

UNIVERSITY OF PORT HARCOURT

**ABOUT LANGUAGE: CAN
CONFUCIUS BE RIGHT?**

A Valedictory Lecture

By

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ORDER OF PROCEEDINGS

2.45 P.M. **GUESTS ARE SEATED**

3.00 P.M. **ACADEMIC PROCESSION BEGINS**

The procession shall enter the Ebitimi Banigo Auditorium, University Park and the Congregation shall stand as the procession enters the Hall in the following order:

ACADEMIC OFFICER

PROFESSORS

DEANS OF FACULTIES

DEAN, SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES

PROVOST, COLLEGE OF HEALTH SCIENCES

REGISTRAR

ORATOR

LECTURER

DEPUTY VICE CHANCELLOR [RESEARCH AND
DEVELOPMENT]

DEPUTY VICE CHANCELLOR [ACADEMIC]

DEPUTY VICE CHANCELLOR [ADMINISTRATION]

VICE CHANCELLOR

After the Vice Chancellor has ascended the dais, the Congregation shall remain standing for the University of Port Harcourt Anthem.

The Congregation shall thereafter resume their seats.

THE VICE CHANCELLOR'S OPENING REMARKS

The Registrar shall rise, cap and invite the Vice Chancellor to make his Opening Remarks

THE VICE CHANCELLOR SHALL THEN RISE, CAP AND MAKE HIS OPENING REMARKS AND RESUME HIS SEAT.

THE VALEDICTORY LECTURE

The Registrar shall rise, cap and invite the Orator, Prof B. E. Nwigwe to introduce the Lecturer.

The Orator shall then rise, cap and introduce the Lecturer, and resume his seat.

The Lecturer shall remain standing during the Introduction. The Lecturer shall step on the rostrum, cap and deliver his Inaugural Lecture. After the lecture, he shall step towards the Vice Chancellor, cap and deliver a copy of the Inaugural Lecture to the Vice Chancellor and resume his seat. The Vice Chancellor shall present the document to the Registrar.

CLOSING

The Registrar shall rise, cap and invite the Vice Chancellor to make his Closing Remarks.

THE VICE CHANCELLOR'S CLOSING REMARKS

The Vice Chancellor shall then rise, cap and make his Closing Remarks. The Congregation shall rise for the University of Port Harcourt Anthem and remain standing as the Academic [Honour] Procession retreats in the following order:

VICE CHANCELLOR

DEPUTY VICE CHANCELLOR [ADMINISTRATION]

DEPUTY VICE CHANCELLOR [ACADEMIC]

DEPUTY VICE CHANCELLOR [RESEARCH AND
DEVELOPMENT]
LECTURER
ORATOR
REGISTRAR
PROVOST, COLLEGE OF HEALTH SCIENCES
DEAN, SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES
DEANS OF FACULTIES
PROFESSORS
ACADEMIC OFFICER

My topic is about human language, languages, and linguistics, their roles in the consciousness industry elsewhere, and in Nigeria. Their place in our personal and national lives. Their place in the university curriculum. Their place as the engines and vectors of tertiary and all sectors of education. Their place in literacy, development communication, and sustainable development. Their roles as vehicles of documentation, analytical procedures and exercises, and literary creativity.

But before I get into the heart of the matter, permit me, Mr. Vice Chancellor, to do the last thing first. A Benediction. Indeed, a doxology. My appreciation and blessing for all those people and institutions which have made it possible for me to reach this last bus stop in my life and in my odyssey in academics. The list of institutions is long. And that of the people, longer. But I will not allow the Benediction to be longer than the Mass – if you allow and understand this (Roman) Catholic figure of speech!

St. Anne's Catholic School, Burutu in Delta State; St. Anthony's College, Ubulu-Uku, in Delta State; Holy Ghost College, Owerri, in Imo State, then in the Eastern Region. All these pre-university institutions exposed me to the cardinal virtues. The Anima Christi and the great Blessed Cardinal Newman's 'Prayer Before a Crucifix'. And the works of Fulton J. Sheen, the great *defensor fidei* of Catholicism in the U.S and clearly its most prolific writer. G.K. Chesterton, the apostle of the common sense. Cardinal Merry del Val's Litany of Humility, and Saint

Ignatius Loyola's Prayer on Peace. From these institutions, writers, and texts, I learnt the dictum that: to work, is to pray. Next, the University of Ibadan where I had my entire university education. There, I had the singular privilege of coming under the tutelage of: in the Dept of English, J.K. Ramsaran, O.R. Dathorne, Sir Wilson Knight, and Martin Banham, Dapo Adelugba, and Axworthy in Drama; J.F. Ade-Ajayi, Emmanuel Ayandele, Obaro Ikime, Adiele Afigbo in African History. All these, in my undergraduate years. And the late Professor Kay Williamson, as a graduate student. Kay was both the catalyst, loadstone and lodestar in my evolution, growth and maturation, as an academic.

As for the people who made me, my eldest sister, Angelina Ogbèianu Ọgbolu, her husband, Late Louis Afààgwu Ọgbolu and their family. They fully adopted me and brought me up as their own, in a strict and uncompromising orthodox Catholic household.

At Ubulu-Ukwu, the late Rev. Fr. Anthony McDonald taught us the English language and to have self-esteem. The late Mr. and later Ambassador C.C. Uchuno taught us Latin, English Language and Literature. Shakespeare: Hamlet,– in fact, all the tragedies, the sonnets, and the Henry trilogy among the history plays. Ovid, Homer, Hannibal and the Crossing of the Alps, Aristophanes. **The Flies** were studied in Latin. C.C. Uchuno also taught us the art and joy of reading and of committing long evergreen texts to memory. In these distracted times, do books still matter? David L. Ulin answers this question in his small

but powerful book significantly entitled: **The Lost Art of Reading**.

All said, at Burutu, Ubulu-Ukwu and Owerri, I learnt very many good and useful things which have remained with me thus far in my life. But I have always treasured the underlisted, among the things I learnt.

First, that it is nice to be important but, it is more important to be nice.

Second, true humility is not bringing yourself down but consciously raising others above yourself.

Third – which summarizes everything – is to never have grudges against others or lose my temper or raise my voice to anybody or call others names or allow any sort of spitefulness. And to be friends with others, kind, forgiving others as readily as God forgives us in Christ. In fact, it was very much later in my growth as a Catholic that I came to know the source of that scripture. It is **Ephesians** 4:30-52.

Fourth – to read and read voraciously, and with speed. It was, indeed, required of us at Ubulu-Ukwu to read three new English novels – all classics, every week. We read the unabridged Dicken's **Hard Times** and **Oliver Twist** in Class Five. Following Burutu, Ubulu-Ukwu and Owerri, at Ibadan, **Tristram Shandy**, **Wuthering Heights**, **Vanity Fair** we read in our second year and James Joyce's

Dubliners in our first year. **The Portrait of the Artist As A Youngman** in year two and an introduction to **Finnegan's Wake** in our last year English class. Thus creative tomes by the Russian novelists, Tolstoy's **War and Peace**, and, Dostoyevsky's **Crime and Punishment**, neither frightened nor intimidated us. We enjoyed them, all of them, and more.

Messers Benjamin O. Akwukwuma, and Austin Odita of the Registry, University of Ibadan, introduced me to the Ford Foundation Fellowship in African Studies available at the University of Ibadan. That was in 1969/70. That contact initiated me into Linguistics and ÒṢniṢchà Igbo in the Department of Linguistics and Nigerian Languages of the University of Ibadan. There, I was exposed to fine scholarly seminars and excellent heuristic teaching in the Department of Linguistics and Nigerian Languages, and the Institute of African Studies; and fine, humane but gentle instruction and learning, and creative mentorship by Professors Kay Williamson, AyoṢ Bamgbose, Carl Hoffman, Oladele Awobuluyi, Robert Armstrong, M. Angulu Onwuejeogwu, Ian Maddieson, Bernard Mafeni, among very many others. Some others included occasional visiting-scholars to our department: the likes of Peter Ladefoged, Larry Hyman, Florence Dolphayne, Gilbert Ansre. And, of course, for emphasis, once more, the indefatigable, amiable and unassuming Kay Williamson. Academics was Kay's mission. Fostering young, enterprising, bright, prospective, level-headed and serious-minded academics was her consuming passion, and

constituted her expansive nuclear family. And her vision and goal were to nurture, shepherd and mentor such young academics to become senior academics and ultimately professors. So that when I became a Professor of Linguistics in this university in 1984, I continued to insist on keeping my chair not beside hers, but very much behind hers.

Distinguished Colleagues,
Mentoring, counseling and shepherding constitute an academic trinity which ensures the continuity and survival of the academic legacy. Any senior academic who is not interested in this and is not doing it, is in the wrong place. And there ends, for now, the benediction.

THE CENTRALITY OF THE HUMANITIES TO DEVELOPMENT

Let me now go straight into the ritual, especially, the liturgy of the word. But Sirs, indulge me this licence. This lecture, in its structure as you may have noticed, does not follow the logic of the Aristotelian unity of a beginning, a middle and an end. The structure of this work will sometimes, however, follow the logic, coherence and cohesion of the stream-of-consciousness technique. Really, how does the human mind handle reality? Is it linear, cyclic or cylindrical? Whatever is its configuration, Virginia Woolf used it in *To the Lighthouse*. And James Joyce complicated but perfected it in *Finnegan's Wake* and *Ulysses*. Indeed, as James Joyce tells us through his inimitable and ubiquitous Stephen Dedalus, literature and

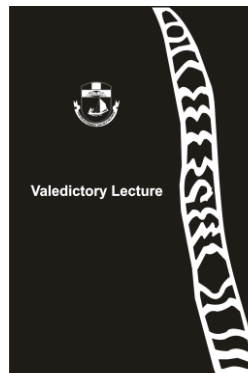
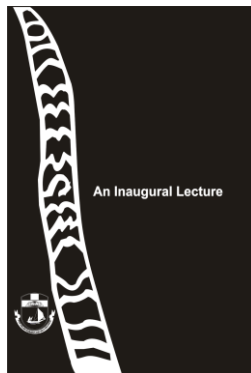
indeed, life “are the eternal affirmation of the spirit of man”. As a supreme confirmation of that position, Stephen Dedalus and Leopold Bloom, the two main characters in ***Ulysses***, demonstrate James Joyce’s belief in the kinship between discrete things foisted on the wings of allusions, puns and riddles. Distinguished audience, my first degree was in English Literature. Literature in English, that race-soaked euphemism for African Literature in Nigerian English was only emerging at the time we left the university in 1966.

In that eerie scene at the wake in ***Finnegan’s Wake***, for some forty-two pages (in my own edition of that epic novel) the punctuation marks were more of colons, semicolons, commas, exclamation marks and question marks than of full stops. All these were meant to capture the mind of the central character as it gave free reign to his consciousness, recounting and reproducing, without any ordering, the riot of thoughts, impressions and emotions in puns, riddles and allusions which gushed through him, without rhyme or reason. All these within the narrative technique of stream-of-consciousness. Even where full stops are found, they follow nouns, noun phrases and even clauses.

I know this exercise has been advertised as a lecture. But it is going to be the product of both a griot’s mind and an academic’s mind-set. The griot’s mind and technique display bold streaks of madness, with the logic of dementia. Indeed, from ancient times, and in cultures, there is a kinship between madness and creativity. In Igbo

culture, the same spirit or being-force, AgwùII - controls divination, wisdom and madness. This helps to explain why in the poetry of Christopher Okigbo, Jadum, the madman, is (one of) his powerful persona(e). And if Jadum talks too much, it is because, in his culture, too many things clog his mind and mouth, requiring to be said at the same time!

In other words, I'm going to present you a weird story in the tradition of stream-of-consciousness, with colours of magical realism; a narrative *mélange* or is it a *montagne* in which asides, side bars, footnotes, bibliographic details and citations, and all those paraphernalia and trappings of a well researched work have no lives of their own, but are integrated into and are part and parcel of the work itself. Against the foregoing, I don't think I should, at the beginning, bore you with a "literature parade," which I see, now passes for "literature review" in academic works! Nor would I intimidate you with endnotes or footnotes, or footnotes on footnotes, to impress on you, the depth and breadth of what I know or do not know.



Now, let me get into what I'm expected to do. Give a valedictory. I looked at the graphic motif on the front and back covers of published inaugurals and valedictories of the University of Port Harcourt. The pervasive and bold motifs on the front covers look inwards for the inaugurals but outwards for the valedictory. Does this not suggest that the inaugural is expected to be written and delivered by a young, hot and adventurous academic in a past-present-futuristic exercise all rolled into one. Not so with the valedictory where the system treats the scholar as a deadwood. The valedictorian is propelled by two powerful neuroses: nostalgia and utopia. The inaugural uses the voice of innocence to search for the voice of experience while the valedictory speaks through the voice of experience to re-collect and re-interpret the voice of innocence. The valedictory uses the spirit of ***Il Pensoroso***, the inaugural, the spirit of ***L'Allegro*** – if you will allow that Miltonian allusion Or another allusion, Blake's ***Songs of Experience*** and ***Songs of Innocence***. Utopia is the other neurosis. Elders spurred on by nostalgia have seen and lived the worst; hope for the best, but grope through the valley of despair in anticipation of the best of the best. That is what Thomas More created in ***Utopia***.

Sir,

I invite all of us to read the first paragraphs of Charles Dicken's ***Great Expectations***, and ***Hard Times***. Is there anything to make one happy and hopeful in any of the areas and sectors of the Nigerian polity? Let us start from

the one all of us here are in, right now – the tertiary/university education, the apex sector. See this mosaic of facts, not just impressions, about the Arts/Humanities from the accreditation visits to Nigerian Universities. Peter Okebukola is the writer. And Okebukola, as some of us here re-call, was a one-time Executive Secretary of the National Universities Commission. A fine scholar, the arrow head of quality assurance and an apostle of entrepreneurial education, Okebukola referred to his findings as a ***crisis of literacy*** in the Arts/Humanities’ in tertiary, especially, university education.

Here are his ipissima verba:

- *‘Poor communication skills – particularly writing skills*
- *‘Cannot write a note-verbal, or letter, very well*
- *‘Need to learn style, formal language, voice/tone of both formal and informal writing and speech*
- *‘Lack the style that goes with each occasion*
- *‘Need training in personal appearance, comportment and civility.*
- *‘A high proportion of them lack confidence, discipline and reasonableness*
- *‘A poor attitude to work (lateness, truancy, and a tendency towards fraudulence and get-rich-quick syndrome).’*

Seven issues are identified. Four – the first four, deal with language, the use of language, literacy, functional and

holistic education. I do not know the number of our university students who have ever heard of, let alone, cared much about the dicta, that; one, those who can read and write rule the world, and two, the reading (literate) nations are the ruling (developed) nations. The non-literacy issues in Okebukola's own words are:

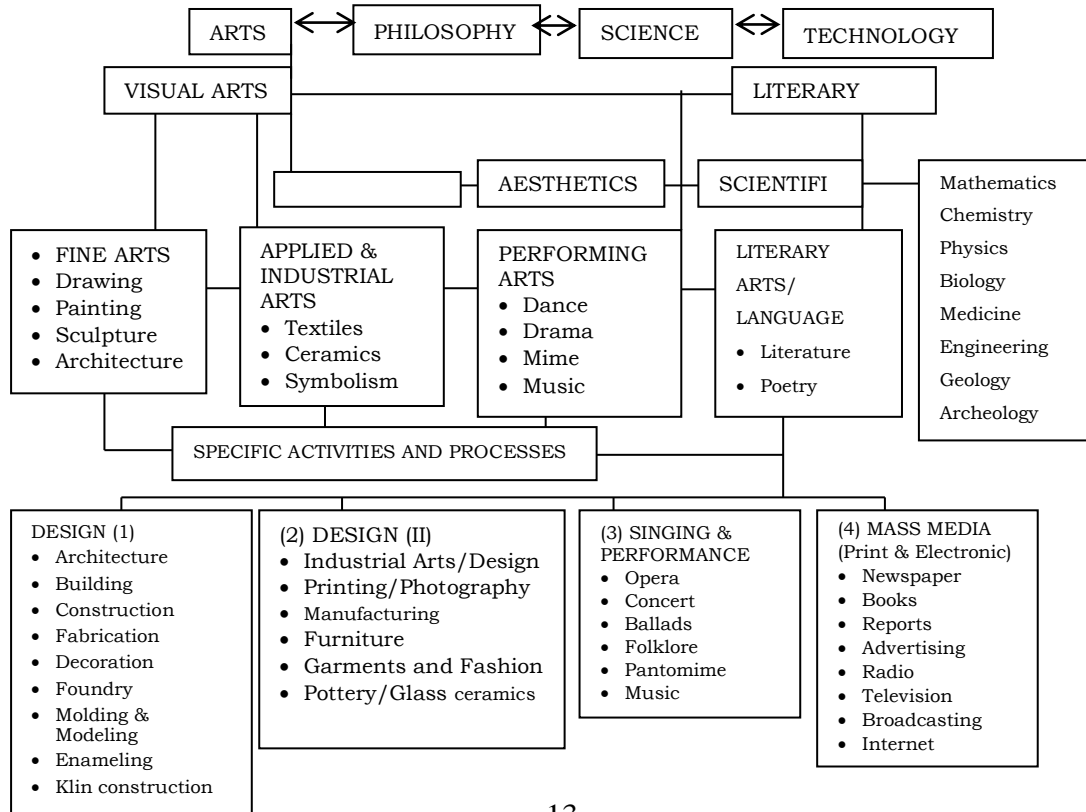
Incivility in personal appearance and comport; low ambition; indiscipline; poor self-esteem-all of which manifest in lateness, truancy, fraud and get-rich-quick syndrome.

Many things are disturbing about Okebukola's findings. This is the situation in the Arts and Humanities, where literacy, oracy, propriety, decorum and humanness are expected! Now that gold has undergone rust, what do we expect iron to do?

Indeed, the goings on in the arts and the humanities are critical and central to the entire knowledge industry. The field of philosophy in particular, is the bedrock and fountain of all the sciences. **Scientia**, (**knowledge** in Latin) translates as **science** in English. The entire nexus in the knowledge industry is watered by philosophy which plumbs the depths of life, for the truth behind the truth. The multi-faceted fecundity in the creative and performing arts has been somewhat captured in this figure re-designed from A.U. Okpara. This model shows clearly that **Art, Philosophy, Science** and **Technology** are on the

same platform or template even though philosophy is somewhat higher in reality because philosophy is not only the queen of the arts, it is also the mother of the sciences and technology.

THE TEXTURE OF HUMAN KNOWLEDGE



Indeed, so central and important are the arts and the humanities to the knowledge industry and to sustainable development, life and living, that it has come to be held that:

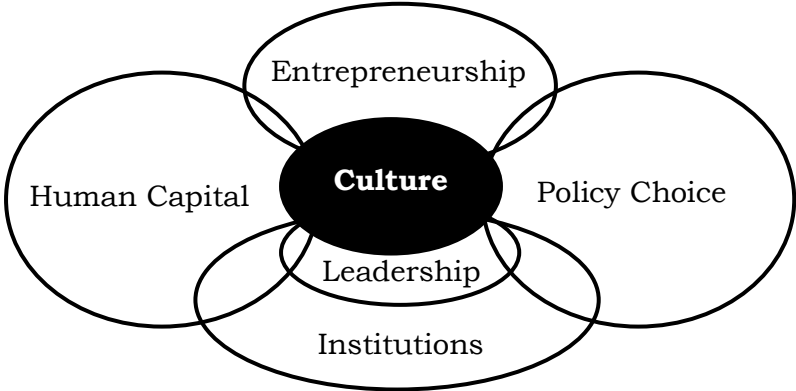
Man can live, though not very well or very long without any extensive acquaintance with the natural and applied sciences. He could get on, though not go ahead, without much experience in the social and management sciences. But he cannot be a good natural scientist or social scientist without first being a fully developed man and he will not be that if he is not acquainted with the humane sciences and humanistic ideas and ideals.

THE COLLAPSE OF CULTURE AND THE ENTHRONEMENT OF ANOMIE

Sometimes, when I stand in front of my office in the Faculty of Humanities, and remember what Okebukola has correctly documented about the dress code and compartment of the undergraduates, in the Humanities quadrangle, and corridors, I ask: are these our students dress-rehearsing for the year's Ray Day? The tragedy of the anomie following the collapse of culture, in Nigeria, is that Nigeria and Nigerians have once more short-circuited the normal evolution process in human civilization by finding themselves, thanks to ICT and globalization, in the post-

industrial and post-technological age. In reality, aren't we in Nigeria, in the Stone Age or, perhaps, much "better", in the pre-industrial age! The emergence of Keke Napep as the means of popular vehicular movement tells us vividly the truth about where we really are. Not those state-of-the-art cars which are the insignia of our oppressors! Endemic with ethnicity and primordial loyalties, our mind-sets and world views are still densely steeped in transcendental analogue realities. Then I looked out for my copy of Pat Utomi's 1966 classic on developmental and strategic economic studies simply entitled: **Why Nations Are Poor**. Then, I re-collect my own interpretation of Utomi's modular representation, in his oral presentation at the 2012 Ekwelie Valedictory Symposium. In our lecture, we have moved the emphasis from leadership to culture because I think culture really precedes leadership let alone human capital, policies, institutions or entrepreneurship (which, seriously speaking, is a way of doing things, a methodology).

THE GROWTH DRIVER'S FRAMEWORK



Note the centrality of culture in the six cross-cutting and criss-crossing circles. Among other things in our present world, especially so, in the poor nations and in our Nigeria, the permanent leader of the E-9 countries, we are in the Age of the Collapse of Culture. The home, the domestic church, and the school of values, has been taken over by the peer group with its own new realities, new loyalties, new symbols and new codes in all matters: religious, social, political, economic, and pressure groups. The collapse of the cradle-religion has been followed by the sexual revolution and the enthronement of relativism, modernism, consumerism, secularism and the Halleluyah Revolution. The Halleluyah Revolution has now taken over everything with its cafeteria catechesis, compromised, compromising and *laissez faire* mindsets and alternative life styles. The funky music (from the big bands), issuing from the heavy, bull dog amplifiers are the new forms of worship long in the liturgy of the word but short in the liturgy of the bread. With the collapse of culture, the dictionary meaning of success has given way to its pragmatic, social and contextual meaning. Put simply, the gospel and culture of death have upturned the gospel and culture of life in basic institutions like the nuclear family, or heterosexual marriage. Now, anything goes as moral absolutes are standing on their heads. Logic and organized ethos now are forbidden or stigmatized words. The spirit and letter of individualism have given way to the reality of narcissism and even hedonism. The profane has replaced the sacred. Order has become disorder and indiscipline and the bizarre, the new religion. Sex is now a plaything,

abortion-on-demand, the in-thing. Now, the young men and women wear their face-caps, face backwards or sideways and the Catholic Rosary, or what looks like it, an item of devil-may-care and funky, up-beat dressing! What do we make of what is advertised and presented as ‘gospel hits’ in some of the apparently ‘Christian’ television stations, local and foreign? The dangerous and harmful thing is that these youths, through social media, are now very rich in digital media knowledge, very poor in digital media literacy and much poorer in the ability to discern what is good and proper from the trash of today’s junk culture.

All these make up the zeitgeist and menu of our age. Not inspiration from the mould of Munoz’s ***Virtues: An Inquiry into the Moral Issue For Our Time***, or Haselbarth’s, ***Christian Ethics in the African Context***, or Abogurin’s ***Religion and Ethics in Nigeria***.

With the collapse of culture, condemnable vices have become commendable virtues. Condemned, certified and proven sinners have become the confirmed and canonized saints, in all domains. The area boys and girls have become the beatified national saints, the grandmasters, and beautiful brides of national politics, the revered ones in the highly exclusive boards of directors, or trustees in the political parties, and the recipients of Nigeria’s national honours, recognitions and medals!

Is it any wonder then that:

- According to the 2009 **Global Hunger Index**, Nigeria is the 120th hungriest nation in the world. Nigeria spends and, in fact, in 2011 alone, spent trillions of naira importing four basic food stuffs:

Wheat	:	₦637b
Rice	:	₦356b (or ₦1b per day)
Sugar	:	₦217b
Fish	:	₦97b

- According to the 2009 **USAID Report**, 138.6m of our country’s 160m people live below poverty line put at \$1 or N150 a day. Most disturbing about Nigeria’s poverty status is that it has become worse with every passing year, as shown below:

1980	Poverty Rate	28%
1985	Poverty Rate	46%
1992	Poverty Rate	42%
1996	Poverty Rate	65%
2009	Poverty Rate	70.9%

In actual numbers, Nigeria’s poverty rate has gone up in thirty years from 17.1m in 1980 to 112.47m in 2010.

- The 2009 World Economic Forum (**WEF**) **Global Competitiveness Report**, ranks Nigeria’s economy (which contributes only 2% to the world’s economy) as the 99th among 133 countries of the world. It is intriguing and interesting that compared with the 2008 figures, Nigeria was “promoted” downwards by five points from the 94th to the 99th position.

- The same **WEF Report** ranks Nigeria
 - 117th in terms of security, corruption and wasteful expenditure by our governments
 - 122nd in terms of the availability of infrastructure
 - 127th in terms of health care and delivery
 - 132nd in terms of primary education
- According to the **World's Tension Index**, Nigeria has the highest tension index in the world with its pandemic, real and potential evidences of sectarian violence, civil crises, communal clashes, kidnapping, cultism, killings and robberies, vandalism, the proliferation of large quantities of sophisticated arms and ammunitions in unlicensed and unauthorized hands
- According to the **Global Rating List for Electrical Energy Production and Consumption (GRLEEPC)**, Nigeria is the world's **darkest nation**. In 2007, Nigeria generated 15.58 kilowatts or 1,500 megawatts of electrical power hoping, by December 2012, to reach 9,000MW, and 40,000MW in 2020. Put differently, Nigeria's PHCN had in 2011, some 6m customers and yet supplied them with electricity only approximately 20% of the time. It is disheartening to learn from the Nigerian Electricity Regulatory Commission that 'the nation is no where in sight to achieve the 40,000MW target set for 2020.'

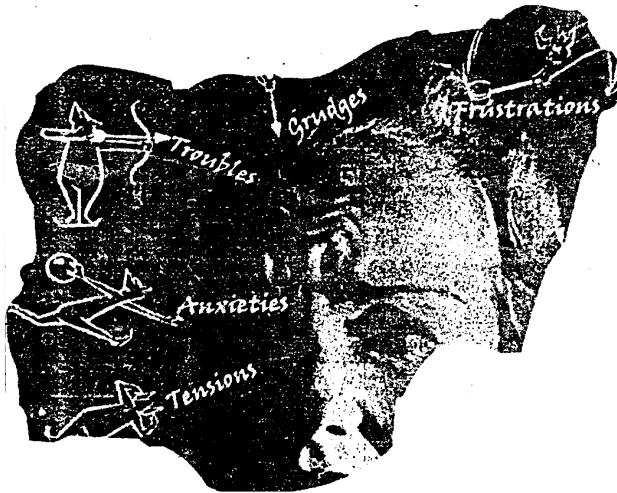
Thus in Nigeria, businesses and well-off Nigerians, run private electricity generators nearly 24 hours a day at an operating cost more than six times the tariff per kilowatt hour on the public grid. This cost, according to a one-time AGM, Project Monitoring Office of the Nigerian Electricity Regulatory Commission, is some ₦796.4b. This very figure was the amount spent annually up to 2011 by Nigerians to fuel their generators as alternative power supply. If we go back to the 2009 Federal Budget, we will find that ₦796.7b was the amount voted for Capital Expenditure!

What is disgusting and infuriating about the entire GRLEPC rating on Nigeria's energy situation is that instead of being found in the league of nations containing S. Africa, Libya, Egypt, and now Ghana, as leading power-generating countries in Africa, Nigeria, the giant of Africa, leads the pack of African countries with deep energy and political stability crises – Somalia, Cameroon, Senegal, Liberia and Uganda. A good number of these countries are still at war or just coming out of war. Nigeria's magical year 2020 is only seven years away. And then Nigeria will actually require 206,745MW of light not 50,000MW! How can we achieve basic economic growth and sustain development without reliable power supply? How can we achieve real Gross Domestic Product (**GDP**) without reliable power supply?

Finally, note Nigeria's parlous state and overall rankings on all the known indices of growth and development, on

the 2012 **Failed State Index**. Here, the indicators are scored 0-10. Behold our country's "noble" scores:

- Demographic pressure 8.5
- Economic decline 6.6
- Public service 9.0
- Uneven development 9.5
- Security apparatus 9.4
- Human rights 8.6
- Human flight 8.3
- Groups' grievance 9.7
- Refugees/Internally Displacement Persons (DPs) 5.3
- Delegitimatization of state 9.2
- Factionalized elite 9.6
- External Intervention 6.1
- Grand Total 9.8
- Position 15th out of 117 countries

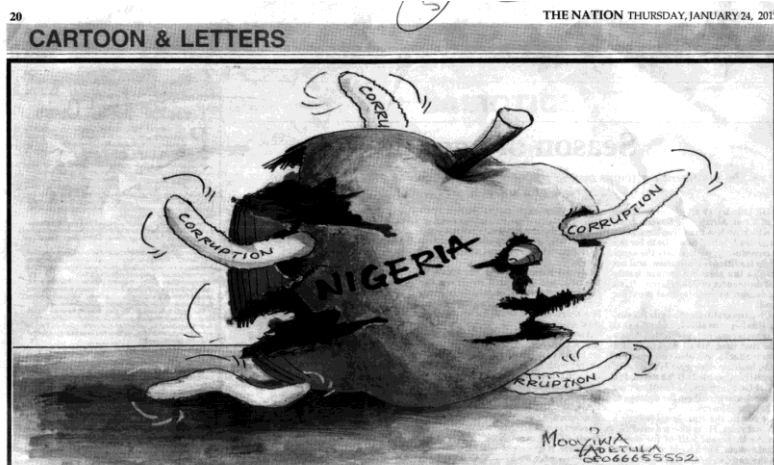


In other words, in terms of position, Nigeria is the 15th country in the world, in danger of being a failed state – if not yet a failed state. If we add recent gory details about the new realities to all the twelve indices marked, Nigeria may even be “promoted” further to about the 5th position. Are we really surprised that the Nigerian house has fallen? Do we need works like Karl Maier’s: ***This House Has Fallen: Nigeria in Crisis***, to tell us that!

Pat Utomi has painted a dismal and grim picture of why nations, like Nigeria, will continue to be high in terms of all the indicators of state failure. Ben Naanen, a Professor of History and International Relations in this university, has some insightful works on the failed state phenomenon.

Early in 2012, at a public forum in Abuja, during a book lunch, retired General Theophilus Danjuma identified some states in the Nigerian nation as failed. Danjuma is said to be a man of few words. He is said to know the thirty six state-and-Abuja Nigerian political structure as much as he knows every millimetre of the Nigerian political state.

NIGERIA, Mo IBRAHIM (2012) AND TRANSPARENCY INTERNATIONAL (2012)



The Mo Ibrahim African Governance Index (2012) has once again scored Nigeria very poorly, placing it 14th out of 16 West African countries and 43rd out of a total 52 countries on issues of governance. As usual, **Transparency International** has scored Nigeria poorly even though Nigeria has been promoted by six notches to the 139th out of 176 countries in its corruption perception index. Corruption. Corruption. Corruption. Bad governance. Mismanagement of resources. Fear. Crime. Insecurity. Kidnapping. Hunger. Poverty. Disease. Neglect. Lack of transparency. Homelessness. Illiteracy. Unemployment. Inflation. Care-takers turned undertakers. A Crawling and Limping Nation. The darkest nation in dark Africa. A Dirty Nation and Dying People. A Rich Nation with a poor citizenry. A Nation with loud deficits in

civic culture. The country with the most incestuous, most outrageous, and unique reward system for its public officers. For a glimpse of the partially big picture see the cover story of **Tell Magazine** (August 24, 2009:37-42) entitled “Feeding Fat on the Economy”. Commenting on this, as well as ‘the sleaze... and sleazy deals (which) still fester with dizzying ferocity in exalted offices’, Sola Adeyeye, a professor and a former member of the House of Representatives, believes (that)

over-remurating (our) officials with taxpayers’ money in a nation riled with endemic poverty is obscene. ...those in public office hide under the façade of allowances to fleece the nation ...much of the money accruing to this category of people comes not in the form of basic salary but in the form of bare-faced looting called allowances... A situation where a political office holder, in an extremely poor country such as Nigeria (is), earns more than a neurosurgeon working in the United States tells the sad story of how our reward system is, in Nigeria.

The public office holders have “hammered big” – if you will permit this Nigerian slang now in the public domain. And so, everybody wants to hammer! From governors to gatemen. From the highest and mightiest in the public and private sectors, to the lowest and lowliest in no sectors or services at all! Isn’t Wole Soyinka, therefore, correct in his observation that corruption is the one unifying factor in

Nigeria which cuts across all barriers, real and imaginary! No! Football à la Green or Papa Eagles, (and sports), is the other unifying force. Except that the zones which produce the sportsmen and coaches are not those that produce the football and sports' administrators. Thanks to Federal character! Corruption has no Federal character or quota. It is national and Nigerian, classless and stateless, zoneless and genderless.

Let us note this dictionary definition of **corruption**

1. *'moral deterioration esp. widespread*
2. *'use of corrupt practices, esp. bribery or fraud*
3. *'(a) regular alteration (of a text, language etc) from its original text*
'(b) an irregularly altered form of a word.'

Against the foregoing definition, the question is, Ònye pùᐁ nà n^ga (who is free from imprisonment?) Who now will throw the first stone? Only Nigerian writers, social critics and satirists continue to throw the hard and uncompromising punches. For example, in a public lecture given at the Sheraton Hotel, Ikeja, on Monday July 9, 2012, 'Niyi Osundare, one of Nigeria's best creative writers and social critic, referred to our beloved country, Nigeria, as

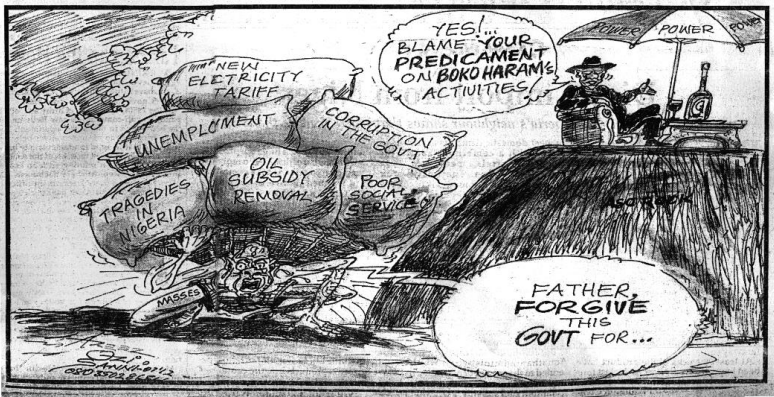
- a kleptocracy: a state ruled by thieves
- corruption (incarnate), its fastest-growing industry

And his conclusion:

*If Nigeria does not kill corruption,
corruption will kill Nigeria. Corruption*

has taken over the commanding heights of Nigerian society. It is, without doubt, the Grand Commander of the Federal Republic (GCFR). Like a frightfully aggressive cancer, it has metastasized to the vital cells of our body politic and the debilitating symptoms are everywhere: perverted moral values, a rig-prone electoral arrangement designed to throw up criminals in place of leaders, fraud-choked banking and finance system, irregular power supply, dry water-taps, death-trap roads, death-dispensing hospitals, a progressively illiterate education system, global notoriety...

9 EDITORIAL/OPINION



Is it any wonder that Nigerians can no longer blush? Isn't everybody waiting for his own opportunity "to hammer"? (Isn't everybody corrupt minus opportunity?) And it will be business as usual.

I agree with Niyi Osundare but I disagree with him in two essential details.

Corruption is not Nigeria's fastest-growing industry. It **is** the flagship industry in Nigeria. It has 100% local content. It requires NO expatriate quota. It is the only industry that still works in Nigeria. No risks are involved. It is tax-free as no VAT, income tax, or withholding tax is charged. It is a winner-takes-all industry. Its product has a ready market in Switzerland and elsewhere. Nigerians are grandmasters at it. Has it not become Nigeria's trade mark and patent in the international market, and talking point at international fora? Today questions are being asked about the \$67 billion USD which the Obasanjo government is said to have left for the Yar'dua – Jonathan Presidency in 2007. These, indeed, concern serious issues of accountability and transparency? Early this year, at the 2013 World Economic Forum held in Switzerland, it featured boldly. In his keynote address, the British Prime Minister, David Cameron, identified issues of transparency and education as crucial and critical to development. And Nigeria was specifically mentioned. In his words, Nigeria and other African countries etc, are asked to

- *‘Deal with debts. Cut business taxes... And crucially make sure your schools and universities are world-class.*
- *We need more transparency on how governments and companies operate.*
- *The present world, is one where – regrettably corrupt government officials in some countries including Nigeria and some corporations-run rings around the letter and spirit of the law to rip off hardworking people and plunder their natural resources.*
- *There is a long and tragic history of some African countries (notably Nigeria) being stripped of their minerals behind a veil of secrecy...*
- *...A few years back a **transparency** initiative exposed a huge black hole in Nigeria’s finances and \$800m discrepancy in companies, governments and government receipts for oil.*
- *... new regulations in Nigeria’s oil sector are imperative so that the richness of the earth can actually enrich the people of (the) country.*
- *And the potential is staggering. Last year (2012), Nigerian oil exports were worth almost \$100b, more than the total net aid to the whole of sub-Saharan Africa.*

(Put simply) unleashing the natural resources in these countries (notably Nigeria) dwarfs anything

*aid can achieve-and **transparency** is critical to that.*

Jide Osuntokun, a professor and columnist in the ***Nation Newspapers*** 21 Feb, 2013 says that: Nigeria is ***Corruption Incorporated.***

The level of corruption – or lack of transparency in Nigeria is just mind-boggling. Nigeria produces, on a daily basis, 2 – 2.5m barrels of crude oil... 400,000 barrels of these are stolen everyday. This is \$40m everyday and over \$14.6b per year... in a country where per capita income is less than \$1000 per year. As long as close to 32% of our national revenue is stolen, we will continue to vegetate in our state of arrested development, poverty and insecurity.

Nigeria cannot and will not kill corruption. And corruption will not and cannot kill Nigeria. Given its pervasive and inclusive nature, and given that we cannot build formidable police forces, agents and agencies to police our polity and policies, our police, and our entire security apparatus, and also given the “comfortable” position Nigeria continues to occupy in respected international and African indexes (Mo Ibrahim Foundation, Transparency International, Fitch, WHO, UNO, The World Bank), our National Assembly should, as a matter of urgent national

importance, cause a law to be included in Chapter II, the Fundamental Objectives and Directive Principles of State Policy of our 1999 Constitution to legalize and legitimize Corruption. Believe you me, I have crafted the privately-to-be-sponsored piece of legislation without the assistance of any legal draftsman!. Part of the spin offs of this law will be the dissolution of all the agencies that define, identify, police and persecute corruption! With corruption banished from the entire political and socio-economic lexicon of Nigeria, only “offences” from ₦25b and above will attract attention. These will be called minor “infractions” or “misdemeanours” which should be handed over for satanic deliverance to the hundreds of solution, redemption, purgation centres where tele-miracles are galore and Christ is sold for a discount! After these offenders are declared delivered, they should be given a GCFR, choice property in Abuja and a hefty pension for life! And become consultants to the President on Corruption!

Mr. Chairman, Sir,

I remember mentioning the University of Port Harcourt in my benediction but said nothing about it. You remember, I said earlier, that my lecture will mirror the stream-of-consciousness. Its logic and cohesion lie in the staccato and non-linear structure of the presentation. I came to this University in 1983, as a Visiting Fellow: forty years into my life and seventeen years after my first degree. One year after, in 1984, I became a Professor of Linguistics and

head of the department which was then known as Linguistics and African Languages.

We used to have a degree programme in Kiswahili here. After my headship of the department, I was elected into the deanship of the Faculty of Humanities. I had two terms. But I did not complete the last year of my second term. I left on 'national' service first to Warri, where I was Provost of the College of Education, and then, to Aba where I was the pioneer Executive Director of the National Institute For Nigerian Languages. In 1988, I gave my inaugural lecture in this university, entitled: **Linguistics, Language and the Nation**. Some aspects of the lecture were futuristic as inaugurals are expected to be. In that lecture, I critiqued Applied Linguistics as being more than language learning and teaching. I went ahead to suggest and to promote another interface within macrolinguistics. This I called Applied Sociolinguistics. In my vision involving Applied Linguistics and Sociolinguistics I established Language Engineering as the cornerstone of the new interface. And I found myself after the inaugural being called, in the premises, a 'language engineer'. Linguistics-qua-linguistics is descriptive. But language engineering is prescriptive as it empowers a language to increase its status, ranking and valency on the Language Vitality Index. Orthography design is the prerequisite for literacy. Digitization and decimalization of numerals and numbers are imperatives for numeracy. And all these and more belong to language engineering.

Text development, capacity building in terms of teachers, must be there if underdeveloped languages must become languages of instruction ahead of being languages of study. And metalanguage must be made available if undeveloped languages are to be taught and discussed in the language as vehicles of instruction. I served my apprenticeship under E. J. Allagoa and Kay Williamson in the Rivers State, Readers Project, and the Language Programme in the old School System which pre-dated the Faculty System in this university. All those experiences prepared me adequately for the Warri and Aba challenges.

At Warri, I set up the Department of Nigerian Languages, for teaching and producing teachers in the languages in the immediate environment – Isekiri, Urhobo, Isoko and Ibibio. That department still survives there. Indeed, I made time to teach some of the linguistics and practical courses at Warri. At Aba, I had the whole of Nigeria and her languages to practice as a language engineer. Working with native-speakers, we developed or systematized the orthographies of many Nigerian languages and got native speakers to write structured and graded school texts in their languages. We also developed curricula and trained manpower for quite a good number of Nigerian languages. In spite of our many administrative challenges including under-funding, issues of indigenship of principal officers and federal character for employment, the Aba experience was rewarding and fulfilling.

Mr. Chairman, Sir,

At Warri and Aba, I had first-hand, and hands-on experience with bureaucracy, governments and governance at the LGA, State and Federal levels. Things happen in there. Demands made of CEOs at all levels by their supervising persons, bodies, agencies or authorities. The images, the metaphors, the realities are frightening for the non-initiate. Debauchery is not the word. Neither is rape, it. It is incest. That is what the leaders or bureaucrats make of the ruled. Not the incest born out of non-culpable ignorance. The type that Sophocles powerfully presented in **Oedipus**. But the incest of blissful and organized experience, and structured performance, in the public glare and public square. Otherwise, how come that those who know and are so charged, in a mono-culture economy in oil, allow;

- the apocalyptic waste of the hydrocarbon resources,
 - illegal bunkering and other associated security matters, through which the country loses oil and revenue to the tune of \$7b annually to illegal bunkering alone, and another ₦5b on the repair of vandalized pipelines
 - lack of investment in the oil industry. With the non-passage of the Petroleum Industry Bill, the sum of over \$28b has been lost through the diversion of investment to neighbouring African countries as at 2010.

(All these in spite of the impending drop of some 20% in Nigerian oil production!)

- Nigeria has the potential of producing 3-4m bpd of crude oil but produces only 2.3m bpd which translates to a shortfall of \$12b or ₦2trillion.
- An Air Nigeria ex-director was given ₦35b to buy aircraft(s) and update his fleet. But he diverted it to other businesses including buying himself houses in Dubai.
- ₦7.8 trillion Federal projects have been abandoned.
- ₦58b pension funds' records are missing with ₦1.7b diverted by officials in the office of the Head of Service to recurrent expenditure leaving the families for whom the monies were made to suffer?
- There are losses of ₦30b yearly to newsprint importation while the local paper mills at Jebba, Iwopin, and Oku Ibokun have remained shut for more than fifteen years now.
- There are losses of ₦59b every three months on the importation of foreign computer software.
- There are losses of \$500m or ₦1b yearly to medical treatment for the elite abroad.
- In one day, June 20, 2012, Nigeria's foreign reserves dipped by \$52m and thus our foreign reserves slumped to \$37.19b.

Mr Chairman, Sir,

In case some people here think I have forgotten the title of this lecture, I want to assure them that I am on all fours about it. Language, is what I have been using since this lecture began. We need and use human language to talk

about practically all fancies and all realities. But students and scholars of language would not ever remember Confucius as making any intellectual foray into language. But they would Boas, de Saussure, the cerebral and multi-facetted Noam Chomsky and his many acolytes in the Chomskyan Revolution. And people would also remember Martin Heidegger, Ludwig Wittgenstein, Gottlob Frege, Bertrand Russell, among others, who have contributed immensely to various issues in the philosophy of language. Just as people would remember Ferguson, Joshua Fishman et al. who have contributed immensely to the sociology of language and sociolinguistics.

Who is Confucius? He is a one-name, 5th – 6th century Chinese philosopher who embodies the quintessence of Chinese philosophy, culture, knowledge, education, religious beliefs and practices. He was not known to be ever interested in being on the hustings. When however, he was once asked what his first policy would be if he became, per chance, the president of China, he poetically replied:

*It is,
To correct language.
If language is not correct,
What is said is not what is meant.
If what is said is not what is meant;
What ought to be done remains undone,
And the people will stand in confusion.*

The way I understand this quote is that there is a **double entendre** about the word ‘correct’. As a noun, it modifies

language and we have a noun phrase which means language that is correct i.e. acceptable, right, proper. Indeed, right pronunciation, right elocution, right diction, right and proper register. The second sense of the entendre with 'correct' implies a verb and implies to correct language as an infinitive phrase which suggests to 'treat' language and endow it with the vitality and empowerment for clear, precise and effective communication. If we put together the two senses of 'correct', we find that what Confucius is saying is that he would see himself as an applied sociolinguist and a language engineer who would treat the Chinese language to become the effective medium for developmental communication. Let us quickly add that even though the quote talks about 'what is said' i.e. oracy, 'what is written' i.e. literacy, is subsumed. Indeed, Confucius was ahead of his time in the sociology of language and sociolinguistics. For a start. With what is said, who will teach the electronic media in Port Harcourt to pronounce our current Vice Chancellor's surname correctly? In Eme᠙nanjo badly pronounced as Ęmenan^jo᠓ and Ikechukwuèbùka badly pronounced as Ike᠙chukwuèbukà! What is pronounced is not what is meant.

G. Orwell has really said it somewhere in one of his many essays that:

If a society corrupts language, language can also corrupt thought. A bad usage can spread by tradition and imitation

even among people who should or do know better.

Holistically taken, Confucius is referring to the six language skills which any comprehensive treatment and use of language entails: listening, understanding and speaking, which constitute the oral-aural set; and reading, writing and translating which make up the essentially literacy set. Confucius is therefore, concerned with

- enunciating a language policy
- enthroning the skills of oracy and literacy in our workaday lives, in education, bureaucracy and governance. Indeed, in all domains and in all disciplines and specializations.

Following the examples of Ayo Bamgbose's ***Language and Governance***, and Part I of Noam Chomsky's ***Language and Responsibility***, I have written not less than two dozen papers on language, literacy, education and development. These, I am putting together in a volume that will go by the title: ***Language, Society and Development***.

TOWARD A NATIONAL LANGUAGE AND LITERACY POLICY

Our country is rich in policies. It even has a policy on family size. In fact, it has an Institute for Policy (and Strategic) Studies. The absence of a national language policy which can be found in a ***corpus juris*** – as Education, Science and Technology, etc, already have) is

really no problem. For the absence of a policy is itself a policy! Nigeria really has definitive language provisions in the **National Policy on Education** (2004), the **Cultural Policy of Nigeria** (1976), **The Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria** (1999), **The Recommendations of Political Bureau** (1987), among others.

Yet, it is necessary, indeed imperative that Nigeria should have a definitive national language and literacy policy, as Australia, South Africa, Lithuania, etc, have. The reasons for this are many. Ayo Banjo, one of Nigeria's foremost linguists, has correctly observed in his inaugural lecture, interestingly entitled **Grammar and Grammarians** that

The language problems of... Nigeria are probably more serious than the much lamented economic and socio-political problems. Language and effective education, language and national unity: these are two of the ultimate questions for Nigeria in the context of four hundred indigenous languages and two foreign languages.

How can Nigeria with its multilingual and multi-cultural configuration achieve effective education and national unity, and overall economic and socio-political development? The examples of the Newly Industrialized Countries (NICs), notably in (S)Asia including Thailand,

South Korea, Malaysia, Singapore and, especially, China, currently the World's 'hottest' and most developed economy, have loud lessons for us. We suggest that it is strictly by harnessing the culture of development (outside the Euro-American paradigms and without IMF prescriptions) with the culture of development that their developmental miracles have taken place. This involves the effective and creative use of the peoples' cultures and languages. Anglophone, Lusophone and Francophone Africans have tried Western models, articulated and implemented in the exoglossic languages of the colonizers, with little success. Let us listen to Chinweizu et al, Ngugi wa Thiongo, etc and decolonize our minds and mindsets and try articulating and implementing our policies in our own indigenous cultures and languages. We often forget that this is really what the Euro-Americans have done over time and the (S)Asians have always done through literacy in their own languages. The result would be staggering in Africa if we follow the S(East) Asian models, rather than the Euro-American models written, packaged and delivered in perfect European languages and supervised by the IMF and Breton Woods. For example, in traditional and Communist China, literacy in Chinese is not only central to class stratification but also imperative for development. In China, **di-shu**, the **ability to read books** written in Chinese, brings fame, fortune and even beautiful girls. See this Miyazaki poem in translation.

*To enrich your family, no need to buy good land;
Books hold a thousand measures of grain.*

*For an easy life, no need to build a mansion,
In books are found houses of gold.
Going out, be not vexed by absence of followers.
In books carriages and horses form a crowd.
Marrying be not vexed by lack of a go-between.
In books, there are girls with faces of jade.
Anybody who wants to become a somebody
Devotes himself to the classics. Faces the window
and reads.*

The topmost class in Chinese society are the **shi**, the scholar-officials, the literati, the Mandarin. These are the experts in Chinese calligraphy and language: the national language, the language of bureaucracy and development and of the Chinese classics. Really, it takes some thirty years of rigour to be a Mandarin, i.e. an expert in Chinese calligraphy.

Chinese rulers and leaders, from traditional times to now, have been **invariably intellectuals**. General Mao Tse Tung wrote on all facets of Chinese governance and military science. Mao Zedong was a poet. General Chen Li was a great lover and friend of the arts and artist(e)s. In fact, among the Chinese, there is an equation between literacy and sensible correct behaviour. The Chinese word for illiteracy is **wen-meng** literally **text-blind**. A non-literate person is someone who is **blind** to a text with all the negative connotations and more of the word 'illiterate' in English. The Chinese word suggests limitations in comprehension and understanding (if not intelligence) by

being likened to the loss of sight. It signals an inability, perhaps, not only not to see, but also not to reason. Do the 'somebodies' in Nigeria read? Are they illiterate, aliterate or both? One of our recent leaders and rulers made it public knowledge that he did not read or care about the products of the Nigerian print media. In the US, when an American journalist was caught and imprisoned, for minding the Chinese peoples' business, it took high octane diplomacy including the personal intervention and visit to China, of a one-time ebullient, charismatic and cerebral American president to get her released. How many of those who claim to rule or lead Nigeria in the executive and bureaucracy, the legislature and the judiciary have heard of the visionary Singaporean leader, Lee Kuan Yew, who transformed his country from a third-world country to a first-world one, within three decades? Maybe they have heard of him. Have they read, understood, and digested, for use, in Nigeria his experiences, documented in his monumental work on that developmental miracle? Perhaps, Lee Kuan Yew is too far in space and, possibly, time. How many of our rulers and leaders have heard of, let alone, read Claude Ake or Billy Dudley, among others, and their powerful and pragmatic discourses on the Nigerian (and African) state? Perhaps, we are expecting the moon from our legislators, some of whom, according to the Deputy Senate President, Mr. Ike Ekweremadu, can barely write their names. (*The Nation* Tuesday, October, 23, 2012:19; and *The Guardian* Saturday September 29, 2012:45), *The Guardian*, Friday October 12, 2012:28)

Our land of magical realism is a place to love. It has no snow. No earthquakes. No destructive thunderstorms. No hurricanes with beautiful, whimsical, and, sometimes, feminine names. Twenty four seven, it is either sun to dry our clothes because we have no drying machines as backup to washing machines. Or rain to wet our soils and provide us with all-season food.

Talking about poetry, a genre of literature, a while ago, reminds me of one of the heresies we had to fight to a standstill over the issue of the language of Igbo or any ethnic literature.

THE LANGUAGE OF WRITTEN LITERATURE

There are now unfortunately two competing views on the question of the language of Igbo literature. Represented by Emenyonu and Acholonu, one view holds that whereas the Igbo language may be necessary for the existence of Igbo literature, language is by no means the only criterion for the definition of literature in general and Igbo literature in particular. Represented by Ugonna, Maduka and Emenanjo, another group holds that important as other criteria may be, language is the touchstone for any meaningful definition and delimitation of any ethnic literature such as Igbo literature, like French or German or English or Chinese literature, is. Although it may not be important or significant, it is essential for us to point out that whereas the first group is made up of people who make a living from teaching English literature and Literature in English, the second group is made up of

people in Igbo studies and in comparative literature, for Maduka.

There is no doubt that central to the question of the language of Igbo literature are other issues like the (universal) definition of literature, the scope of African Literature and the delimitation of ethnic or national literatures. As one with more than a smattering knowledge of what goes into the making of literature, I know that literary critics and stylisticians are agreed on what literature is, its scope, its relationship with the other arts (e.g. the plastic arts), its relationship with folklore, anthropology, etc., etc. Among the universals that feature in the works of literary critics and stylisticians are the nationality of the creative artist, the subject-matter, the world-view presented, the author's empathy for his subject(s) and, very importantly, the language used. It is only after looking closely at a given text and weighting these criteria accordingly that it is possible to assign any work of literary art to its appropriate 'national' or 'ethnic' literature. For example, even though they write in English, none of the Anglophone African writers is considered an English writer. The main reasons are that the subject-matters and world-views of these writers are neither typically British nor is their brand of the 'New English' language used, Standard British English. Does this not explain why, even though Henry James, an American, wrote in a form of Standard English, his variety was the Standard American one. It is only those works which he wrote after he took on British citizenship which are

regarded by the English, as belonging to British English literature. What has been said of Henry James is true, in a fairly different way, for T.S. Eliot. To qualify for a place in British English literature, Josef Konrad not only became Joseph Conrad, he propagated British European imperialist view-points in his novels and short stories no matter their setting. Leopold Senghor was a senior French 'citizen', with a French wife and all the trappings of French culture, and wrote French with the facility and expertise of the French classics. Yet, Senghor does not belong to the French literary tradition. The reasons: he is a Senegalese African, merely an évolu  and the high priest of Negritude, the epitome of a world-view which is certainly not French. Like Senghor, Ola Balogun has written, at least, two works in French, published in Paris. Yet, Ola Balogun's plays have no place in French Literature. At best, they have some place in the literature of "The Third World", written in French by Francophones. Like the Anglophone African writers, Elspeth Huxley writes in English which, in fact, is her mother tongue. Yet, no one will consider her an African writer in English.

If the language used and the ethnicity/nationality of the writer are not imperatives for defining and delimiting literatures, why is it that in world literature there is a difference between English, French, Spanish Literature and Literature in English, French or Spanish? Are people still seeing Obi Wali, Chinweizu et al, and Ngugi Wa 'Thiongo as mere rebel rousers desirous of catching the head lines? How can Flora Nwapa, in one vein, be in

Literature in English and, in another, in Igbo Literature of English expression, that funny, racist, and inelegant euphemism used by people in world literary studies to continue to propagate the misconception started by Emenyonu's ***Rise of the Igbo Novel***, where accomplished Igbo novelists like Tony Ubesie, Vincent Odilora, Ndubodii Obodo are left out but Achebe, Ekwensi and their fellow travelers are given prominence? For Ikenga's sake, how can one say that Ekwensi's ***Burning Grass*** or ***The Passport of Mallan Ili***, set in northern Nigerian and written in Nigerian English, are Igbo novels or novelettes? The centrality of language and culture appears to be trivial issues in the evolution, creation, delimitation and appreciation of Afro-Saxon literature, literary stylistics and aesthetics. But not so in Afro-African literature as Ngugi wa Thiong'o has continued to argue since he stopped writing creative literature in English and concentrating and investing in literature in Gikuyi, his mother tongue. Ngugi's views, which I strongly believe in, have been rigorously and vigorously argued in the 1997 revised and enlarged edition of ***Writers in Politics*** whose subtitle is: ***A Re-engagement with Issues of Literature and Society***. If one of the definitions of literature is the creative use of language, what language have the Anglophone writers of Igbo extraction used: a variety of English or a variety of Igbo?

The same phenomenon is now playing out in the definition and delimitation of home video films in Igbo. Only 1% of these are produced in Igbo. Yet in, at least, 50% of the

films in Nollywood, the entire architecture, the underlying meta-culture and the pervading non-verbal meta-communication are Igbo. The paralinguistic features such as vocal qualities, vocal qualifiers, vocal characterizers and vocal segregates are Igbo. The jewelry, necklaces, beads, footwears, head covers (caps, hats, gears) are patently Igbo. The clothes and fabrics are patently Igbo. The fabrics, their textures and sartorial styles are essentially Igbo. The personal and praise names, curses, exclamations are Igbo. All the features of kinesics and the behaviour of the actors and of dramaturgy: eye movements, eye contacts and gazes, facial expressions, gestures, postures and stance, emblems, illustrators, affect displays, regulators, adaptors etc are fully Igbo. The use of space and distance, haptics and, even, silence are essentially Igbo. Sounds and, even, music, the phrases and proverbs sometimes heard are in Igbo. If our academics would like to label such 'movies' Igbo, let us listen to this insider observation by Mr. Kelechi Nwandu, Executive Director of Ikenga Movies Award

*Nollywood started with the mega-Igbo movie **Living in Bondage** which was created and produced by Kenneth Nnebue, Nek Videos in 1991. People of Igbo descent constitute over 60% of the Nollywood industry in Nigeria either as actors, actresses, producers, directors and marketers, etcetera. It is unfortunate that while people of other ethnic groups strive to make more*

*movies in **their language**, the number of Igbo movies has dropped drastically.*

LANGUAGE AND EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

The tragedy of our present plight in development has been put at the doorsteps of corruption, ignorance, illiteracy, poverty, disease. But this is really not fully it. It is perhaps, more importantly the problem of language as the vector of communication: our incompetence in the communication skills. Many people love to forget that because it is everywhere like air, language

permeates our thoughts, mediates our relations with others and even creeps into our dreams. Most human knowledge and culture is stored and expressed in language which is so ubiquitous that we take it for granted. Without it, however, society as we know it will be impossible. Without it, development is actually impossible.

In public discourse today, everybody is talking – not speaking. Nobody is listening. From the family to the nation, our children are talking to us. But we are not listening. We are talking to our children. But they are not listening. Thus, the falconer no long hears the falcon. In our over-crowded class rooms, across the nation, from the nursery school to the tertiary institutions, we are talking to our students. But they are not listening. The media are talking, sometimes, patronizingly to us. The DJs and

various electronic media houses are jolting us with their rotten English and their more rotten pronunciation and elocution. Do they expect us to listen?

Our national plight is in the realm of communication. We have lost or is it, not developed our skills for speaking, listening, reading, writing and translating! As well as our skills for thinking, “smelling”, touching, and appreciating the synergy in our differences. If we still have the skill of “smelling” how come we buy – or allow others- to prepare and sell to us edible akara, *boIIeII*, roasted corn from the unkempt seller at the point where unsnapped drains, human waste and garbage, just a few months old, have mounted a guard of honour? In all our domains; churches, mosques, the media, schools, there is no much talking going on. Indeed, too much talking. But no oracy. No literacy. No effective communication.

Yet, the empowerment of literacy has always been one of the mission statements in Nigeria’s Education Objectives in *corpora juris* like the ***Constitution(s) of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, National Policy on Education, National Cultural Policy***. The eradication of illiteracy is the underlying goal of Nigeria’s ***National Policy on Education*** in general and the thrust and burden of the (language provisions of the) ***Universal Basic Education***. This in particular, specifically targets literacy for ALL Nigerians, especially:

*Children – The Boy Child, The Girl Child,
Street Children, Almajiris Adults – the
Underprivileged, the Marginalized,
Nomads – Migrant Fisherman and Cattle
Rearers,
The Handicapped, the Physically and
Gender Handicapped,
The Adolescents, - Area Boys, School Drop-
outs, the Overtaken*

Nigeria is committed to achieving, in 2015, the universal basic literacy goal, one of the eight UN Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Nigeria was meant to have achieved the Education for ALL (EFA) in 2000! But wishes in Nigeria are never horses!

In the education industry, there is plenty of input and a lot of motion. But little output and no movement: uƆkwuƆ ejula àlà, mà ijè adiƆghiƆ ya. The channels in the educational industry are clogged by too much bureaucracy, too many parastatals, too much overhead. Too many non-functioning institutions. Too much noise. Is it any wonder then that there is very little output? How can there be output when the stimulus is incapable of generating a response? The channel is overheated and clogged by too many policies and practices, most times conflicting and contradictory and, at all times, poorly articulated. Too many experts. Too many implementing agencies. Too many regulatory bodies. Too many policy somersaults. In Nigeria, policies change with new

governments and, new, ministers even where and when the same political party is in the saddle. Too many (education) summits. Too many roadmaps. And yet no clear or cleared road or map to follow.

New summits end up setting up new parastatals, new agencies, new curricula and even new policies that contradict the extant ones which are supposed to be on course.

At the end of the day, no education is delivered to the people. Everything is overcharged. Overloaded. Overheated. Fatigue. Bloating. Overspending. Perpetual motion. No movement.

Let us now narrow our discussion to our own setting in the university system. What are we delivering to our students? How are we doing this? Sometimes, we have virtual libraries and state-of-the art equipment in our science and language laboratories, and in our science and technology workshops. Equipment designed for electricity, twenty four-seven, in a post-industrial age. Yet these are being manned by computer-immigrant people with high certification, yet a mindset that is pre-agrarian and in a society where power is rationed, cooking gas very expensive and children shout NEPA whenever there is power outage or its return!

How can we indeed trust government when its own agents and agencies use non-human communication through

verdicts at (election) tribunals, presence at campaign rallies, and open under-the-table-tactics to twist the people's choices at elections?

What message is government sending by under-funding its own agencies in education and communication, downsizing, deregulating and even proscribing its own agencies without cancelling their enabling statutes! Like the National Institute for Nigerian Languages, Aba. The French and Arabic language villages are hale and hearty even though they do not have enabling legislation, unlike their Nigerian languages counterpart, among the inter-university centres!

LANGUAGE AND THE UNIVERSITY CURRICULUM

In our own circumstances in the university system there is a very serious crisis with human communication. So much is being taught but so little is being learnt. A good number of our university lecturers, with due respect, lack the skills for effective communication. Our General English Studies (GES) programmes are to me a colossal waste of time and resources. The current NUC programme on ESP (English for Specific Purposes) is a complete waste of public money, and students' time. Our language departments are teaching much more of literature and esoteric, if not traditional grammar, than they are, the use of language and communicative skills. Very little if any effective communication is going on in all our language programmes-regular and sandwich; full time and part-time. The university is designed to function on a multi-

channel transmission system. But because of too many inadequacies in both the system and its operators, the university system now has been reduced to a one-track system. Hence the hand-out or buy-my-book culture – a one-channel, one-track system which destroys dialogue and dissent – the ***raison d’etre*** of university education. As if the ***raison d’etre*** of our calling and standard practice in our profession are not bad enough, we have not been the best of our friends or of ourselves in our public outings. Some of us who have had the opportunity, no matter how by, to serve in national, state and local government public institutions, have exposed our underbelly. And this has become generalized and taken as the standard. Such people, especially, those who have gone into combative party or military politics as (special) advisers, Vice-Chancellors, Executive Directors, Commissioners, Ministers, have proved beyond all reasonable doubt that practically everybody is a fraud minus opportunity!

Ladies and Gentlemen

Pardon but tolerate this. How many of us know the reason academics are dreaded outside! It is this. What makes us tick, bubble and relevant is our capacity to argue within ourselves and between and among ourselves. Self-communication, intrapersonal monologue, self-criticism working in union with interpersonal communication, dialogue, effective, robust but by means personal criticism. These are what make us academics.

How can outsiders like and tolerate us? Gadflies and spoil sports as we are? Remember the fates of Plato and Galileo.

There is a crisis of communication in all our offerings in the national university system. I am sure that if we ask the people in education to find out the therapy for this, they will recommend a specialized PGDE!

Perhaps, Sir, some, if not most, university lecturers will need some doses of education courses to be good and effective teachers. This is the practice in a number of countries such as Canada, Australia, etc. But all of us need also, courses in communication skills to be effective communicators, as teachers. Since we all operate in a formal situation where the teacher and the taught need to dialogue and communicate in ESP, in their respective disciplines, our lecturers must be brought up to communicate effectively in the ESP relevant to their disciples. We do not expect their oral skills to equal those of the Received Pronunciation of BBC English. But we expect that they should, at least, be able to speak and communicate in Educated Nigerian English. Those lecturers, even within the Humanities, who care less how they communicate in formal lectures are doing a great disservice to the system in terms of standards, quality assurance and the overall interest of effective teaching and learning in the university system.

THE FOUNDATION YEAR PROGRAMME

The burden and thrust of this valedictory is that communication is as central to the knowledge industry as it is to national and sustainable development. Both require effective communicative skills in human language. That is the underlying message of Confucius.

For this purpose, therefore, our educational system needs to strengthen all our language offerings, at all levels. At the tertiary level we shall take up the GES programme. We need to take a very hard look at all the offerings and structures currently found in the GES. These need to be totally overhauled, re-structured, re-enabled and re-empowered to achieve the emerging goals of learning in the 21st century. These include installing essential proficiencies, inquiry capacities, integrative learning; civic, societal and general knowledge. These are crucial and critical for self and group relevance, survival and overall sustainable development. In this regard, and for a start, the GES should be unscrambled, re-designed, re-kitted and elevated to the level of a Faculty (if not a College) of Foundation/Basic Studies with its own well-established and discrete departments in:

1. Communication Skills

This department will provide courses for the essential or core proficiencies in:

- speaking and listening
- critical reading
- effective writing-analytic, creative, documentation

- quantitative reasoning
 - multilingual/bilingual competencies
 - technological literacy and fluency
2. English for Specific Purposes
- This department will provide courses in:
- language use in different disciplines
 - information literacy in different domains
 - language proficiency in different registers

In his inaugural lecture, Nkem Okoh has identified the following sub-varieties of ESP such as:

ALOS	(Academic Literacy and Oracy Skills)
CLIL	(Content and Language Integrated Learning)
EAP	(English for Academic Purposes)
EBP	(English for Business Purposes)
EGAP	(English for General Academic Purposes)
EMP	(English for Medical Purposes)
EOP	(English for Occupational Purposes)
EPP	(English for Professional Purposes)
ESAP	(English for Specific Academic Purposes)
ESOL	(English to Speakers of Other Languages)
E3L	(English as a Third Language)
E4W	(English for Work)
ESL	(English as a Second Language)
ELF	(English as Lingua Franca)
EIC	(English for International Communication)
EAL	(English as an Additional Language)
E4WPS	(English for Widening the Participation of Students)
EMI	(English as a Medium of Instruction)

TT, TT & TE in ESP (Teacher Training, Trainer Training and Teacher Education in English for Specific Purposes)

3. Multiculturalism and Literatures

This department will provide courses in:

- diverse cultures and traditions (local, national and international)
- oral and written literatures in English and Nigerian Languages

4. Liberal Arts with very large doses of philosophy and Nigerian history

5. Integrated Science

6. Social Studies

ASSETS OF THE NEW FSP

- ❖ In terms of duration, the FSP, as envisaged, should last one year.
- ❖ In terms of teaching-learning, the orientation and methods must not only be novel, stimulating and heuristic but also emphasize:
 - essential proficiencies
 - critical inquiry
 - developing inquiry capacities through:
 - project-based learning
 - technology-based learning
 - collaborative learning – direct and online
 - experiential learning (apprenticeship, fieldwork, service learning)

- hands-on orientation
- self-knowledge and examined values
- integrative, transdisciplinary learning and knowledge
- team work and dialogue with the student at the centre of everything
- text development
- editing and publishing
- ❖ In terms of quality and qualifications, the programmes should be taught by senior, seasoned and serious academics based in the new faculty as well as drawn from across the university system.
- ❖ In terms of career structure the new faculty should have its own complement of permanent staff who many choose to be professors in their own disciplines but based in the faculty.
- ❖ Finally, a credit pass in the foundation programme will be required for students to go on to their core undergraduate programmes.

SPIN OFFS OF THE FOUNDATION YEAR PROGRAMME

If the course contents in these departments are properly and creatively articulated, and taught by competent and committed lecturers with the right emphases and orientations as spelt out, at the end of the foundation year, the students would have acquired:

- the necessary language and communication skills to carry on, with confidence, university academic programmes with minimum supervision

- the necessary reading skills for the students to enjoy reading with speed and understanding, on their own, so that they can read anything and everything that comes their way and upturn the present preoccupation with the engines of social media, and home video films as their only forms of recreation
- the language skills which will make them enjoy the art of writing, as a hobby, and, as a way of life. This will help to discourage plagiarism and photocopying since the students will be happy, contented, interested and convinced to write their term papers, long essays and dissertations without plagiarizing other people's works, or farming them out to mercenaries all over the place
- the necessary oral skill to express themselves with confidence
- the necessary lifelong skills to see learning as a life-long affair, and knowledge as a transdisciplinary, holistic and integrated phenomenon in spite of colleges, faculties, departments, units or sections. This will also enable the students to appreciate the inter-dependence of disciplines and foster in them respect for all disciplines and programmes in spite of colleges, faculties, schools, departments or programmes
- the flair for bilingualism and multicultural perspectives which will make or allow them to appreciate fellow Nigerians as human beings, and diversity as the reality in nature.

- the sociolinguistic skills for the development of texts in the MT/L₁
- a sound understanding of English as the language of multilingual and multicultural communication, multicultural education, intercultural and international communication in a multilingual Nigeria, and in the global world.

The one-year intensive foundation programme will make students appreciate the imperative of human language as Confucius has envisioned.

The training will enable students to begin to appreciate language with all its constituents as the vehicle for communication through words. And learn to watch and effectively select their words, because:

*Words become thoughts,
Thoughts become actions.
Actions become character,
Character becomes destiny.*

In addition, students will begin to appreciate that words, the building blocks of human language, are sacred. Words are used for fleshing out creative literature and for producing sacred things like books which are not only works of art, but also sacred intellectual property. They will come to appreciate that as sacred artifacts, books should not be abused through the breach of copyright, piracy and plagiarism. And, as art, books should not be defaced, vandalized, misused and abused.

All these because books are engines of change, windows on the world and light houses in the sea of time.

*Without books,
history is silent.
literature dumb
sciences crippled
thought and speculations at a standstill*

Students should at this level be made to appreciate the facts that

*...books are telescopes because through them we can look at the distant stars and speculate about life upon them...
microscopes because through them we cannot only examine the chromosomes and the atoms but also infer those minute particles which even the finest lenses cannot reveal.*

...the only known time-machines that can create the events of the past and open up vistas of the future.

Finally, the FSP products will be made to see the centrality of books to literacy and development. Because

If we want to conquer poverty, hunger and disease, we have to conquer illiteracy. Illiteracy is the most serious handicap for economic, political... and individual underdevelopment we know.

The Foundation programme will equip students to begin to appreciate the complementary relationship between language and usage. For, whereas language and its grammar enable us to talk about knowledge, and linguistic competence, usage enables us to speak and write language with communicative competence.

The Foundation programme will, through exposure, get the students to appreciate that they too can become novelists, poets, essayists and journalists. Indeed, they will come to appreciate good writing, as something good, not because of the person, his/her age, his/her level of formal education, ethnicity, race or even publisher.

Antagonists of the Foundation Year programme should not be in a hurry to forget that would be undergraduate students from English-speaking countries, studying in different places outside Africa are required to pass the EFL/ESL before they set sail. And all of those facing me here who have the experience I am talking about, did not complain about the duration of the degree programmes which they passed through in foreign lands: the compulsory one year language and culture programme in the language of instruction in the countries they studied in, before the four or more years undergraduate programme.

Another argument for the duration issue is that the NUC and other Regulatory Bodies and Councils are said to be working towards a first degree being the prerequisite for

entry into some professional programmes. Besides, have we forgotten that even now, all first degree programmes are not of the same duration, in the same university? Medicine, Architecture, Engineering. And hasn't NUC announced that even Education could become a 5-year programme! Our last reason for the extra year programme is that it will help to make our products look more mature than they now look, on graduation. I suspect that because of their real biological ages, our products, on graduation, look like 'eaglets'. I suspect that it is this that makes them incapable of absorbing the "arcane stuff" that we inflict on them. For age and maturation have a lot to do with cognition and learning, especially so with the slow evolution from pre-literacy to permanent literacy in Nigeria. I know there will, naturally, be negative reactions to this extra year structure from all sectors of society. The society foists their juveniles on us to lecture! Thanks to the perjury that parents propagate through the affidavits industry concerning year-of-birth! Yet, many employers refuse to employ our products claiming that they lack the requisite competencies and look too young! Whatever those mean, I think that those who hire and fire labour have reservations about engaging smart, pamper-wearing but certificate-carrying juveniles!

Talking about the labour market calls to my mind an anecdote that one of us, a professor in this university, told me about his mother. He took his sick but alert mother to a hospital. When the doctor appeared, our professor's mother took no notice of her. Then the doctor started

asking the professor's mother some questions, which she considered too close for comfort. Our professor's mother looked at her from head to toe and then retorted:

Oò ìII bùII doIIkiIItà?

ÒIIòII giII bùII doIIkiIIta anwà?

Nwa m☪, òIIrìIIà m à tòIIròII giII.

Ben^ji nwa m☪, gàa chòIIoIIroII m☪, doIIkiIItà.

For those of us who don't understand the language used by our professor's mother, the text reads like this!

Oh! Are you a doctor?

Oh! Are you the doctor I am expecting?

My child, this my ailment is older than you are.

Benjy, my son, please go and find me a doctor.

OH NIGERIA!

Isn't our Nigeria what T.S. Eliot had in mind when he wrote "The Wasteland". And aren't Nigerians the hollow men – shapes without form, living in a world where darkness is invisible? Nigeria, your country, my country, our country is one of robust paradoxes. It is a nation of cardinals and con-men, pastors of truth and prophets of doom. Its nationals are great umpires (and peace keepers) outside but vampires at home. Her universities are overflowing with professors including professors of religion who profess no religion. Nigeria is a blessed country where the worst imaginable constitute our daily menus. Yet, Nigeria tops the Happiness Index in the world. We have lost our sense of wonder and so nothing now excites us. Indeed Nigeria remains the eternal and vibrant paradise

for satirists and the bubbling theatre of the absurd where all of us are still waiting for Godot. The bizarre, the grotesque, the most nightmarish and kafkaesque are daily trying to outkafka Kafka. In Nigeria, national visions and policies are always so deftly crafted that they read like fiction. But God loves Nigeria. Anytime it goes very close to the cliff and finds itself between the devil and the hard place, a ***deux ex machina*** pops up with an effective national prayer for Nigeria in Distress! And a new cycle begins. If people of my generation tell you about the angst, trauma, anxieties and great fear they have about Nigeria, you will dismiss them as doom-sayers and alarmists. God save Nigeria!

DEFICITS IN NIGERIAN EDUCATION

Nigeria, our country, is one where the superlative degree is the only one that is relevant and meaningful. She has all sorts of institutions here, with all things passing for educational institutions. In these, teaching and learning are dispensed, negotiated, sold and bought for a fee. Secondary schools are now only patronized if they are 'international' or better 'academies' or some 'x-gate'. So, too, the universities. I have lost count of the number of universities which we now have in this country. Their names, their locations. Thanks to the revelations of the 11-man Committee on ***Needs Assessment of Nigerian Public Universities*** headed by Professor Mahmood Yakubu, the Executive Secretary, Tertiary Education Trust Fund. Here is a flash of some of their findings.

THE NIGERIAN PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES: A PARTIAL OVERVIEW

Infrastructure

- 701 physical projects uncompleted
- 163 (23.3%) are abandoned-22 in UNN; 16 in UDUS
- 583 (76.7%) on going
- 60% funded by TETFund
- More than 50% of lecture theatres lack public address systems
- Many universities operate 'dry' laboratories
- Open air sports' pavilions, old cafeteria, convocation arenas and even uncompleted buildings are used for lectures. In some cases, workshops are conducted under corrugated sheds or trees

Teaching/Non-teaching Staff

- 77, 511, non-teaching staff are on varsities' payroll
- 37, 504 academics are employed by universities
- Only 43% have Ph.Ds
- 9,376 are part-time lecturers
- Only 4 percent are senior academics
- Only 1,343 of the 7935 scholarly articles are published in international journals
- Most varsities' workers are 'closed' (homogenous staff-in terms of ethno-cultural background).

Student enrolment/Hostel accommodation

- 1,252,913 students enrolled in varsities
- 85% are undergraduates
- 1503,431 wrote the 2012 UMTE
- Lecturer/student ratio is as high as 1:300

- Eight universities (NOUN, LASU, UNIABUJA, UNIBEN, UNIPORT, ABU, EKSU, UNIMAID) provide 33% of total enrolment.
Seven account for less than one percent
- Hostels can only accommodate 109,509 students.
- All hostel projects by the NDDC are abandoned
- Most hostels are overcrowded, dilapidated and lack good toilet facilities and running water.

So, the emasculation and decay of the Ivory Tower continue on their march of infamy, as, in this country, there are universities with only two resident professors: the Vice-Chancellor and one other. But the undergraduate and graduate programmes of these universities are fully accredited by the relevant almighty regulatory body! And so these universities have been churning out first, second and third degrees as well as the full complement of undergraduate and postgraduate certificates and diplomas!

Even in those universities which are better endowed with professors and the full plethora of Colleges, Faculties, Schools, Departments and Directorates etc, aren't strange and funny things happening in terms of hiring, maintaining, promoting and firing staff, academic and non-academic? And in terms of basic sanitary conditions, aren't staff and students "pissing" all over the place and messing up hallowed grounds because the few conveniences available are either only reserved for privileged members of staff who hold the keys to them or

have been converted into college or faculty stores or private, commercial photocopying centres!

Before I forget. Universities are always asked to improve their Internally Generated Revenue (IGR)? Are universities industries? How much can be generated from bottled and pure water? Our greatest revenue should come from those who enjoy our services: whether they are fulltime or part-time, or ad-hoc. All these students should pay economic charges for our services. All those pressure groups and governments which insist or think that tertiary education should be free are simply playing the ostrich game. Members of such groups send their children and wards to high fee-paying institutions locally or outside. If the 30,000 or so students in our university pay economic fees, and other charges, our IGR would run into billions of naira. There is no free education anywhere I know of in the world! Where members of these free-education activists get their paradigms from, I don't know! Yet a good number of them studied and trained outside our shores! Tertiary, and more so, university education is NOT for everybody. But further education is for everybody.

Because we think university education is for everybody, the population of Nigerian universities is a lot more than their carrying capacities. Forget all the arguments for the bloated populations. Harvard University, in the US, has maintained a student population of some 17,000 and 11,000 academic staff in spite of its age, quality services, quality teaching and great demand from the world. And all

the students at Harvard pay economic fees and charges. Every American academic would like to be on the faculty at Harvard! And every American or foreign student would like to be in Harvard!

Information available about Basic Education are shocking and sickening. In addition to the poor articulation of the policy and its programmes, there are issues of poor funding and over politicization. Here are some statistics.

In 2007, there were 5,591 primary school teachers for 20m pupils

- 8m of these children, between ages 6-11, are not in school
- 61% is the drop-out rate
- 61% is the transition rate from primary to secondary school
- 12% of the children sit on the bare floor
- 72% of the children have no text books and writing materials
- 87% of the classrooms are overcrowded
- 38% of the classrooms have no ceilings

As if these statistics are not heart-rending enough, here are some recent statistics on incompetent teachers and incompetent teaching in the primary education sector in one of the states of Nigeria.

Some 1,599 primary school teachers selected from across the state were given tests in Basic Literacy and Mathematics, meant for primary four pupils:

- Only one of them scored 75%

- 250 scored between 50% and 75%
- 1,300 scored below 25%
- The same examination was given to 1,800 primary school pupils. Most of them failed woefully.

The state is Kaduna State. The source, Alhaji Usman Mohammed, the State Commissioner for Education, the occasion, an education summit tagged “Education for all is responsibility for all”.

- In 2008, primary school teachers in Kwara State performed woefully in a proficiency test.

Is it, therefore, any wonder that teachers in Ekiti State, and elsewhere in Nigeria are kicking against such proficiency tests in their states?

In spite all of these, the Federal budget on education sits comfortably at below 9% of the annual budget. And are the state budgets on education, any better?

The foregoing figures have helped to confirm the correlation between underdevelopment in the knowledge industry and the underdevelopment in government, governance and in all facets of life and living in Nigeria. But to confirm how badly Nigeria has done, let us compare the statistics between Nigeria and Brazil which in 1960 were almost at par as newly developing nations. According to NationMaster.com

- In 2005, education expenditure in Nigeria as a percentage of Gross National Income (GNI) was 0.85%. On account of this, Nigeria was ranked 167th out of 168 in the world.

- In the same year, Brazil's education expenditure was 4.09% of GNI with a ranking of 83rd.
- Today, Nigeria ranks 104th with regard to the completion rate of primary education, Brazil ranks 13th.
- Today, our adult literacy rate is 48%, Brazil's is 82%.
- Today, Nigeria has 70.2m people living under \$1 a day with a ranking of 2nd in terms of worldwide poverty. Brazil has 11.8m people living under \$1 a day with a ranking of 44th in the world. In other words, Nigeria holds 8.03% of the poor in the world, Brazil's is 1.82%.
- Today, in terms of the HDI, Nigeria's is 0.452 with a ranking of 159th, Brazil's is 0.792 with a ranking of 63rd.
- Finally, today, Brazil has outstripped Nigeria in everything including football. While Brazil is in the league of Newly Industrialized Nations, Nigeria, the giant of Africa, remains in the infamous league of the E-9 nations!

Mr. Vice Chancellor,

Permit me to fly back to Sept. 1963, on the ways of nostalgia. That was when, at the biological age of 20, I entered the Dept of English of the University of Ibadan, for a three year post- HSC degree course. And I have been inside Nigerian education since then.

And this year is my 50th year in the tertiary education system. For half a century, I have been fully engaged in Nigerian education- as a student, secondary school tutor, Education Officer, lecturer, Research Fellow and tertiary education planner and administrator. So, I think I know what I'm talking about, concerning education in Nigeria!

A WORD FOR NIGERIAN PARENTS

Nigerian parents and guardians should stop seeing the universities as the foster homes for their children and wards, and, university teachers as baby or juvenile sitters. Nigerian parents hate holidays and worse-closures for whatever reason. For very many reasons, parents would like the universities to be open all the year round even if no teaching and learning is taking place. Nigerian parents should be told that universities are not correction centres. A student who enters the university indisciplined will graduate in indiscipline. A female student who is used to easy virtue and easier living before coming to the university, will find good company in the university for plying her trade. A student brought up in a family where the father and/or mother belong(s) to closed societies, needs no invitation to closed societies.

TOWARDS RE-STRUCTURING LINGUISTICS AND LANGUAGES' PROGRAMMES

This lecture will now move on to consider the need for a re-structuring of our undergraduate offerings in linguistics, languages, literatures, and communication in our entire national university system. We suggest a re-structuring of

departments and offerings in all those departments. In the Faculty of Arts, Humanities or Letters (whatever is the name), we suggest the following Departments:

- Languages
- Literatures in Nigerian/African Languages
- Theoretical and Applied Linguistics
- English Literatures and Literatures in English
- Foreign Languages Literature and Literatures in Foreign Languages
- Translation Studies
- Creative Writing
- Communication Studies

The above recommendation will enable the university system to formally adopt the following realities on the ground, at least, in this university.

- Very few language courses are available in Nigerian/African Languages, English, French and Foreign Languages. All these programmes have fewer lecturers, at the senior cadres, in languages and linguistics. They often depend on the Department of Linguistics for such services. Most Departments of English do not expose their students to enough courses in Linguistics and the English language. The same happens in the Department of Foreign languages and Nigerian/African languages (mere euphemisms for specific or selected national or local languages of the catchment area).
- The skewed and very inadequate languages' curricula in the programmes are not student-friendly. A situation where the curriculum provides

one or two courses on introductory language and linguistics, at the 100 and 200 levels, and an advanced course on New Trends in Syntax demanding lectures on Chomsky, TGG, X Bar Syntax, GB and the Minimalist Programmes breeds a disaster waiting to happen for both the lecturer(s) and the students! These are among the things that frighten students away from graduate studies in linguistics!

- Just as many departments of English, French, African and Foreign languages have a few courses in language/linguistics which they rarely teach well, so too many departments of Linguistics and Nigerian/African Languages have a few courses in the literatures of the selected Nigerian/African languages which they teach. Sometimes, in those Linguistics departments courses are not available for Nigerian languages and/or their literatures. They teach mostly Linguistics And where such courses are available at both the undergraduate and graduate levels, they are rarely students for them. This is because, more often than not, there is a token of lecturers in the languages and/or their linguistics but NONE with the requisite competencies in their literatures and stylistics. Our recommendation will obviate this problem, among many others as:
 - The Department of Languages will now handle language matters in Nigerian, African, English, French and Foreign languages,

- The Department of Literatures will handle literature and literary matters in Nigerian/African Languages, English and Anglophone Literatures or French and Francophone Literatures, and Literatures in Foreign Languages,
- The Department of Theoretical and Applied Linguistics will feature functional programmes in all the traditional and interface specializations in:
 - (a) **Theoretical Linguistics**
Phonetics, Phonology, Morphology and Syntax, Semantics and Pragmatics
 - (b) **Applied Linguistics** in the macro sense
 - (c) **Sociolinguistics** including Anthropological Linguistics, Ethnolinguistics, and the Sociology of Language.

This new Department of Linguistics, as conceived, should provide adequately for members of its staff and students who are interested in practising linguistics as it is done in some American and European universities where abstract theoretical concerns count more than the concerns for raw data from natural languages. Is it, therefore, any surprise that in some of the universities in America and Europe, linguistics is sometimes domiciled either in the department of mathematics or the department of philosophy? Noam Chomsky is first, a mathematician.

ANY PLACE FOR DEPARTMENTAL BARRIERS?

In today's world, knowledge is an industry, whose basic products are services, high octane services propelled and propagated by the computer and all its ICTs, and globalization. The nature of knowledge is such today that the man-made traditional barriers or walls between disciplines, in colleges, faculties or departments are no longer relevant or only relevant for purely administrative purposes. With its multifaceted, diverse and transdisciplinary interfaces, knowledge can no longer be departmentalized or compartmentalized. How are we, in Nigeria, to respond to these realities in our university offerings? Certainly not by over fortifying disciplines but by liberalizing inter-departmental and cross-faculty offerings in viable combined honours programmes or even, in general degrees.

We need to remind people that originally, all qualifications, even in Agriculture, at Oxford, were B.A degrees. We all know when B.Ed, B. Pharm, B.Eng. etc all began: when the professional bodies outside the university system and their fellow travelers inside the university system began to want to express how different their degrees are from the mainstream ones! Even in this knowledge age? Our universities should begin to think seriously of combined degree programmes. They hold the ace to relevance, entrepreneurial relevance, marketability and jobs in our knowledge age!

TOWARDS A NATIONAL LANGUAGE AND LITERACY POLICY

As the Nigerian universities re-design their programmes in linguistics, languages, and literatures, as well as the academic departments housing these, the Nigerian nation needs to formally put in place a pragmatic and implementable policy for languages and literacy. This is because one of the main reasons people study, learn or even need language is so that they can use it to achieve some form or type of literacy for the skills and competencies therefrom: basic/initial, adult, traditional, formal, functional and permanent. Our country specially needs such a policy, because she remains an endemically illiterate country given the following data on the ground:

- Nigeria remains a solid and visible member of the E-9 countries – the most populous countries with the highest illiteracy levels
- 48% of Nigerians are completely illiterate in any language
- 48% of Nigerian able-bodied adults are illiterate in any language
- 70% of Nigerians are illiterate in English
- Male adults are 63% illiterate and 37% literate, in terms of basic literacy
- Female adults are 61% illiterate, and 39% literate in terms of basic literacy.

Let us once more emphasize the nexus between illiteracy, poverty, hunger and disease – and underdevelopment.

- The reading and leading nations of the world are the developed nations.

- Illiteracy is universally recognized as the irreconcilable hindrance to development and progress everywhere in the world and furthermore is a grave block to international understanding and cooperation.

Yet, most Nigerians including L₁ speakers of the major Nigerian Languages can neither read nor write their mother tongues, first languages or languages in their immediate communities.

- In spite of the age of formal education and of the print media in Nigeria, the culture of reading in Nigerian languages and in English is still very low in the country
- Nigerians, at all levels of formal education, especially in the secondary school are more interested in studying the grammar of their languages than the creative literature in these languages because they find grammar easier, less demanding and involves the use of a fewer books!
- Nigerians really value education. And thus spend about N160b annually on education for their children in Ghana. Can we say our country values education more than Ghana which has been spending 30% of its annual budget on education, for over 10 years now? Yet, the giant of Africa is still struggling to implement the 8% annual budget allocation (***The Nation*** Sept. 14, 2012:5)

Indeed, the indices are pointing to Nigeria and Nigerians as graduating from illiteracy to aliteracy. In all the political zones in this country, youths, indeed the entire society,

now believes and plays out the content of this unrhymed triplet.

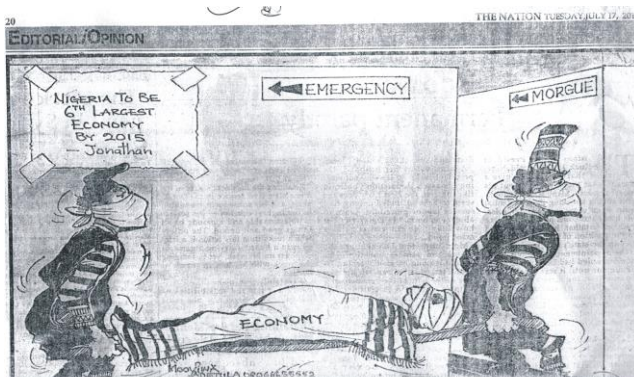
*U II nù II nà-àgu II akwu II kwo II,
Ànyì II àna-àgu II ego ☹,
Fa n ☹cha niīne bù II ife o II ☹gu II gu II.*

*If you(pl) are reading/counting books
We are counting/reading money
All of them are countables/readables.*

In the language in which that triplet is given, the verbs **-gu II 1** 'read'; **-gu II 2** 'count' sound alike but have different meanings, leading to a play on words and sounds in the triplet. That triplet promotes aliteracy.

Now, if strategic government projects and policies do not include and address critical and strategic issues in language, culture and development, language and literacy, language and effective education, and language and national unity, how and where will the salvation for NEEDS, SEEDS, LEEDS and VISION 20:2020 come from?

VISION 20:2020



Let me now say a few words about **Vision 20:2020**. And my take-off source is what a former President of the Nigerian Senate, the third citizen of this country, Ken Nnamani said about Vision 20:2020. As we all know, this vision was conceived and designed by some Federal bureaucrats, Nigerian technocrats and foreign consultants to be the mother of all our nation's development plans. So confident were the visioners of 20:2020 that they believe it is the panacea for all our problems of structural, political, economic and ethical deficits, and other fault lines.

Designed during the Obasanjo presidency, following the projections of Goldman Sachs, Nigeria's Federal Government believes that this is the development agenda that will drastically turn Nigeria around from a third world country to a first world one. For those who have seen the document and may even have contributed to it, there are serious reservations about its being realized. One of such reservations comes from Ken Nnamani himself. Let's listen to Nnamani's critique of Vision 20:2020 in the distinguished annual lecture he gave at the National Institute for Policy and Strategic Studies (NIPSS) to mark the 30th anniversary and graduation of the Senior Executive Course 31 participants.

- If Nigeria is bent on achieving Vision 20: 2020, it has to work twice or even thrice as hard to get there within the allotted time.
- 'Comparing Nigeria to Indonesia, the latter came out of dictatorship with better infrastructure for economic development than the former.'

- ‘While the Indonesian dictators were mainly nationalists, their Nigerian counterparts were pathologically selfish, greedy and self-centered.
- ‘To achieve Vision 20:2020 Nigeria has to outperform China and India in net economic growth.
- ‘No matter the nobility in Vision 20:2020 it seems... that no sustainable development is possible without a clearly articulated set of guiding human values anchored on nationally accepted ethics. Such values and ethics must be aggressively, purposefully, and strategically promoted by the federal, state and local governments as well as other institutions and agencies of the public, private and non-profit sectors. In the absence of values and ethics as guiding principles, vision and development will continue to grope in the dark and muddling our way from one problem to another with no lasting solutions in sight”.

Nnamani seriously faulted the multiple national developmental plans that Nigeria had experimented with. Among them are: OFN (Operation Feed (Fool!) the Nation), NEEDS/SEEDS/LEEDS(National/State/Local Government Economic Empowerment and Development Strategies, the Reformation Agenda and the present Transformation Agenda. ***The fundamental shortcomings*** of all of them including Vision 20:2020 is that ***they were not properly conceptualized and articulated.*** In other words, there is a serious disconnect between what is said and what is meant.



There are, indeed, many other critiques about the serious and intractable odds stacked against the achievement of Vision 20:2020. Indeed, the UN has dismissed its possibility. Price Water Coopers, an accounting firm, thinks that it will be in 2050 that Nigeria will become one of the world's leading economics enjoying a comfortable position of 13th among 20 nations of the world! A cartoonist in one of Nigeria's national papers puts the year at 30:30. (But the most devastating of them is this cartoon, language of silence, or with very few words, found in **The Nation** newspaper on which I now superimpose another cartoon on the state of the Nigerian economy, from the same newspaper).

CARTOON & LETTERS



THE CONFUCIAN IMPERATIVE: LANGUAGE AND PERMANENT LITERACY, AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

For any person to grow and develop, he must be literate and educated. For any society or nation to grow and develop, it must be literate and educated. For growth to co-exist with development, literacy must co-exist with education. For any person or society to want to be in a pre-eminent and top leadership position, he/she/it must be holistically literate and holistically educated. This is the only catalyst for all-round development in all sectors of the political economy.

Literacy is the cornerstone of education. Education is the key to development in the individual, the community, the society and the nation. Literacy is a function of language – human language. For literacy to be interesting,

meaningful, vibrant, creative, life-long, and the basis for learning-to-learn, it must be dispensed in the language that the learner and the teacher understand best and are most comfortable in. For education to have multiplier effects and surrender value in the development process, and for literacy to be permanent and proactive, it must be initiated, given and acquired in the language in which the learner, the teacher and their immediate community or environment are most competent and comfortable in. That language must be the **first language of the learner** or his **mother tongue**. In Nigeria that language **cannot** be English, even where it is the mother tongue or first language, or community language of a very small elite. The level of competence in the English language in Nigeria is said to approximate that of English in South Africa. It is estimated that at the end of primary education, at age 12, and on the eve of entry into Junior High School, South African and Nigerian pupils have a **real** literacy level in English that is equivalent to that of Primary/Elementary 2/3 pupils. Verspoor, an African educationist, reveals that in:

Most African countries, less than a third of young Africans acquired the knowledge and skills that they are expected to master in primary school.

The deduction from the above observation is that initial literacy is badly flawed in Nigerian and African countries using exoglossic, colonial languages and their education policies. And this flaw or disability remains with the other

levels and deliveries within education in the entire life of the entire citizenry. This explains the very huge percentages of functionally illiterate Nigerians in English. And functional illiteracy rarely imparts permanent literacy. And so the different forms of literacy listed below rarely take a foothold:

Visual literacy, prose literacy, quantitative literacy, document literacy, financial literacy, and computer literacy, etc, etc.

And for reasons of ignorance and prejudice, adult literacy, mass literacy and post-literacy, hardly take root. Contrast the African situation with that in (S.E) Asia where:

One of the factors explaining the good results achieved in the education sector is the use of Asian languages.

It is in this South Asian region that we have China, S. Korea, Malaysia and Singapore, among others, whose backward, third-world, dependent and pre-industrial economies were individually transformed within three dramatic decades into those of the first world, with their post-industrial and technological economies. I find it embarrassing that given the centrality of language to development in a complex multilingual and multicultural nation as Nigeria is, formulators, articulators, implementers and facilitators of Nigerian development in Nigeria's Think-Think, the National Institute for Policy and Strategic Studies (NIPSS) Kuru, have never considered

language issues serious matters. So, when in 1997, I carried out a research on the issue, I found out that by 1997, of the 781 essay projects produced by NIPSS's Senior Executive Class of Students, from its inception in 1979 up to 1997, **only two** essays had dealt with **Culture and Development** pointedly and another two, tangentially. Yet, NIPSS's enabling statute, Act 20 of 1st January 1979, points out that the Institute was set up to:

... conduct courses, seminars, and workshops etc for top level **policy makers and executors...** for **leaders in the public** including the armed forces and other disciplined forces for **long-range national plans** and objectives... on an inter-disciplinary basis in intellectual support for those charged with **making or implementing policy for Nigeria**, research in depth into **the social, economic, political, security, scientific, cultural** and other **problems facing the country** and to **formulate** and **present in usable** form the available options for **their solution**.

WHAT TO DO?

- Re-visit the **Cultural Policy of Nigeria**, to make it proactive
- Re-visit the **National Policy on Education** (NPE) to make it implementable

- Review the language offerings at the pre-university levels to make them real, nationalistic and meaningful.
- Re-visit the philosophy, goals, curricula and delivery in languages, in the entire nursery and primary education. In the entire gamut of formal education, objectives are sometimes properly articulated, but in implementation we find the curricula often overloaded, and teaching time-tables permanently overheated. Thus, so much is taught but so little is learned. And that is **the** tragedy of Nigerian education! So much verbal input, so little concrete output. So much communication, so little illumination.
- Re-visit the policy and practices of the Language of Instruction (LoI) in Initial Literacy, Basic Literacy, Mass Literacy, Adult and Non-Formal Literacy and, even, in Nomadic Education.
- Re-visit the policies and practices on all the languages in the Nigerian polity and their domains.
- Engage all the stakeholders with the relevant training, skills and competencies- in linguistics, language education and policy in the design of the new language and literacy policy.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

In specific terms, Nigeria needs a pragmatic and implementable national language and literacy policy (NLLP). Right now, there is no such policy. All the language provisions in the **NPE, Constitution(s) of the Federal**

Republic, The Cultural Policy of Nigeria and The Government Views and Comments on the Findings of the Recommendations of the Political Bureau do not add up to a NLP, let alone a NLLP. A NLLP should (be):

- comprehensive and inclusive of ALL languages in use in Nigeria: Nigerian and foreign, official and non-official, LWCs, including Nigerian Pidgin, and LLCs, major and non-major, small-group, medium-group and large-group, underdeveloped, developing and developed, national-level, state-level and local-government-level. The way the National Assembly went about an Act which made French a second official language, in Nigeria, is just not right and proper. (See **The Guardian** of 28 September, 2004). This is an adhoc and divisive approach to language legislation, especially, in a multilingual country.
- prescribe the roles and domains for all languages – no matter their status, size or sociolinguistic vitality, because

A smaller language may have its role only at the local level (in initial and adult literacy) whereas a major level may have both a local, national or regional roles. There should, therefore, be no question of dispossessing any group, however small, of its language

- institutionalize **egalitarian multilingualism**, because of the current demands of the **Universal Declaration on Human Rights** (1948); **The Rights**

of Persons Belonging to National, Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities (1992); the ***Universal Declaration of... Linguistic Rights*** (1996),... ***Cultural Diversity*** (2002) and the ***Language Plan of Action for Africa***, and because of the multilingual and multicultural configuration of Nigeria.

- ❖ Indeed, in multilingual, multiethnic and multicultural polities:
 - all peoples and all languages are equal, no matter the state of development of their individual material culture and development
 - linguistic rights are human rights
 - all peoples are entitled to the right to be seen and heard, in all domains, in their own languages
 - all peoples are entitled to the right for their own languages and cultures to be taught, and in their own languages
 - in a true multiethnic federation, such as Nigeria is, each ethnic group, no matter how small, is entitled to the same treatment as any other group no matter how large. Without the governments making administrative (and linguistic) arrangements to reflect this, there will be no peace or stability in Nigeria.
- ❖ The multilingual and egalitarian policy should thus insist that:
 - whatever is the number of languages recognized in an LGA or state, including Nigerian Pidgin,

that should be the number of languages to be used as Lo1 in Initial, Basic, Adult and Mass Literacy, as well as in the electronic and print media

- encourage, enhance, promote and facilitate polyglottism. A good number of Nigerians, especially those born and bred in multilingual milieux are polyglots by nature and by nurture. Polyglottism and multilingualism are great assets in today's world. In spite of globalization, monolingualism is no longer fashionable or an asset. The Czech have a proverb that if you learn a new language, you get a new heart. And the French concur with the proverb that 'a man who knows two or more languages is worth two men'. Nigerians, especially the elite, should not discourage their children from learning Nigerian languages other their own.
- entrench and empower symmetrical or balanced bilingualism in English and a NL, in formal education and in the public and private spheres and domains
- entrench and empower egalitarian multilingualism in formal education, made up of
 - MT/LIC as Lo1
 - a major Nigerian Language as L₂
 - English, the official language
 - French or Arabic as an auxiliary/additive language for those who require it

- provide the language planning agencies the wherewithal for capacity building, acquisition planning and overall language development
- re-enstate Nigerian languages in Nigerian pre-tertiary education. The new ‘policy’ designed by the NERDC is a distraction and most unnationalistic
- provide a detailed chronogram of activities for a structured and sustained implementation
- contain enforceable sanctions for erring persons, agencies and institutions
- empower Nigerian languages and their inherent symbols for effective use in all domains – the media (for news and features), ICT, notices in public places and institutions (aviation, airports, road signs, public examinations for entry into institutions of learning from primary to tertiary) public services such as Local Government and the Uniformed Services etc.
- synergize and proactivate the L₂ policy in the Colleges of Education and nationalize the Acculturation Programme in Nigerian Languages
- provide the enabling legislations for the French and Arabic Language Villages, and properly fund them to achieve their objectives
- re-establish, re-engineer and properly fund the National Institute for Nigerian Languages

to function in accordance with the stipulations in its pristine enabling statute

- establish zonal English Language Institute(s)/Village(s) to do for English what the French and Arabic Language Villages are doing for their languages. This is not another recommendation and another language institution too many. In spite of its age in Nigeria, only 30% of Nigerians are literate in English, and less speak and write tolerable Educated Nigerian English. We need to try many more strategies to bring about a quantum increase in the quality and quantity of competent users of English.
- re-focus and properly fund national, state and local government agencies for Mass Literacy, Adult and Non-Formal Education, to enable them become the change agents they are meant to be, through development communication.

VERNACULAR LITERACY: AN IMPERATIVE

This was a cardinal objective of the Colonial language policy. Thanks to the missionaries, especially the Protestants, who sponsored and funded the Phelps-Stokes Commission in 1920. This Commission gave rise to:

- the Advisory Committee on Native Education of 1923, in the British Tropical African Countries
- the ***Imperial Education Policy of 1925***

- the **Imperial Education Ordinance and Code of 1926**, See, especially, **Schedules A and B** of this Code
- the memo on **The Place of the Vernacular in Native Education** in 1927
- the establishment of the International Institute for African Languages and Cultures in 1927, as a Research and Language Planning Agency
- the establishment of Transation Bureaux at Ibadan, Zaria and Umuahia, for the three regions at that time
- the publication of the detailed statement of Imperial policy with regard to the rural African masses with emphasis on the **Vernacular** as the language of **adult** and **mass education** in 1935
- the memorandum on **Language in African Education** in 1943
- the UNESCO Monograph on **Fundamental Education: The Use of Vernacular Languages in Education** in 1953
- the UNESCO Conference in Jos on “The use of African Languages in relation to Education” in 1959.

As if the colonial input to Vernacular Literacy was not enough to convince Nigerian policy makers and Nigerians about the validity and viability of Vernacular Literacy, note the input to the issue from African sources, (to which the giant of Africa was both a participant in and/or a signatory to):

- the 1963 Addis Ababa Conference on ‘Mother Tongue Education in Africa’

- the 1963 ***Charter of the Organisation of African Unity***
- the 1966 ***UNESCO Declaration on the Principles of International Cultural Co-operation***
- the 1975 UNESCO/OAU Intergovernmental Conference on ***Cultural Policies in Africa***
- the 1976 OAU ***Cultural Charter for Africa***
- the 1980 ***Lagos Plan of Action for the Economic Development of Africa***
- the 1982 ***Report of Project 2000 of UNESCO's Meeting of Experts on the Definition of a Strategy for the Promotion of African Languages***
- the 1985 ***Declaration on the Cultural Aspects of the Lagos Plan of Action***
- the 1986 OAU ***Language Plan of Action for Africa***
- the 1996 ***Accra Charter for the Promotion and Use of African Languages in Education***

Indeed, if Nigerians and Nigerian policy makers need more home-grown projects to validate and replicate the findings of the Six Year Primary Project (SYPP) in Yoruba, let them first read and internalize the SYPP findings:

- (i) 'Primary Education in the Mother Tongue (or the Language of the Immediate Community/ Environment) in which the learners and the teachers are most competent, leads to more ***permanent literacy*** and ***numeracy***.
- (ii) 'Vernacular education... leads to faster and more rounded development of the affective, cognitive and manipulative domains of the human person... Those who turned to technical areas have proved more

resourceful than others without their exposure. They demonstrated greater manipulative ability, manual dexterity, mechanical comprehension, greater sense of maturity, and tolerance...

- (iii) 'Vernacular education ... has greater surrender value and makes the child a better adjusted citizen in the community'.

The limited UBE Projects, carried out between 2001-2003, on Language-of-Instruction(Lol) in schools selected from local government areas in the Hausa-speaking, Igbo-speaking and Yoruba-speaking areas have confirmed all the findings of the SYPP. Do we need projects and policies from other lands, both monolingual, (Britain, USA), bilingual and multilingual (Canada, Australia, Norway, Sweden) to prove the strategic importance and relevance of vernacular literacy to the development of the individual and the society?

CONCLUSION

Let me now end this extended monologue with a Chinese proverb, and then a quotation, *in extenso*, from Lee Kuan Yew. And then the final statement.

- **One**

The Chinese have a proverb which, translated into English, reads like this:

*In a country well governed,
Poverty is something to be ashamed of.
In a country badly governed,
Wealth is something to be ashamed of.*

Isn't one of the MDGs, the creation of wealth through halving extreme poverty and hunger?

▪ **Two**

From Lee Kuan Yew, in his monumental tome, on how he developed Singapore from a third world country into a first world one in under thirty years.

*We learnt some valuable lessons in those early years as apprentices in the exercise of power. We never stopped **learning** because the situation kept on changing and we had to adjust our policies. I had the advantage of having several ministers who **read** widely and were attracted to new ideas but not mesmerized by them... We passed interesting **books** and **articles** we had **read** to each other. When we started, we were **ignorant** and **innocent**, but we were saved by being careful to probe and test ideas before we implemented them. All we had was a burning desire to change an unfair and unjust system for the better. To do that we had to win political power. Having gained it, we had to retain the support of our people to continue our unfinished job... We learned on the job and learned quickly. If there was one formula for our success, it was that we were constantly*

***studying** how to make things work and how to make them work better. I was never a prisoner of any theory. What guided me was **reason** and **reality**. The acid test I applied to every theory was, would it work? This was the golden thread that ran through my years in office. If it did not work and the results were poor, I did not waste more time and resources on it. I almost never made the same mistake twice – and I had to learn from the mistakes others had made.*

Surely, true functional literacy, founded on strong language competencies, produces a critical, pragmatic, data-critic, dynamic, synergetic and proactive mind, with industrial capital and social capital like Lee Kuan Yew's.

- **Three**

- The Final Statement from Devcom

- If Nigerians will not continue to underdevelop Nigeria, and Nigerians are really serious about transforming their country from a pre-industrial one to a post-industrial one, we may have to look away from the Euro-American models and paradigms we have lived with for so long, with little success. We must shift our paradigms to the Asian models and Brazil where the culture of development is integrated with the development of culture.

- Again, if we are to continue to practice a federalism like the present over-centralized one with all its asymmetries and illegalities, the further we run away from a sovereign national conference, the closer we will find ourselves in the quagmire of perpetual stagnation and dilemma of perdition if not disintegration,
- If, in the long run, we are really serious about transforming Nigeria from a third-and last-world country to a first one, enthroning a democratic and datacratic culture and operating a true federalism, and
- If, in the short run, we are really serious about achieving the MDGs by 2015
 - halving extreme poverty and hunger
 - achieving universal primary education, and EFA
 - reducing under-five mortality by $\frac{2}{3}$
 - reducing maternal mortality by $\frac{3}{4}$
 - reversing the spread of HIV/AIDs, malaria, TB, etc.
 - ensuring environmental sustainability, and
 - developing a global partnership for development, and
- If, for all times, we are really serious about producing and sustaining capital: human, industrial, social, and enduring structures: infrastructure, (basic needs), techno-structure (government apparatuses and processes) and superstructure (democratic values), our choice is clearly, certainly, and only, Hobson's: dispense fundamental education through

literacy in Nigerian Languages. Have we forgotten the 'liberation' dramaturgy of Ogunde and Ngugi wa Thiong'o and the extant practices in the developed world?

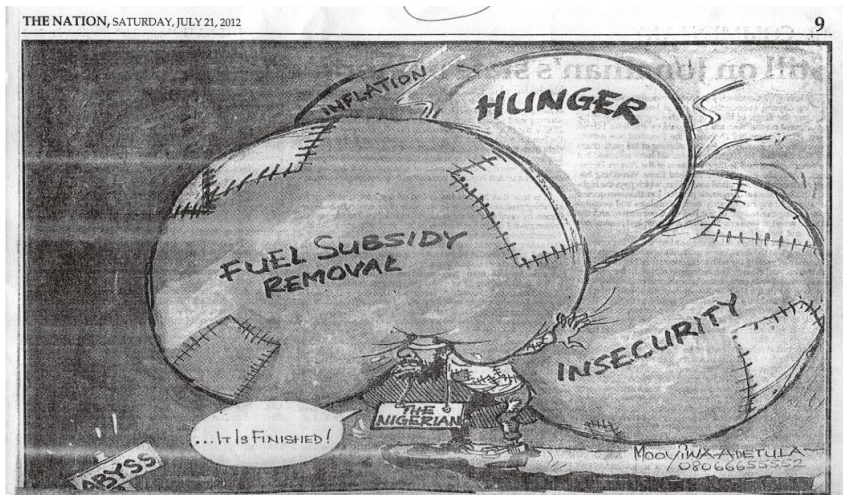
- The Very Last Word

Development is first, about people and then, about capital and structures. It involves a change for the better in both the human, cultural, socio-economic and political conditions of the individual, and consequently, the society. The end-users and beneficiaries for whom development is designed must be involved in interactive and proactive processes with the agents and agencies of development. The agents and agencies must empathize **with** the beneficiaries through talking **with** them rather than talking **at** them or **for** them in the languages they understand, best. All the foregoing demand participatory communication for involvement to be struck or reached and development achieved. A frontline development communicator put it in these words:

*Go to the people, live among them, love them, plan with them, start with what they know and build on what they have – and **do all these in their languages.***

How else can all these be, as the developed world and the South-East Asians have demonstrated, but in the languages of the people! And that is Nigerian languages. For, to use English as we have argued throughout this lecture or a language foreign to the environment to bring

about behavioural change and development, looks oligarchic and imperial. It smacks of dependency, foreign domination and arbitrary authoritarianism. It is heavily top-bottom. It ignores all the stakeholders and end-users or beneficiaries, and seriously discourages grassroots involvement. It is non-participatory and propelled by master-slave mentality. It is non-democratic, and unidirectional. It is class rather than mass complaint. It will lead us, no matter how long we have remained **Waiting for Godot**, not to **Utopia**, but to **Erewhon**, which read backwards means **Nowhere**. The title of this valedictory is a question. The answer is: About Language: Confucius is right.



I thank you all for your patience and for listening.

**A CITATION ON
PROFESSOR EMMANUEL NWANO ̄̄LUE EMENANJO ̄̄**

BY
PROF B. E. Nwigwe
Dept of Philosophy
University of Port Harcourt
Port Harcourt

THE MAN PROF. E. NO ̄̄LUE EMENANJO ̄̄

Professor Emmanuel Nwano ̄̄lue Emenanjo ̄̄ is a true Anioma son from Ibusa in the Oshimili North-East Local Government Area of Delta State. Born on April 21st 1943, he had his primary education in St Anna's Catholic School Burutu; his secondary education in St Anthony's College Ubulu-Ukwu, where he was among the pioneer students and took his West African School Certificate in 1960; and Holy Ghost College, Owerri, where he took his Higher School Certificate in 1962.

He proceeded to the Nigeria's premier and pre-eminent university – the University of Ibadan, where he had all his qualifications: BA (Hons) English Literature in 1966; a Postgraduate Diploma in Linguistics in 1971; an MA (Linguistics) in 1975; and a Ph.D (Linguistics) in 1981.

WORKING EXPERIENCE

After his formal education, he has had a most chequered but most rewarding experience having been, in turn, an education officer in the Federal Ministry of Education; a

tutor and Research Fellow, Department of Linguistics and Nigerian Languages, University of Ibadan; Editor, Oxford University Press Ibadan, Lecturer, Alvan Ikoku College of Education where he rose to the position of Reader, and Dean, School of Arts (1978 – 1983).

From there he became a Visiting Scholar in the Department of Linguistics and African Languages, University of Port Harcourt. Here, he was elevated in 1984, to the rank of a full Professor of Linguistics and then became the Head of the Department of Linguistics and African Languages (1984 – 1986). Right after that, he was elected Dean, Faculty of Humanities (1986 – 1988). He was returned for a second term (1988). But this, he did not complete having been called to higher duties by his home state, then Bendel State (January, 1990), to serve as Provost, College of Education, Warri. Again, even before completing his first term at Warri, he was found out by the late Professor Aliyu Babatunde Fafunwa, at the time, the Federal Minister of Education. On the recommendation of one of his teachers at Ibadan, Professor Emeritus Ayo Bamgbose, he moved from Warri to Aba as the foundation Executive Director of the National Institute for Nigerian Languages, in 1992. As if to complete a cycle, he returned to the University of Port Harcourt after all these sojourns.

ACADEMIC ROLES

Professor Emenanjo II has had pioneering and leading roles in Nigerian Linguistics, Igbo Studies and their allied and cognate disciplines. This pioneering work is not only

in scholarly research and publications but also hands-on experience in teaching, orthography design, curriculum and text development in Nigerian languages. He has also contributed immensely in the area of academic publishing in Nigeria. His publications in general linguistics, sociolinguistics, Igbo linguistics, language and literature are intimidating, ranging from primary through secondary to the tertiary levels of education.

In all, Professor Emenanjo II has over one hundred and forty-eight (148) publications bearing his name as sole author, co-author, editor and co-editor, including fifty-two (52) books and monographs and well over 118 articles all in local, national and international journals – and still counting. 28 of the books are mainline works published by very reputable publishers. His contributions to the description and analyses of Igbo syntax, literary aesthetics and stylistics, and Igbo oral literature, are ground breaking and include:

- i. the establishment of the grammatical categories, especially the primary and secondary ones – relevant to Igbo nouns and nominals, nominal modifiers, Igbo verbs and verbals, and ideophones
- ii. the identification of aspect as the verbal category central to Igbo verbal inflectional system vis-à-vis extensional and derivational morphology
- iii. the identification of suffixes as different morphemes form verbs

- iv. the identification of clitics as different form particles, verbs and suffixes
- v. the identification of the interfix as a class of affixes different from infixes in universal morphology
- vi. the delineation of the definitive features of standard Igbo
- vii. the delineation of the differences between grammaticalization and lexicalization in Igbo
- viii. the identification of the irrelevance of transitivity as a category for Igbo verbs.
- ix. the identification of the Anecdote as a miniature form of (oral) literature, different from both the folktale and the proverb
- x. the postulation of the Wellerism as a sub-genre of Igbo literature, different from proverbs.

From the scope, depth, breadth and strategic importance of his works, Professor Emenanjo II has come to be regarded as the palm-oil with which Igbo syntax, features of Igbo literary aesthetics, endangered languages, sociolinguistics etc are eaten.

MEMBERSHIP OF NATIONAL/INTERNATIONAL BODIES

Professor Emenanjo II has been entered in five National and International Biographies. In 1997 – 1998, he was invited to the Hall of Fame for ‘Select Nobility’ and nominated to the ‘Gold Record of Achievement’ of the American Biographical Institute. He holds many distinguished fellowships, including those of the Nigerian

Academy of Letters, the Linguistic Society of Nigeria and the Modern Language Association of Nigeria. Professor Emenanjo II has been

- The Nigerian representative in the UNESCO Lingua Pax Project, where he belonged to the Technical Committee on World Languages
- President, Igbo Studies Association, Nigeria
- Member, Igbo Language Academy
- Member, Literary Society of Nigeria
- Member, Folklore Society of Nigeria
- Two-term President, the Linguistic Association of Nigeria
- Consultant, the defunct Bendel State Languages Committee
- Consultant on Language matters to the Nigerian Educational Research Council and the West African Examination Council
- Consultant, National Council on Education for the Production of Teachers of Nigerian Languages
- Researcher, Legislative Terminology Project
- Researcher, Technical Terminology Project
- Researcher, Igbo Metalanguage Project
- Chairman, Editorial Board, Editor, and Consultant Editor to over two dozen local, national and international journals
- Member, the Committee on the Establishment of Delta State University.

He is finally the Chairman, Elders Advisory Committee (to the Dean) Faculty of Humanities.

In Igboland and in Igbo Studies, there are three great public lecturers by which scholars are ranked: **AhiOajoOkuO**, **Odenigbo** and the **OogbaluO Memorial**. Professor EmenanjoII is one of the five Igbo scholars who have achieved this feat and recognition so far.

The above are indeed signs of great devotion to service and academics that only a few can match.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE MAN

Professor EmenanjoII is a family man, happily married to beautiful Mrs Florence Nwamaka EmenanjoII (LSJI) who he fondly calls “NwaanyiII oIIcha”. The union is blessed with eight children, all of who are graduates and professionals in fields as diverse as accountancy, hospitality management and tourism, microbiology, fine arts and design, medical sciences and computer technology.

Professor EmenanjoII is a practising Catholic and, in fact, a Knight of St John International. In his church, he has served in various capacities including membership of the Parish Council, Laity Council, Education committee, catechist, the Legion of Mary, church warden, marriage counseling and youth ministries.

He is patron to well over twenty social and developmental associations and clubs in Ibusa and AnioIImaland as well as patron to many pious societies. Professor EmenanjoII is also a traditionalist, a titled man, having been conferred

with the title of Edeogu of Umuodafe, Ibusa. He was among the ten foundation councillors of the Òbuuzò-in-council in Ibusa.

To say that Professor Emenanjo has supervised hundreds of first degree long degree essays, scores of master's theses and tens of doctorate dissertations is to say the obvious. But that he has produced professors locally in this university and helped to produce not only less than twenty-six professors elsewhere is not obvious. The current dean of the Faculty of Humanities, in this university was his direct supervisee. So too a one-time Deputy Vice Chancellor of Abia State University, Uturu. A good number of the current academic staff in his department were his students – some, his direct supervisees.

ON A PERSONAL NOTE

Professor Emenanjo has served this university full time for thirty years, twenty-nine of which as a professor. Since his return from national service, he has served the university in three strategic committees: Academic Policy, Curriculum Review, where he is the Deputy Chairman, and the University Wide Accreditation and Local Affiliation. He may be disengaging from the university academic services but, as is self-evident, looking at him here, he is far from being tired. He is going to remain a very valuable resource person in academic matters.

This valedictory lecture, entitled, ‘About Language: Can Confucius Be Right?’ is a question. He has answered it in the affirmative. In the lecture, he gives us very valuable hints about human language, natural languages, language treatment and language policy. As if to summarize his life work on language, he warns that not to pay attention to human languages especially our national languages will be not only to lose the right orientation but also to lose our self-identity or self-worth, personal freedom and to continue to court stunted development of the individual and his society. We should not ape foreign languages to the extent that, we unlike the S.E. Asians, forget our indigenous languages. In saying this, he has said it all.

FINALLY

Vice-Chancellor Sir, I have the pleasure and privilege to present to you, one of Nigeria’s pre-eminent linguists and, perhaps, the most rounded, the most erudite, the most versatile Igbo language and literary scholar in Nigeria today. This man also happens to be a renowned descriptive linguist, a dialectologist, bi-lingual translator, stylistician, lexicographer, poet, literary critic, folklorist, language educator, language engineer, “Mr Endangered Language” academic publisher and a dedicated teacher who loves teaching and whose philosophy of life is simplicity, accessibility and humility; a man who loves service and is committed to duty, respect for principles and schedules and exemplary mode of behaviour, an amiable and thoroughly bred gentleman, soft-spoken but with a devastating sense of humour, the Edeogu of Ibusa, whose driving motto is:

It is nice to be important, but

It is more important to be nice.

Here is Professor Emmanuel Nwano IIue Emenanjo II.