

## Language and Communication: Effective Tools for Educational Supervision and Inspection in Nigeria

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### Abstract

*This paper highlights the role of language and communication in removing barriers, building bridges and promoting behaviours targeted at achieving already set minimum standards, guaranteeing quality assurance and supporting management functions of supervision and inspection in education in Nigeria. The paper recognizes that the stressful life and traumatic experiences teachers go through during supervision and inspection and government's inactions and reluctance to act on supervision and inspection reports which consequently undermine general conditions in the education industry owe their origins to ineffective articulation and conceptualization of ideas and concepts and their eventual communication by supervisors and inspectors. As measures to overcome this unfortunate development, the paper recommends among other things that unlike the present practice where "Godfatherism" is the basis of appointing supervisors and inspectors, ability to effectively communicate should be the yardstick for becoming a supervisor and inspector and basic rudiments of communication should take centre stage in the training of teachers who naturally are potential supervisors and inspectors.*

**Keywords:** Education, supervision, inspection, supervisor, inspector, language, communication, school, teacher, mentor, reform.

### 1. Introduction

One known index for determining the effectiveness of government policies in educational institutions, teacher productivity and obtaining feedbacks on split second innovations in education is the quality of supervision and inspection that goes on in the education industry. Ideally, the education industry should and ought to come under water tight surveillance from supervisors and accredited and professionally trained inspectors, if government's use of education to achieve predetermined objectives is to be a success, policies of government, activities of teachers, behaviours of learners as well as those of host communities where educational institutions are located should be the focus and central areas upon which supervisors and inspectors tirelessly and relentlessly beam their search lights. Supervisors assist; guide and mentor fellow teachers on their day to day activities so as to enhance effective service delivery and inspectors obtain information and disseminate it to stakeholders in the education industry. This practice is a fundamental norm for effective service delivery and a core and determinant issue on the workability or otherwise of government's innovations and policies in education that targets possible review or change of gear that can bring in the much desired change or result in the education system.

Constant surveillance on the activities of teachers, students, parents and host communities of educational institutions are necessary because, in addition to admitting constant changes, the education industry bristles with thorny social, economic, moral, political, scientific and general issues that consistently demand attention of stakeholders and the general public as to ensure that the objectives upon which schools and educational institutions are established are achieved. In fact within the school system, enrolment of learners often increase in alarming proportions so much that there are always terrible mismatch between school enrolment and available human and material resources. Obtaining information on these and other similar cases in the education industry such as the total loss of intellectual spirit and enabling environment for effective service delivery as they exist today are necessary actions for intensifying supervision and inspection in education. Policy information aside, the extent in which practices are religiously implemented in educational institutions and the extent in which policy formulators rest assured that policies are implemented according to stipulations are fundamental responsibilities of supervisors and inspectors in education. Directly or indirectly, better

communication and human relations are at the root of any worthwhile supervision and inspection that is desirous of achieving the best for the education system and any critical observer can observe that supervision and inspection are complex acts that among other things incorporate feedbacks, counselling, mentoring, guidance, advice etc through effective communication. Generally this paper objectively focuses on the role of language and communication in supervision and inspection in the education industry.

Our methodology is basically philosophical. A research methodology is said to be philosophical when it involves or incorporates speculation, analysis and prescription. Speculation as a philosophical method of enquiry according to Aminigo (1999:4) attempts to find logical coherence in an entire realm of thought. The foundation of this method of enquiry is that the soundness or reasonableness of any proposition can be established through its rootedness in the science of logic or the various orderly sequences that leads to a conclusion. The hinging of this methodology on logic serves what Miller (1996:6) calls "a tool" in mankind's vibrant and robust quest for knowledge across disciplines.

Analysis as a method of philosophical research involves careful and critical clarification of the make-ups or constituents of a subject matter with the aim of unfolding the meanings associated with such subject matter. At the heart of this method is language and logic or what Hirst and White (2000) call "the relationship between language and reality or word and the world". Interestingly any researcher who employs this method starts by breaking down his subjects matter into smaller forms that constitute it and at the same time shows how all are related in attaining a specific objective. Prescription as a philosophical research method establishes criteria for judging or evaluating values and passing prescriptive value judgement.

Indulgence or embrace of philosophical research methods affords freedom and opportunity that invites, motivates and challenges researchers to venture into various problem areas across disciplines. By this feature, researchers are availed platforms which, in addition to tackling diversified subject matters also promote progress in the forms of extending and breaking new frontiers of knowledge. The issue of diversified subject matter and the dividends thereof are possible because philosophical research methods produce and rely more on theories than any other research method. What is implicated here is that philosophical research method is not restrictive and consequently does not in any way impoverish researchers and disciplines that are favourably disposed to using it. It rather contributes in ground breaking breakthroughs in the knowledge industry. All these by implication mean that the knowledge industry and mankind can be better off in terms of opportunities and dividends associated with research, its contributions to improving human condition and acquisition of knowledge. Again, the focus of this research methodology on language, logic and reasonableness tends to point towards a vital direction namely that proper use of language and communication are necessary conditions for getting the best out of workers including planting solidly any management innovations in establishments and institutions.

## **2. The Concept of Supervision**

Establishments and institutions that have recorded astronomical and phenomenal developments in effective service delivery prioritize giving their personnel all the needed assistance, mentoring, guidance, advice and support so that they can put in their best for the attainment of the targets set by the establishment or institution. This practice is the key to the success of any establishment or institution and is simply known as supervision. Supervision in establishments or institutions is purposefully carried out to ensure that personnel or workers maximally perform duties officially or otherwise assigned to them for the achievement of set goals and individuals who are constantly supervised in their places of work superlatively and tremendously improve both in speed and efficient mastery of their jobs so much that they quickly become assets to their institutions and establishments and by implications drivers of human and national development.

To many, supervision is the livewire of institutions and establishments and awareness of the general public on the importance of supervision has been matched with a plethora of scholarly definitions of the concept. Whawo (1993) defines supervision as the exercise of general superintendence over activities of functionaries in an establishment. This definition is deeply rooted in a paradigm or framework where a personnel or group of personnel in an establishment, due to superior technical, and managerial expertise or any other factors, exercise administrative and leadership control over a group of staff with the sole aim of guiding them perform their jobs creditably well for the attainment of the targets of the establishment. This can be in the form of providing adequate mobilization, encouragement, motivation or advice to staff in institutions or establishments usually by a supervisor so that personnel under him can creditably and effectively discharge their duties or minimize the occurrence of errors in the discharge of their duties or key-in to master the latest technological inventions and innovations for effective discharge of their duties.

Ogunsaju (1983) sees supervision as a way of persuading people to desist from applying wrong procedures in carrying out certain functions of their jobs and at the same time try to emphasize the importance of good human relations

in an organization. It is important we state that the justification for supervision in any educational establishment derives from the desire to objectively, carefully and critically monitor the compliance and performance level of teachers and learners along already laid down standards or rule with the aim of noting progress or shortcomings arising out of policy decisions and forging common fronts upon which any observed shortcoming can be minimized or improved upon for the benefits of improving standards in the education system. This means supervision targets enhancing continuous improvement in the quality of instruction in the education industry. In other words supervision in education targets making teachers more committed, dedicated and more responsible in the discharge of their duties. In making this a reality, supervisors who are usually heads or those who have superior technical or other advantages over those they supervise must show appreciable level of charisma in the discharge of their duties by being supporting, caring, encouraging, advisory, sharing rather than directing, authoritative, intimidating, arrogant and imposing.

Supervision occurs in virtually every establishment and writing with reference to the education industry, Okoro (2004) writes that supervision corresponds to all the efforts and resources used by a supervisor to encourage the supervisee to achieve educational goals and the supervisor to mean one who is assigned or charged with the responsibility of overseeing the functions of others in order to encourage and improve on the functions one is officially or otherwise assigned to carry out. This means supervision in educational institution is any conscious efforts initiated by the government or administrative heads in the case of public schools or management of private educational institutions in the case of private schools targeted at achieving set goals.

Whawo (1993) writes that a supervisor in the educational institution basically functions as a teacher of teachers whose principal motivation or task is to facilitate the teaching learning process in the classroom. Ideally to be a teacher of teachers maybe suggesting that the supervisor may have technical, managerial and administrative expertise or any other added advantage over those he superintends or supervises. Characteristically a supervisor in an educational setting is an employee of that educational institution or establishment who among other responsibilities interacts with major stakeholders in education notably teachers, learners, parents etc with the aim of bringing about improvements in the teaching learning process.

It is important we state that although private schools exist and have their own employed staff or consultants who function as supervisors, states in modern educational practice have inspectorate and supervision units that ensure that private schools comply with laid down rules and standards for effective service delivery. In other words even though supervision is basically an internal affair, government as the chief monitor of what obtains in the state gives directives and guidelines that can assist private investors in education achieve their set targets.

Because the education industry serves the public, most of the activities in the sector involve persons in the public domain. This is true of persons who serve as supervisors in the education industry. According to Whawo (1993), three groups of persons in the society perform the functions of supervisors in the education industry and they are: The Ministry of Education, Principals and their vices and parents and community leaders. In their supervisory functions, the ministry of education ensures timely provision of general rules and regulations for the education system generally, ensures timely planning of school calendar and curriculum, availability of fund especially to public schools and instructional materials to schools, supervises schools and teacher education programmes as well as advises teachers, students and school managements on possible lines of actions for achieving set-targets.

No doubt, every head of an educational institution is a supervisor- be it a Vice Chancellor, Provost, Rector, Principal, headmaster or headmistress and the supervisory roles of these persons unfold in their abilities to render and provide quality guidance, mentoring and advice to lecturers, teachers learners and other classes of stakeholders in their institution in the hope of improving service delivery that can lead to the attainment of set objectives.

Again heads of educational institutions serve as bridge between the government and recipients of government's educational policies and the extent in which they emphasize any educational policy of the government determines the seriousness with which teachers who are the implementers or drivers of the policies will respond. In the same way their feedbacks to the government determines pattern of sustainability, modification or otherwise of any government policy in education.

The sense in which parents and community leaders function as supervisors in the education industry is unique and can best be described as indirect. Precisely heads of educational institutions and teachers obtain information on the abilities, potentials and capabilities of learners from parents and community leaders and this in turn guides school authorities on paradigm shift in selecting content materials, pedagogical improvements as well as modifications in management and administrative strategies that can bring about the best results for both the schools, learners and the communities. Specifically, parents and community leaders assist schools in providing feedbacks on learners' receptivity or progress to school experiences which help to guide teachers in their service delivery.

These revelations about supervision and the supervisor are tasks that call for the possession of certain qualities.

We have earlier indicated that a supervisor in the education industry is "a teacher of teachers" and for one to merit the name "teacher of teachers", he/she must be professionally qualified in addition to possessing many years of experience that can single him or her out as being above his or her equals. A supervisor who is sensitive of the trust and responsibilities bestowed on him or her by his or her educational institution must be open and receptive to embracing set improvements as fundamental foundational requirements for his continued relevance in the education industry. He or she must be vast in issues of human relations especially skills of effective communication and must have feelings for other people, must be creative in addition to being morally conscious of himself or herself and must show leadership skills and interests in dignity of labour among other human qualities.

### **3. The Concept of Inspection**

Much reflections and much ink have been spilled in efforts to grasp the meanings and functions of inspection in the education industry. However, after thorough and critical examination of the concept, meanings which surround the concept of inspection is the idea of a visit officially embarked upon to carefully and diligently examine if prescribed standards and rules that are set out as guides for an educational system are courteously and religiously obeyed. What this means is that inspection in education is that moment in educational practice where government or the appropriate ministry or agency sends out specially trained personnel to schools to critically evaluate, ascertain and examine if practices in real school settings actually correspond with already predetermined objectives and targets mapped out to be achieved. In other words inspection in the education industry is a routine evaluative and reflective assessment and practice that is deep rooted in observation and dialogue for ascertaining the extent in which administrative, philosophical, curricular, sociological, managerial and pedagogical issues and practices in actual teaching learning, feelings of teachers and learners, receptivity of host community and other general environmental conditions of school positively harmonize with predetermined objectives outlined to be achieved by a state and its people through the education industry.

An analysis of what has been said above squarely locates the task of the inspector of schools to be one in which he concerns himself with the extent in which already set goals are achieved and consequently advises all the stakeholders in education on modalities for strengthening support to ensure general school improvement (Ololube and Major, 2014). The above is in line with the position of Memisoglu and Ekinici (2013:139) who defined inspection as the process of following, regenerating and developing the functioning of the organization in order to prevent possible deviation from the planned organizational objectives. Inspection is focused on monitoring and evaluating the day to day curricular, management, planning, administrative and pedagogical issues in education. The guiding principle here is to maintain and ensure that there are no compromise in issues of quality and standard in education. Consequently it will be right to say that inspection as an ever present practice in education is a dynamic mechanism that serves a number of purposes namely: ensuring that the seal of quality is constantly placed on education and educational practices, to guarantee that minimum standards are maintained across states or regions that practice the same education, provide and ensure the setting up of platforms or think tanks for reviewing or offering constructive advise or criticism on strategies and roadmaps for effective formulation and implementation of school curriculum, syllabus, module etc and developing networks for disseminating and sharing good (positive) and bad (negative) experiences as they exist in the education industry in states.

There are unique features that set inspection apart from other similar practices in education. One unique feature of inspection is that unlike supervision that is principally initiated and carried out internally by heads of educational institutions, inspection is usually initiated and carried out by either the Local Government Education Authority, the Inspectorate Divisions of State Ministries of Education or those of the Federal Ministry of Education or any of its agencies in the case of countries where higher education has special units for inspectorate functions, meaning that forces that are external to schools engineer inspection.

Ideally inspectors at the end of their inspection visits normally produce written reports where they itemize and detail whatever strengths and weaknesses they noticed in the course of their inspection visits. This is in addition to holding post inspection briefing where causal remarks are made concerning certain issues that need immediate and urgent attention. It needs to be pointed out that no new schools exists without government getting or receiving official reports from inspectors on the degree of compliance of owners of such schools with laid down rules and inspectors routinely visit old schools to ascertain their compliance with set goals. In other words inspection on new schools is for the purposes of determining whether such schools have what it takes to function as schools while inspection on old schools is to identify possible areas of deficiency with a view to mapping out signposts for improvement or ascertain their degree of compliance with set rules. The above points, point in the directions of getting approval for the establishment of schools and operational improvements in the case of existing schools.

There are other reasons for inspection. Inspection is carried out in educational institutions for purposes of justifying and certifying if they (educational institutions) have attained bench marks for mounting some programmes or for being admitted into the fold for handling some sensitive issues in education like the conduct of public examination and the award of certain certificates. Technically, programme recognition is the name of the inspection that is made on school for purposes of determining their eligibility to be admitted or allowed to transit from one level of operation to another. Such activities as eligibility for public examination, mounting of new programmes and other forms of expansion are matched with reports from inspectors who confirm the eligibility and suitability of such schools for such programmes. Inspection is also carried out on schools as a necessary condition after crises to ascertain the extent of normalcy and security of lives and property after schools/educational institutions have been hit by any form of social unrest like students protests or demonstration, natural disaster or any other emergency, where the aim is to report the state of affairs to the appropriate authority and the authorities to communicate the outcome of such inspection to the general public who in turn can restore their confidence in the system.

In the education industry people very easily believe that supervision and inspection is one and the same thing. This is not correct as there are distinct features or areas which each of the two concepts focuses on but the truth is that there are certain features which the two concepts share in common. No matter the distinct areas of the two concepts, they converge at a point namely, they both target improving the quality of service delivery in schools so that already set goals which the school is predetermined to achieve can be achieved.

Specifically, supervision in education focuses on internally engineering or initiating positive behaviours in teachers and other class of workers in schools that can bring about accelerated continuous improvements in the performance of individual staff of educational institutions. This means that supervision targets producing changes in the behaviours of staff that can lead to the general development of staff in a school in particular and the school in general through the efforts of colleagues, who, due to experience or the possession of unquestionable administrative, managerial or pedagogic skills can mentor, advice or guide those with less skills so that they too can become proficient on the job. In attempts to achieving this, supervision preoccupies itself with identifying the strengths and weaknesses of teachers with a target to improving any weakness associated with any individual teacher.

Inspection on the other hand is externally arranged by the appropriate unit(s) of the ministry of education in the local government council, state or at the federal level for monitoring and evaluating the extent in which the performance of educational institutions corresponds with set goals and standards upon which they were set up. In other words inspection attempts to preoccupy itself with the extent in which educational institutions live up to expectations in terms of meeting set objectives.

For purpose of analytic clarity, one can state that inspection in school is basically a formal practice where schools are officially communicated on days the inspection team will visit, the general requirements and expectations from schools during inspection. Supervision on its own does not require this formal arrangement but can occur in school unofficially in a split second order without a prior notification from a supervisor to a supervisee.

Inspection is a necessary practice if the education industry is to achieve its objectives of developing or breaking new frontiers of knowledge that can give rise to behaviours that can radicalize and revolutionize man and the society in readiness for changes in an ever changing society where the forces of social change and globalization introduce innovations that make today's super inventions obsolete by the morning of tomorrow. A question for reflection however is: How far do inspectors discharge their duties in the course of inspecting schools? The truth is that inspectors in the education industry in present day practice seem to lack the philosophical insights upon which inspection in schools is hinged and the lack of this essential platform for successful practice is responsible for present day inspections' unimaginable abuse where inspectors turn the inspection process into fault finding expedition, and golden opportunity to find lapses and shortcomings from teachers, thereby charging school atmosphere during inspection into one in which teachers experience nightmare, "confusion, anomie, anxiety and doubts about their professional competence" (Jeffrey and Woods, 1996:325).

Any keen observer of the inspection process in real live situation can observe that the behaviour of inspectors during inspection process tends to suggest that inspectors already have conclusions at the back of their minds that teachers far from being part of the solutions to educational problems were rather part of the problems. Another possible reason for the behaviour of inspectors during inspection is that inspectors adopt "new orders" and "clinical" approaches that are in conflict with the numerous philosophically, psychologically and holistically approved approaches that fix and locate the child at the centre of instructional and pedagogical activities which teachers usually adopt.

Casual and simple observation of the school environment during inspection can reveal that there are many disconnects between inspectors and teachers and principally these disconnects produce in teachers prior to inspection and after inspection many emotional traumas and stress ranging from "a sense of normlessness, uncertainty,

disorientation to a complete and total sense of professional inadequacy as well as feelings of worthlessness and feelings of loss of self\* (Jeffrey and Woods, 1996). In fact the general atmosphere which inspectors fosters on teachers during inspection and after is one in which teachers feel so reduced first as individuals and secondly as professionals whose professional competence are in doubts. In totality, the attitudes of inspectors leave teachers with negative emotions to the extent that teachers are not always certain of themselves and what might be the outcome of inspection and psychologically, under these tensions, teachers are completely weighed down by depression. Jeffery and Woods (1996:340) capture the predicaments of the teachers when they write that:

*...emotional reactions such as these are indicators of an assault on the teachers' sense of professionalism. The teachers experience fear, anguish, anger, despair, depression, humiliation, grief and guilt – emotions produced by the mismatch between the power of the critical event they were experiencing and the cultural resources provided by their beliefs and past experiences.*

In fairness to teachers, the behaviours of inspectors immensely contributed to the various traumas and stress that teachers experience during inspection. This conclusion is reached following Brimblecombe, Ormstrom and Shaw's (1995) observations that some inspectors disastrously and terribly lack the necessary professional expertise required for effective inspection and the consequence of this is that the behaviour of inspectors induce stress into teachers they inspect. They write that:

*Stress induced by inspectors may be due to unfamiliarity with the job: nervous new inspectors who behave in a distant, aloof and sometime imperious manner or even display signs of stress themselves have a greater effect on the stress levels of staff than they probably realize (p. 57).*

It has to be pointed out that inspectors who rise to the position through what Nwaokugha (2014:18) calls 'Godfatherism' display shocking and terrible ignorance in their work and embarrassingly act in manners which undermine and witch hunt those they inspect. What results out of this is unprecedented increase in the stakeholders' feelings of powerlessness and a concomitant loss of job satisfaction with its telling effects on the general performance of the teachers and learners.

Unfamiliarity with the job of inspection can be traced to the fact that regulations and policies guiding inspection in many states change in split second order especially in states where political leaders are interested in initiating their own educational policies instead of sustaining any one they met in office. In fact it is an open secret that the education industry bristles with thorny political, economic, social and moral issues of the society and these capture the attention of political leaders of states, who in turns attempt to use education to redress such challenges and depending on the philosophical orientations of a particular political leader in terms of policies, school inspectors are usually charged to embrace new forms of inspection without adequate thoughts on their degree of expertise concerning such change of gear.

No doubt supervision and inspection in education are administrative and management components of the education industry which must be in the system if the system must perform at its peak. Without contradiction, effective assistance, effective guidance and effective mentoring for effective service delivery or performance which is the focus of supervision and obtaining information, disseminating information and appropriately evaluating the extent in which activities or practices in education can bring about the realization of predetermined or set goals in education as well as initiating ideas that can lead to further improvements in the system, which is the purpose of inspection must remain areas of priority despite mounting challenges which tend to make supervision and inspection a nightmare for all the major stakeholders in the education industry. Whatever challenges, a ray of optimism for restoring hope and sanity in the administrative and management functions of supervision and inspection in the education industry can be better human relations or effective use of language and communication and it is the role of language and communication in supervision and inspection that are now turn to.

#### **4. Language and Communication: Their Role and Place in Supervision and Inspection in Education**

The education industry is a centre of attraction to both the rich and the poor so much that both the rich and poor functionally embrace it as an article of faith for their individual emancipation and empowerment, where the rich look up to education as a process and as an institution to maintain their status quo and the poor equally look up to education as an instrument and institution for challenging the status quo (Nwaokugha, 2013). Interestingly most responsible states according to Shively (2005) route and chart the path to their national development and greatness into education. This attitude to the education industry suggests that it can be a breeding ground for the production, dissemination and

utilization of ideas from people of different ideological orientations. As a breeding ground for the production, dissemination and utilization of ideas, education is synonymous with politically charged concepts that are open to manipulations and contests. This is so because anyone who has anything to say—whether good or bad, wise or foolish uses education as a platform to do so “and in most cases education easily becomes a hotbed where ideas which it generates for the upkeep of society and the survival of mankind easily degenerate into clashes and conflicts between the various publics it serves”. Whatever any society associates with education is achieved through the school (Nwaokugha, 2013) and like education, reflections on what constitutes a school have been thought-provoking because school stands for different concepts and activities (Kauchak and Eggen, 2011), ranging “from school as a place where teacher teach and learners learn, school as factory, school as shopping mall, school as prison and school as a social institution”.

In all of these, every responsible state meanders and navigates through axiological, metaphysical and epistemological frontiers in attempts to select and sift what is best for her citizens and consequently relies on supervision and inspection through supervisors and inspectors to get the best out of education, usually the predetermined objectives for its people. The mechanism that unmask the various frontiers and removes all abstractions, absurdities and promotes better human relations in education is effective use of language and communication.

We have from the onset stated the reasons for supervision and inspection as bordering on attempts to ensure that new entrants into the teaching profession or those who are less experienced are mentored, guided effectively by those who are more experienced in the profession and ensuring that set objectives are not compromised in teaching learning situations in the school and the education system. Be this as it may, the effectiveness of the supervisor or the inspector in terms of his ability to effectively discharge his duties is dependent on the extent in which he/she can be effective in his/her use of language and his/her ability to communicate with teachers and other stakeholders in education. This means the foundation upon which success lies in anyone’s supervision and inspection duties is the extent in which the supervisor or inspector is capable of relating and communicating with those he/she is to supervise or inspect.

As everyone knows, the education industry is basically a social institution, involving social practices initiated by humans where the use of language and communication play critical and central role in guiding, decoding, signaling and shaping practices and responses to situations. In the field of education, effective use of language and the ways language is used especially by supervisors and inspectors to communicate feelings, attitudes and values produce a corresponding response in teachers and learners in terms of the ways teachers, learners and other stakeholders in education practice, understand, conceptualize, act or react to issues and happenings in education and more importantly how they follow up curricular and pedagogical directives and guidelines marshaled out to them by their supervisors and inspectors. These point in the direction that effective use of language especially by supervisors and inspectors can communicate basic and fundamental assumptions about classroom and school practices that can encourage stakeholder to appreciate and comprehend daily practices from virgin vantage points.

It is instructive we point out that much is expected from a supervisor and an inspector in the discharge of their duties and it is in their ability to use language and communicate effectively with it that he can achieve his objectives especially in a social practice like education where the beliefs, values, wishes and desires (Frowe, 2001) of those who are at the helm of the social practice called education and its practice are instrumental for its success. The point here is that as management personnel, the extent in which supervisors and inspectors relate and communicate government policies and programmes about education to communities, teachers and learners determines teachers’ and learners’ activeness and seriousness with their jobs and both teachers’ and learners’ level of seriousness, activeness and commitment with their teaching and learning can be a litmus test for evaluating, assessing and determining government’s social, political, economic and general policies for the people.

In the management field of supervision and inspection, the degree of expertise in a supervisor’s and inspector’s use of language and his ability to communicate with it speaks volume in terms of his professional practice. A supervisor’s or inspector’s manipulative proficiency of language can enable him influence teachers, learners and other stakeholders in education positively in the form of using language to create desirable new realities or the type of environment that can enhance and promote teaching learning friendly behaviours in teachers and learners for attaining predetermined objectives. To this end, language and effective communication in the management functions of supervision and inspection are according to Frowe (2001:93) necessary foundations for “bringing about something which previously did not exist”. Frowe (2001:91) highlights the relationship between language, communication and practice in social practice which education is one when he writes that:

Only language users can create practice because all practices require sophisticated forms of communication and secondly, language is necessary for the formulation, articulation and transmission of the principles, rules and standards which form the practice. Language makes practices possible in both a generic and procedural sense.

It is common knowledge that from creation, communication and the expression of feelings have always been

initiated through language and depending on the intention of the user of the language, has been used for good as well as for bad. Majority of persons employ language for good in the direction of liberating a people or charting courses or routes for the attainment of predetermined objectives. History has it that African Americans were encouraged to "use language as a weapon in their struggle for their liberation" (Mitchell 2008:79). This can be extended to education by advising and encouraging inspectors and supervisors to receptively, politely and courteously use language in their communication in the education industry to elicit desirable and expected behaviour from teachers, learners and others.

It is true that there are ways in which supervisors and inspectors in their management functions of supervision and inspections can get the best out of teachers, learners and other stakeholders in education through their methods of communication and abilities to manipulate language. Supervisors, inspectors and stakeholders in education can be sensitized to draw up inspirations from the position of the Holy Bible on polite uses of language and communication in human relations, interaction and institutional harmony and remain conscious of the implications of impolite use of language and communication. Supervisors, inspectors and stakeholders in education can be guided to live by Bible principles especially those that recognize that "pleasant sayings are honey-comb, sweet to the soul and a healing to the bones" (Proverbs 16:24), in addition to recognizing that "a soft answer turneth away wrath, but grievous words stir up anger" (Proverbs 15:1). Generally, in the management function of supervision and inspection in education, the position of the Holy Bible as recorded in Ephesians 4:29 should be highly applied and respected namely that "let not a rotten saying not proceed out of your mouth, but whatever saying is good for building up as the need may be that it may impact what is favourable to the hearer". In fact in the same way as language and communication are fundamental in stimulating and provoking functional and transformational behaviours that are conducive to producing reforms that can bring about positive changes in people and institutions, appropriate use of language in communicating feelings and expectations by supervisors and inspectors promises to reposition, sensitize and conscientize stakeholders in the education industry to work towards the actualization of the core values upon which the education industry was established.

## **5. Conclusion**

Directly or indirectly, supervision and inspection in education is a complex art that among other things incorporate feedbacks through effective communication. Feedbacks are key features in education generally and supervision and inspection in particular where the wishes, aspirations and expectations of a state for its people and those of a people from their state are transmitted or exchanged. However, the government does not on its own directly undertake this responsibility but through its personnel or representatives who meet with the people with the message of the government on one hand and return the people's own to the government on the other. In the education industry, this responsibility is usually undertaken for the government by supervisors and inspectors and the pedigree of these personnel in communicating the expectations and aspirations of the government to the people determine the receptivity of the people to educational reforms, policies and programmes of the government. In the same way, the feelings of a people are transmitted to the government through supervisors and inspectors whose pedigree in communicating back to the government the receptivity of the people towards its policies and programmes provide government fundamental basis to balance, judge, evaluate and manage the split second and frequently conflicting ideas in the education industry.

In all these, what is communicated and the ways they are communicated determine the continuity, modification or outright rejection of educational policies and programmes. The fact in the issue is that the extent in which supervisors and inspectors communicate issues in education from the government to the people and vice versa is the pivot upon which success or failure in educational practices, policies and programmes can be hinged in the education industry. As serious and obvious as this is, supervisors and inspectors are not sufficiently aware of this and neither do educational provisions make this a priority to teachers in training who are potential future supervisors and inspectors. The heart of the matter is that supervisors and inspectors should be sufficiently educated on the role of language and communication in the success or failure of their duties, bearing in mind that communication has potentials that when appropriately explored can strengthen the basis upon which predetermined objectives can be attained and when compromised can be a ladder or step for weakening interests and enthusiasm that can be supportive of attaining predetermined objectives.

To this end, ability to use language to communicate effectively should be credentials which individuals should have before they are appointed as supervisors and inspectors especially in multi-linguistic and multi-cultural society like Nigeria. It is only when supervisors and inspectors can communicate effectively that they can capture graphically the real situation or sound convincingly meaningful in their detailed reports to the government or any concerned agency.

Globally, governments should as a matter of urgency consider the training and retraining of supervisors and inspectors on the importance of language and communication in the discharge of their duties a national priority. Maybe the celebrated and widely publicized criticism that governments globally delay in implementing reports of supervision and



inspection when they are submitted may hinge on communication problems and such delays may have repercussions in the forms of misinformation and attendant terrible inactions to mounting problems in the education sector. Perhaps the earlier we turn a new leaf by prioritizing effective mastery of language and communication in the professional education of teachers, who in turn are potential supervisors and inspectors, the better the supervisors and inspectors learn to communicate rightly to the government and the more the government can urgently and rightly respond to mounting problems in education. When these are done, both the government and the people can beat their chests that the right foundations and the right investments for sustainable development of the people and the state are on course.

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