

Achieving National Security In Nigeria Through Reading Comprehension Passages

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Abstract

This article examines how national security in Nigeria can be achieved through reading comprehension passages. Security is defined as the totality of measures undertaken to ensure protection of lives and property of people including government. National security is the ability to preserve nation's physical integrity and territory, to maintain the economic relations with the rest of the world on reasonable terms to preserve its nature, institutions and governance from outside disruption, and to control its borders. Reading comprehension is a combination of identification and interpretation skills. Teaching and learning in schools are expected to be in line with the demand of the curriculum innovation. English textbook passages should be geared towards teaching societal norms, values, cultures and effect of vices such as drug abuse which can make the nation to be secured and help students become human beings capable of virtuous acts and remain firm in various streams of modern pressures. One of the recommendations posed is that more passages of this kind should be provided in the textbooks in order to achieve national security as a whole by teaching those values and cultures and the expectation society has on the students.

Keywords: National security, comprehension passages, school, norms, values, acts

Introduction

Security simply refers to the totality of measures undertaken to ensure protection of lives and property of people including government. Odekunle (2012) asserted that security is a protection or defence of people against all kind of victimisation including protection from

external militancy attack, economic want, poverty, illiteracy, disease or ill-health, political exclusion, social exploitation, criminality act, etc. In other words, security encompasses the socio-economic wellbeing of the people which enables the co-existence in peace and harmony of all agents of developments, and enhances the ability of each to function without hindrance. Reading on the other hand according to Grabe (1991) is an active process of comprehending (students are ought to be taught strategies to read more efficiently. That is when the students are well taught, they will guess from the context, infer the meaning of what they learnt and synthesize a given idea of a particular text. One of the main ideas of reading comprehension is for the students to utilize information in the reading texts, for the day-to-day interactions. Therefore, national security can be achieved through reading comprehension, through positive reinforcement and teaching of good views or to discourage and even change the negative ones.

Research Questions

By the end of the research, the following Questions are going to be answered:

- i. What is the effect of Reading Comprehension Passages on the Secondary School Students in relation to National Security?
- ii. What is the Rational behind teaching students national security through reading comprehension?

Significance of the Study

National security is among the paramount tool in achieving sustainable development. Through reading comprehension passages, students' are strongly motivated on ho their life will be in future when they imbibe good characters and how their contributions can influence

their society and country at large. They are seriously warned on the bad act by seeing what can exactly happen to them if they become bad in the society. This can help the society to be at peace by making its young ones to be good ambassadors in and outside their environment.

Literature Review

National Security

National security cannot be known without defining security. Security according to Nnom (2013) is described as the total peaceful state of mind of an individual, the group, the state, the nation at a particular point in time and space. He maintained the view that it may not be a total absence of violence or some sort of physical assault or some disruption but a relative peace that can guarantee quality life and social cohesion for survival of the individual group or nation. From the definition and explanation above, one can understand that security is perceived in terms of protecting the generality of the people, and it is a collective responsibility of the government and the people. Mezieobi (2012) has pointed out some issues that pertain, predominantly, to one or a combination of the following whenever security is discussed:

- a. The defence and protection of national integrity or Nigeria's sovereignty, territorial and political jurisdictions from external and internal interferences or intervention;
- b. Personal safety of members of political class who are in control of the helm of affairs of governance, in addition to safeguarding or protecting their office, hence the incredible allocation of funds for security services;
- c. The security agents or forces, civil defence corps protecting the lives and properties of the mass of the defenceless citizenry against the menace of the men of the underworld;

- d. Forestalling or deterring possible internal attacks or crises and subjugating insurgency;
- e. Keeping the security agents on active security alert and readiness at all points in time;
- f. Checkmating impending or actual internal threats to state or national security or anti-social behaviours by those who are deliberately undermining or sabotaging government efforts;
- g. Checkmating social problems such as Boko Haram saga and youth militancy, kidnapping/abduction that may pose threat to the state and national security and detract the political cadre in control of state affairs from active commitment to their functions; and
- h. Making the environment free from insecurity in order to attract international investment.

From the assertions above, security could mean state of being free from danger, risk or threat. Ogheneakoke (2014) has maintained that security covers freedom from anxiety, fear, the safety of a state or organization against criminal activities and attacks like terrorism, theft or espionage.

Brown (2013) opines that national security is the ability to preserve the nation's physical integrity and territory, to maintain its economic relations with the rest of the world on reasonable terms, to preserve its nature, institutions and governance from outside disruption, and to control its borders. National security protects and enhances the people's values and beliefs, their democratic way of life, institutions of governance and unity, welfare and wellbeing as a nation. It is the pre-requisite that maintains the survival of the nation using quality education, economic power, military and political power, diplomacy and power projection. Osakwe (2013) maintains that national security comprises of security interest of

the individuals, political entities, human associations and ethnic groups which make up the nation.

National Security Challenges

Effiom and Edinyang (2013) define insecurity as the state of being subjected to danger and injury. It is a feeling of unusual nervousness that may be triggered by perceiving of oneself to be vulnerable. It is a state of or situation of declining safety of lives and properties, apprehension over increasing rate of terrorism, armed robbery, kidnappings, political upheavals, religious conflicts, assassinations, secret cults related criminal acts, riots etc

Ogheneakoke (2014) identifies several factors as causes of insecurity in Nigeria. These include, but not limited to, the following: corruption, marginalization, social inequality, ethnicity, poverty and greed, loss of value system, religious intolerance, foreign infiltration-insurgency, bad leadership, youth unemployment, porosity of our borders, falling standard of education, poor judiciary system, cultism and cult activities, high value for material things, manipulation of electoral processes by political parties, lack of trust on security agents, human rights abuses, injustice, lack of transparency, etc.

Reading

Reading is defined as the cognitive process of decoding symbols to determine a text's meaning (Grell 2023). Reading can also be defined as an 'interactive' process between a reader and a text which leads to automaticity or (reading fluency). The reader interacts dynamically with the text as he/she tries to elicit the meaning and where various kinds of knowledge are being used: linguistic and systematic knowledge (Grabe, 1991). Grabe further explains that researchers have understood and explained the fluent reading process by

analysing the process into a set of components skills. Researchers have proposed at least six general components and knowledge areas:

1. Automatic recognition skills
2. Vocabulary and structural knowledge
3. Formal discourse structure knowledge
4. Content/world background knowledge
5. Synthesis and evaluation skills/ strategies
6. Meta cognitive knowledge and skills monitoring

Types of Reading

There are two main types of reading: Intensive and Extensive Reading

Intensive reading: learners are exposed to specific texts and to examine a specified aspect of a language which later should be assessed.

Extensive reading is the ability to expose learners to large quantities of meaningful and interesting L2 material which produce a beneficial effect on the learners' command of the L2 (Hafiz and Tudor 1989). Extensive reading helps greatly in exposing SL learners to English. Learners can develop their language competence, progress in their reading ability, become more independent in their studies, acquire cultural knowledge, and develop confidence and motivation to carry on learning (Hedge 2003).

The difference between intensive and extensive reading is that, in intensive reading, learners have limited materials while in extensive reading learners have ample materials to deal with and there is no specified task to carry out after.

Reading Comprehension

Stephen Krashen's hypotheses have great influence on studies dealing with reading comprehension especially 'Schema Theory' (Grabe 1991). A number of empirical researches have attested the role of schemata in English as a foreign or second language (EFL/ESL) reading comprehension. Special attention was given to interactive approaches to reading, which argue that reading comprehension is a combination of identification and interpretation skills. Comprehension strategy training is one of the five most important areas of current research which are very paramount. There are many things one can learn in terms of reading which were mentioned earlier. One of them is to synthesize and evaluate a given text by decoding the message it carries. Motivation and engagement are the factors that make learners to effectively read a particular set of writing.

Methodology

The researchers use content analysis of almost five selected reading comprehension passages from the selected secondary English textbook: Communicative English for Junior Secondary Schools 2

Data Analysis

- i. In Communicative English page 177 there is a reading passage titled: **Corruption: A Deadly Monster in Our Society**. The passage explains deeply what corruption is and what evils it does in our society. The society becomes immoral when corruption engulfs it. This is because everything will be abnormal in the society which brings insecurity on our lives and properties; it brings greed, covetousness, excessive importance attached to social status, poverty, unemployment and moral decadence among others. So teaching the students what corruption is can help our youth to avoid being corrupt citizens.

ii. In the same book CE page 199 there is a reading passage titled: **Insecurity**. The excerpt is made to teach the students that those that need peace, peace shall meet them and those that make things the way they want, shall one day reap what they sew. So, they should be guided well on how they can tackle issues with patience and perseverance.

iii. In CE page 208 there is a reading passage titled: **Religious and Ethnic Conflict in Nigeria**. The passage explains the nature of our country Nigeria where we have different religions and tribes. In a situation like this you are expected to be tolerant to other peoples' ideologies, respect their culture, religion and opinions. You should not feel superior to others since we are all the same citizens. Intolerance, disrespect of religion/culture brings chaos and conflict among people. We should learn to live together, cooperate towards the national goals and aspirations. Failure to do so can jeopardise our peace and development.

iv. In the same book, page 164 is another reading passage titled: **Society**. The passage explains clearly what a society is, what an individual is expected to do order to make society develops and maintains peace and stability in it. Every individual has a vital role to play for example tolerance and communal cooperation no matter what a person is in terms of his/her religious ideologies, ethnicity, etc.

Findings and Discussions

Teaching and learning in schools are expected to be in line with the demands of curriculum innovation. Levin (2005) has an opinion that values are infused only through those channels where they can be most effective in affecting behaviour. One of the essences of curriculum is to make citizens aware of the societal norms and culture, to be beneficial later in the society and possibly to bring a positive change towards the society.

Therefore, comprehension passages that are used in the English textbooks should be geared towards teaching national security by making the students aware of the important values such as protection of lives and properties of people, respect of people's religion and culture, respect of leaders, values of the country, etc. They should also be taught how to contribute their quota towards the development of their country. Vices such as drug abuse and their consequences should be taught to the students through reading comprehension. Lumpkin (2008) pointed out that beside the intellectual development reinforced by the universal standardization, there should be a call for a moral progress which would help students become human beings capable of virtuous acts, and remain firm in various streams of modern pressures.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The simplest and easiest way to inculcate and establish moral conscience in the society is through institutional academic programmes at primary, secondary, colleges and university levels. School is designed to use its curriculum as a major instrument to transmit skills, practical knowledge, important cultural values, norms, patriotism and loyalty, lesson of obedience, ambition, concern for others, internal behaviour disposition. All these can be incorporated in the comprehension passages of English. This make the textbooks to be more innovative and been restructured to attain these goals.

Teachers need to be trained more on how to focus on the morals and values of the society which will result to national security. More comprehension passages need to be added to the textbooks which mostly centred on the teaching and inculcating national security among the learners.

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