the language of the privileged educated majority, English, plays a highly dynamic role. Similarly, Lawal (1999) relates that such roles include communication, aesthetic expression, a viable instrument of political unity and an enhancer of socio-economic development. To accomplish all these goals, effective communication is required for institutional efficiency and the English language serves this need. This is so because English develops the elites through education and provides a tool for the cohesion of educational elites from different indigenous language groups, making for increased mobility of skills within the nation across tribal boundaries (Adetugbo, 1980).

For any nation with a multi-lingual status like Nigeria to be united politically, socially and economically, there must be a language that is common to all. This leads to the issue of national language that binds all the languages and dialects within a multi-lingual nation

together. The question of a national language therefore becomes very imperative in the survival of the nation. In choosing a national language for such a country like Nigeria there is bound to be some conflicts brought about by social and political decisions. This is so because the British (Colonial overlords) created Nigeria to meet their own metropolitan economic objectives, while little or no consideration was given to Nigeria's ethno-cultural and multi-lingual needs, thus, hundreds of ethnic groups were lumped together to make up the huge entity called Nigeria. But in either way however, English language has become a unifying factor among Nigerians across linguistic and ethnic boundaries.

In a similar vein, the Nigerian people no longer require anybody to tell them who and who are the leaders having witnessed one form of government or another since the name "Nigeria" came into being stretching over the period of independence to date. The three tiers of government are the entities at the helms of affairs which, through constitutional provisions, are saddled with the responsibility of governing and directing the affairs of the nation from the Local level, through the State to the Federal, a kind of triangular or tripartite governance structure. At the local level are the local council chairmen and their counsellors who rule and live with their people, know their plights and challenges which afford them the opportunity to know where the shoes of their people pinch most. At the state level is the Executive Governor who directs and controls affairs of the state (and even the local councils in their states), together with commissioners, etc. At the very top (the apogee) is the Executive President, his Ministers, members of the Senates, among others. The tripartite, using administrative and constitutional fiats are responsible for the general and improved development of the local, state and the federation as a whole. But the political scenario could become more alarming and frustrating when paradoxically the cure turns out to be the poison that kills the patient.

To avert this, it will be right to philosophize that the higher the number of literate persons in the leadership positions, the better the quality, service delivery, political maneuvering and socio-economic developments that would be entrenched in the country (Bello et al, 2014). This implies that there is a high correlation between literacy and politics (the architects of sociopolitical and economic development). In other words, Natta's (1997) observation that literacy (English language by implication) goes a long way to enhance the quality of political structure which is fundamental to national development is very correct. Natta goes further that of late, the quality of our legislators has improved across board in terms of educational qualifications. And since the Nigerian constitution stipulates that the minimum qualification of public office holders in Nigeria must be Senior School Certificate (SSC), it is therefore believed that any aspiring or any-would-be-leader in Nigeria must have passed through senior secondary school, and who must have inadvertently passed through the rubrics of English language. Similarly, due to the multilingual nature of Nigeria as a nation, no national language will be sufficient to write manifestoes of a party, among other things, except with the use of a lingua franca (English), just as Oxenham (1980) technically describes English language as a code of visual representation of an aural/oral communication. As well, the emphasis on the effective use of English language for individual and national development, and governance naturally happens to be one of such areas in which the role of English language is invaluable and unmistakable.

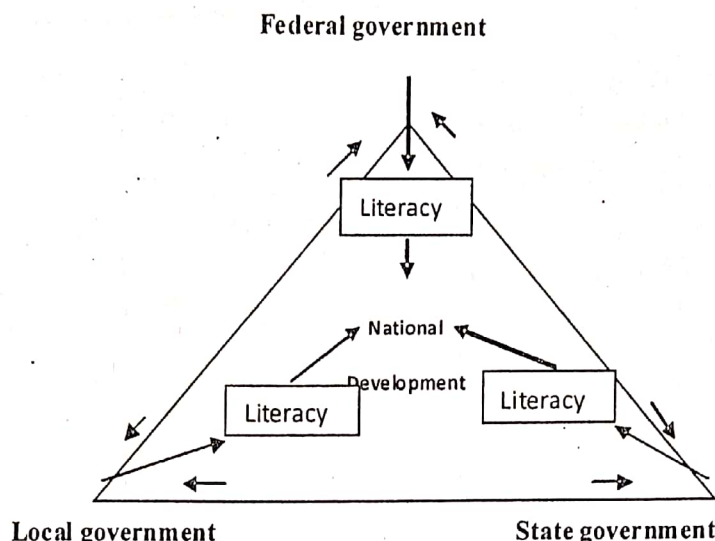


Figure 1: Tripartite leadership with literacy as a tool for national development
English Language as a Panacea for Good Leadership and National Development

As rightly observed by Bello et al (2014) that the higher the number of literate persons in the leadership positions, the better the quality, service delivery, political maneuvering and socio-economic developments, was corroborated by Olajide (2002) that 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. This will afford us the opportunities of strategizing and drawing action plan or manifesto. Apart from intelligence, literacy is the tool for putting down the action plan in black and white, because the only medium of expression in a country like Nigeria is English language that has the power as a unifying factor. Any country that has waged war against poverty and under development did so with the supersonic artillery of educated and enlightened leadership. Japan was almost wiped out of existence in the second world war, but in less than half a century, Japan overcame the heavy burden of reconstruction and went on to become one of the most industrialized nations on earth today. "Ask any Japanese the secret of this miraculous recovery; they will not hesitate to tell you that it is education" (Bolaji, 2008).

Components of National Development

Going by the definitions of national development, Olorisade (2000) identifies the following economic, socio-cultural and political components as components of national development. The economic component of national development will include the per capita income of citizens, the standard of living, energy consumption, daily calories supply and the poverty level of the people, among several others. He further sees the following as indices of economic development: the size of material possession, the growth rate of wealth, level of human satisfaction, level of participation and consumption system and the level of employment. According to Olorisade, the extent to which these indices are satisfied gives us an idea of the quality of development of a given society.

The socio-cultural components on the other hand include annual population growth rate, life expectancy level, level of literacy, school-age enrolment, spread of wealth, freedom of

religion and association. Others are relevance of culture to the conditions and to the future needs, interests, values and aspirations of the society, as well as the outlook and world views of individuals; while the political components include democratic process of governance through the involvement of acceptable and practical pattern of electing the headship or leadership of the society, through the right individuals to vote and be voted for, the standardization of an acceptable political rules and putting in place of an adequate machinery for decision making to attain societal objectives. Nevertheless, all the indices highlighted above take sustenance from education, little wonder therefore that the National Policy on Education (1981) surmises that:

... education is the greatest investment that the nation can make for quick development of its political, sociological and human resources.

Similarly, Elugbe (1995) asserts that national development refers to the growth of the nation in terms of unity in education, economic well-being and mass participation in government.

In line with the above, (Bolaji, 2008) asserts that the nexus or the bond between education and development anchors on the medium of instruction in schools which is English language, and that is why education is naturally at the heart of any nation, and for this reason, we must allow ourselves to be advised by the "experiences of other countries that have used education to climb out of the dark pit of hopelessness, and that development as a consequence of education is a function of deliberate investment in the hands of national leaders, it just not happens".

In another development, Akinpelu (1992) posits that development embraces all the aspirations, dreams and goals of peoples, nations and governments, and that to a developing nation like Nigeria, development is expected to be transformative, in this wise, the citizen will have some measures of self-fulfillment, happiness and can realistically hope and work for a better tomorrow. Akinpelu states further that if modernization of the economy and the democratization of the political structures are to be meaningful, sustainable and permanent, literacy is the key. He believes that any nation without mass literacy (powered by good leadership), the future might be worse than the present or the past for such a nation. In other words, no nation can be developed better than the level of literacy of her citizens, simply put 'no mass literacy, no mass development'

Similarly, Adiseslia in Akinpelu (1992) submits that countries which UNESCO identifies as accounting for 72.25% of world's illiterates are also the poorest countries in the world; as such, UNESCO identified three basic elements for national development as education, career and entrepreneurship. Also, Ofodu and Omolewa (2008) affirm that literacy has become a benchmark for the categorization of societies as either developed or underdeveloped as expressed by the United Nations Educational Scientific and cultural organization (UNESCO). This means that illiteracy accompanies poverty, low life expectancy, political oppression and underdevelopment.

Statement of the Problem

Akinlolu (1993) perceives reading as travelling without exerting oneself which is

unparalleled opportunity that the information one picks up from biography, philosophical and psychological books to a large extent, goes into shaping one's thinking and personality. He states further that the very developmental stage Britain and America are today, and even great men like Nehru made reading their second nature. This means therefore that literacy has a way of being a liberating force to individuals and societies. Literacy raises the thought, emotion and the consciousness about the oppressive structures within which one lives and it empowers individuals to organize themselves in order to change the existing societal realities. Literacy, (English language as its tool) is therefore a means for liberating people from the shackles of political, economic and social oppressions.

At another instance, Bello et al (2014) submit that a society where the leaders are not educationally conscious will be misinformed, remained poor and underdeveloped, and the future of their people and their society will be frightenly precarious. It is at the instance of things like these that the Save the Children Fund, Westport (CT) Press Release of 01 March, 2011 asserts that if rich countries were to transfer just six days' worth of military spending on development assistance for basic education, we would close the US \$16 billion external financing gap for global education and achieve education for all (EFA) goals putting all children into school by 2015. Education facilitates intellectual development, social development and development in other areas of national importance. These developments are only made possible by cultivating reading habits, reading all sort of books for academic, leisure and recreational purposes (not only the masses, but including the leaders), and by so doing, our morals will change, we shall develop positive attitude and also high aptitude towards ourselves and the society we belong which is possible for yielding positive bi-directional influence. While lending credence to the above, Unoh (1991) is of the view that reading broadens one's intellectual horizon while recommended texts in classroom broaden one's knowledge in particular subjects.

One cannot but realize that development cannot but take place in an enlightened and literate environment. This is so because it allows people to challenge their oppressive structures and affords them the opportunity to sustain such challenges. It will also afford them the opportunity of manipulating their society to the changing need of the society. It is of importance that places of mass illiterates in the world are more often than not, the places of civil unrest, social underdevelopment as well as economic and political underdevelopments.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is therefore to correlate between literacy and governance of a nation as well as literacy and national development.

Research Questions

The following research questions are raised to guide this study:

1. What is the correlation between literacy and governance?
2. What is the correlation between literacy and national development?

Research Hypotheses

The following hypotheses are generated for testing to give this study a focus:

1. There is no significant relationship between literacy and governance.
2. There is no significant relationship between literacy and national development.

Methodology

This study is a descriptive correlational study. The population for the study is all the Federal, State and Local government staffers in the six geo-political zones of Nigeria, from where the target population of 2 Federal, State and Local government staffers each were selected using stratified random sampling technique, giving a total of 36 staffers as respondents.

Instrumentation

Researcher-designed 16 questionnaire items which were given to two experts ascertain its content validity. The experts' correction and advice were effected in writing the 16 item questionnaire that was used for the study. The reliability of the instrument was carried out using Pearson r which resulted in 0.57 at 0.05 alpha level of significance.

Data Analysis and Results

The two research questions were answered using Mean, Standard Deviation and Rank Order statistics while Pearson r statistic was used to analyse the two hypotheses.

Research Questions

1 What is the correlation between literacy and governance?

Table 1: Mean Scores, Standard Deviation and Rank Order of Correction between Literacy and Governance

	Mean Score	Standard Deviation	Rank Order
1. Education enables the rulers to understand the problems of the ruled.	3.13	1.71	3 rd
2. Literacy enhances good governance.	4.11	2.18	2 nd
3. Literacy does not matter in governance.	2.77	1.70	5 th
4. Annual population growth rate is a component of governance.	1.01	1.11	8 th
5. Literacy and governance have nothing in common.	1.61	1.14	7 th
6. Literacy is only useful in academics.	1.76	1.18	6 th
7. Literacy accounts for successful democratic governance.	3.11	1.69	4 th
8. Literacy is instrumental to standardization of an acceptable political guidelines and the putting in place of adequate machinery for decision making.	4.17	2.20	1 st
Total Average Mean	2.71		

The calculated Mean in Table 1 above is 2.71 while the criterion Mean is 2.50. Since the calculated Mean of 2.71 is greater than the criterion Mean of 2.50 (which is regarded as good), it implies that there is a correlation between literacy and governance.

2 What is the correlation between literacy and national development?

Table 2: Mean Score, Standard Deviation and Rank Order of Correlation between Literacy and National Development

	Mean Score	Standard Deviation	Rank Order
1. Literacy enhances national development.	3.58	1.87	1 st
2. Literacy aids socio-economic progress of any nation.	3.46	1.83	2 nd
3. Level of literacy school-age enrolment are factors for national development	2.70	1.63	8 th
4. National development master plan is made possible through literacy.	3.21	1.80	4 th
5. Literacy is instrumental to the outlook and world views of individuals.	3.36	1.81	3 rd
6. Mass literacy should be encouraged to enhance national development.	3.09	1.75	5 th
7. Determination of annual population growth rate is made possible by literacy.	2.99	1.70	6 th
8. Values and aspirations of societies are realised through literacy	2.86	1.68	7 th
Total Average Mean	3.16		

The calculated Mean in Table 2 above is 3.16 while the criterion Mean is 2.05. Since the calculated Mean of 3.16 is greater than the criterion Mean of 2.05 (which is regarded as good) it implies that there is a correlation between literacy and national development.

Testing the Hypotheses

Ho₁: There is no significant relationship between literacy and governance.

Table 3: Pearson r of Correlation between Literacy and Governance

Variable	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	Critical value	r- Calculated r-value	Decision	
Literacy	36	1.085	0.871	35	.325	1.212	Ho1 Rejected
Good governance	36	1.085	0.871				

@ 0.05 alpha level of significance

The analysis in Table 3 above indicates that the calculated r value of 1.212 is greater than critical r value of .325 at 0.05 alpha level of significance. This indicates positive but low significant correlation and so, the null hypothesis which says that there is no significant relationship between literacy and governance is rejected.

Ho₂: There is no significant relationship between literacy and national development.

Table 4: Pearsonr of Correlation between Literacy and National Development

Variable	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	df	Critical r-value	Calculated r-value	Decision
Literacy	36	1.58	0.879	35	.325	1.422	Ho2 Rejected
National development	36	1.58	0.879				

@ 0.05 alpha level of significance

The analysis in table 4 above indicates that the calculated r value of 1.422 is greater than the critical r value of .325 at 0.05 alpha level of significance. This implies positive but low significant correlation and as such, the null hypothesis which says that there is no significant relationship between literacy and national development is rejected.

Discussion

Result in Table 1 affirms the submission of Bello et al (2014) that the higher the number of literate persons in the leadership positions, the better the quality, service delivery, political maneuvering and socio-economic developments. This will make possible the opportunities of standardizing and drawing action plans or manifestoes, an indication that apart from intelligence, literacy is the tool for putting down the action plans in black and white.

Result in Table 2 agrees with the finding of Ntta (1997) that literacy (English language by implication) goes a long way to enhance the quality of political structure which is fundamental to national development. He asserts further that of late, the quality of our legislators has improved across board in terms of educational qualification.

Result in Table 3 is in consonance with the position of Unoh (1999) that reading broadens one's intellectual horizon while the use of recommended texts in classroom broadens one's knowledge in particular subjects, and that one cannot but realise that development cannot but take place in an enlightened and literate society. This is so because it allows people to challenge their oppressive structures and gives them the opportunity to sustain such challenges to be able to manipulate their society to the changing need of the society.

Result in Table 4 toes the stand of Bolaji (2008) that any country that has waged war against poverty and under development did so with the supersonic artillery of educated and enlightened leadership. He submitted further that Japan for instance was almost wiped out of existence in the second world war, but in less than half of a century, Japan overcame the heavy burden of reconstruction and went on to become one of the most industrialized nations on earth today. This miraculous recovery is made possible through education (having literacy as its engine room).

Conclusion

Based on the results of the findings, it was concluded that the nexus or the bond between education and development anchors on the medium of instruction (English language) in schools, and that is why education is naturally at the heart of any nation. For this reason, we must allow ourselves to be advised by the experiences of other countries that have used education to climb out of the dark pit of hopelessness, and that development as a consequence of education is a function of deliberate investment in the hands of national leaders.

Recommendations

At the age of 54, Nigeria ought to have been able to fashion out a developmental ideology instead of incessant revisionism in governmental policies. Goals and actions for national developments ought to have been prioritized and judiciously followed. Nigerian leaders should however be aware and do something about the increasing access to education in our

society through the Universal Basic Education as the key objective of the education for all (EFA) in the context of positioning education as a crucial entry point strategy to poverty eradication and sustainable national development. We shall therefore require a more sophisticated definition of the concept of "access to education" to exceed the concern over quantity and to focus on quality. Nigerian leaders must unpack "access" to go beyond mere access to school, to place emphasis on access to education. This way, we cannot claim that a child has access to education by the mere fact of attending school, unless such a child, through the totality of the resources provided by the society or the government acquires the skills and abilities expected of children of his age and schooling. The most important concern therefore should be quality education for all which is invariably becoming impossible because of educational and social stratifications of "two types of Nigerian educational system of education for the poor and education for the rich", the general life style of Nigerian leaders. To ward off this problem, it is recommended that reading should be made a separate subject especially at the primary and secondary schools, and particular periods of the week should be allotted to school-wide reading by learners, teachers and other supporting staff. It is also recommended that leaders too must lead by examples, and as such, there must be a particular time set aside for them (leaders) to read texts apart from Newspapers which are always read on their behalf by their chief press secretaries.

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