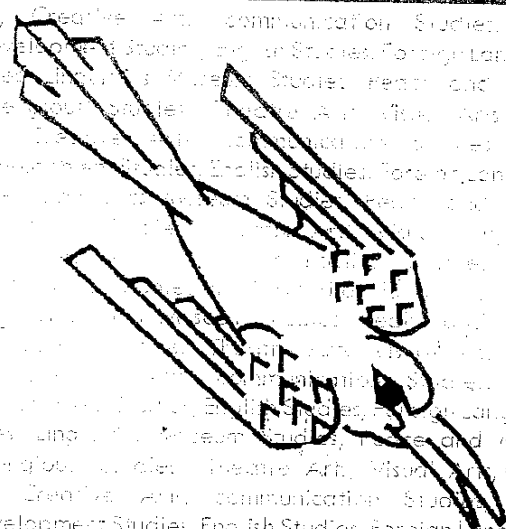


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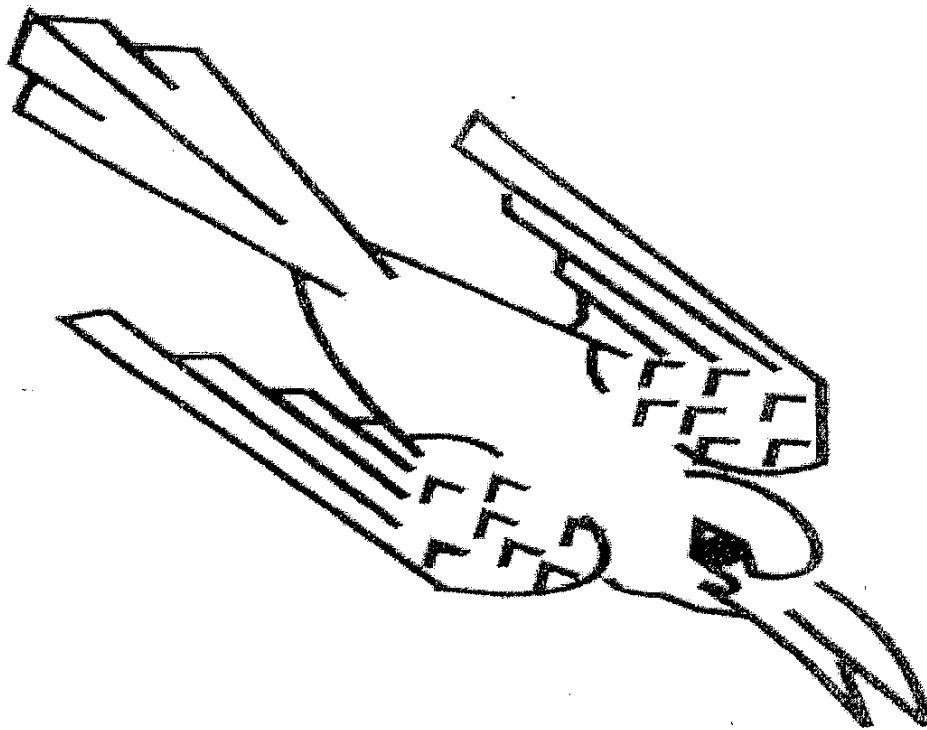


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achievement of learning and practiced in such a manner as to respect the learner's intellectual integrity and capacity for independent judgment. The three definitions agree on the fact that teaching must involve activities aimed at bringing about learning [goal]. The third definition however added the condition or manner in which learning has to be carried out. Therefore for any activities to be recognized as teaching it must fulfill the criteria of goal and manner.

ii. *Teaching as Human Development*

Teaching is here viewed as the process of overall human development. Citing Obanya [1982], Ezeokoli [1999] notes that teaching as a process aims at cultivating in the learners the three Hs [i.e. the head, the heart and the hands] which are faculties for the development of reasoning, thinking, feeling, attitude, neuro-physical co-ordination and other manipulative skills. In other words, teaching aims at developing the cognitive, affective and psychomotor domains of the learner [i.e. the whole person]. This implies that an enabling environment is a crucial factor towards achieving an overall development of the learner.

iii. *Teaching as Psychological Activities Involving Mutual Interaction*

Teaching here is a form of interpersonal influence targeted at changing the behavior potential of another individual. That is, teaching is a form of interaction resulting in mutual influence whereby the teacher strives to change the behavior of the learners while the learners in turn influence the behavior of the teacher. This conception conforms to the definition of Balogun [1991] earlier given, this view sees learners as active participants in teaching-learning process.

iv. *Teaching as an Art*

Citing Della Fish [1997], Ezeokoli [1999] conceives teaching as a form of professional artistry. The teacher here is seen as an artist, who learns and improves upon his art by imitating earlier artists and then adds something of his/her own. Hence, a teacher's level of competence in the teaching profession is the sum total of knowledge and skills he or she has acquired about teaching, as well as the teacher's resourcefulness in teaching. This implies that a teacher must not only have access to existing knowledge and skills about teaching he or she must also be creative. Ukeje [1998] noted that the concept of teaching has drastically changed in contemporary societies. He views teaching as currently being very much systematic, rational, and more organized process of transmitting knowledge, information, ideas and skills in accordance with professional principles and practice. In the light of this, those who do not perform the act of teaching in accordance with professional principles cannot be said to be teachers. Such people are cheating as opposed to teaching. [Obanya, 1982 cited in Ezeokoli 1999:216].

From the various conceptions of teaching it could be deduced that the teacher is the core of any development or improvement effort. Teaching demands that both internally and externally imposed demands are met to the satisfaction of both the learner and the society. As a result, teaching can then be viewed as a process of guiding students

integrated into the society and equally able to function at international levels; having access to quality education; having the sense of belonging to the Nigerian society as well as having acquired certain physical, intellectual or social competence that will enable him function well within and outside Nigeria.

Definitely, the type of education that will produce such a 'super-human' being must be that which is of high quality and capable of meeting the needs and aspirations of the individuals in terms of making him or her functional within and outside Nigeria (Jegede, 2004:13).

Language and Development

Language is a major means of human communication. The role of language in human communication is so important that most of the definitions of language center on communication (Ogunsiji, 2003). The ability to communicate through the medium of language is exclusive to man and without this form of communication, the human society if it existed at all, would be devoid of order and meaning.

Nigeria is a multilingual country of well over 400 indigenous languages. English and French are the 2 official languages while there are 3 national languages (Igbo, Hausa, and Yoruba (NPE, 2007, Draft).

Discussing the complexity of the Nigerian situation vis a vis individual and societal language needs, Ajibade (2001) notes that the colonialists lumped together different nationalities with different languages for proper administration of the country. This brought about the communication needs among the people. An already existing language within the territory could have become a *lingua franca* but the colonialists imposed their own language (English) for the purpose of communication with their subjects. For effective communication within and outside the Nigerian territory, language needs must normally go beyond the ability to communicate in the indigenous languages. The study of foreign language like Arabic, English, French, Spanish, German, therefore become relevant as indicated by respondents in a study conducted by Ajibade (2001) in Oyo state. The respondents indicated interest in seven language based on their needs. The languages include French, English, Hausa, Spanish, German, Igbo and Yoruba. 60% of the subjects chose 'wider communication' as reason behind their choice of language while 32% chose proficiency in the language as their reason.

While it is true that being bilingual or multilingual will be beneficial to Nigerians in terms of effective communication within and outside the country, for educational, economic and social-personal factors, there is the need to ensure that every citizen has access to education in his or her indigenous language.

Trudell (2008) notes that several discourses of development are in use today. These are:

- a) sustainable development in terms of economic reform and indicators as well as social stability and environmental stability;
- b) human centered development;
- c) human capabilities and well-being (p. 75).

According to her, a close look at any of the discourses reveals that enhanced human learning, communication and critical thinking are key components of sustainable development no matter the definition. These aspects of development are influenced by language choice.

Robinson (1996) and Djite (2008) have argued vehemently on the relevance of language issue to sustainable development. For instance, Djite (2008) notes that:

No matter how one defines development, it cannot be achieved without reference to language as an important factor, and real development is not possible in Africa without the integration of local languages and full participation of all her human capital (p. 16).

Both Robinson (1996:42) and Djite (2008:6) agree in their argument that the crucial language to development hinges on the role of communication in effective development and they note the impracticability and even absurdity of expecting good learning and communication without attention to language.

Language is no doubt the eye with which an individual interprets and understands the world around him or her. Language is the key to a people's heart (Nwajuba and Okereke, 2008). It is through language that knowledge transmission across space and time is made possible (Nwadike, 2006 cited in Nwajuba and Okereke, 2008). Progress in the sectors of education, health, governance and economy depends on the use of the languages of the people in question (Djete, 2008). He (Djete), equally notes that while some might argue that multiple African languages could be an obstacle to nation building, to him, it is one thing to argue that a common language is a necessary and sufficient requirement in nation building, but it is another to suggest that development can occur in someone else's language. Language is a part of culture and an indigenous language will express culture of a people better than a foreign language. For the school curriculum to transmit the culture of a given society, the language of the culture must be employed as a medium of educating the people (Makinde, 2010:4). It should be noted that for a people oriented development, critical thinking sustainable human capacity and maximal comprehension which are critical aspects of development and which are equally affected by language choice must be considered.

Robinson (2006:10) notes that power issues play significant role in language choice for development as development intervention among marginal, underprivileged social groups usually involves language differences between those group and the group of power. To this, Djite (2008:116) observes that as long as European language continue to maintain pride of place as the language of governance and power, ignorance will prevail for the majority of the people thereby depriving the country of the contribution they could otherwise have made and making it impossible to achieve a stable or viable democracy.

Chumbow (2005) also argued that there is a link between language and development in Africa. He is of the opinion that language factor affects outcomes in education, inter-African co-operation, the development of science and technology and national development in general. Djite (2008) and Trudell (2009) argue strongly that

careful attention must be paid to language questions in development discussions in Africa and that sustainable human capacity development will not be achieved at the expense of the people of Africa, or at the expense of their language. Whatever is true concerning Africa is also true of Nigeria.

For instance, Mwinsheikhe (2008) reports that for decades, alarming decline in level of performance of students, in Tanzania secondary schools has been witnessed due to persistence in the use of English as a Medium of Instruction (MOI). Citing Batibo (1995) he notes that demographically, the majority of Tanzanian population has very little use for English, indeed only 5% of the population speaks it as a second language. Kilore and Chuwa (1995) also report that Kiswahili fulfils the basic requirements qualifying the language as MOI for all educational levels and that the majority of Tanzanian teachers at all levels of education are proficient in Kiswahili and those in post-primary institutions should be able to use the language in teaching with a short orientation course.

Language and culture are strongly related. Indeed, language is one of the indices or markers of culture (Emenanjo, 2000:1; and Oderinde, 2005:5). Oderinde (2005) cited Emenanjo (2000 1-4) and identified the four components of culture which language cuts across, namely: creative component (people's literature); philosophical components (ideas, beliefs, and values of the people); material component (artifacts like tools, clothing, food, medicine, utensils, housing); institutional component (political, social, economic and legal structures etc).

The relationship between language and culture explains the reason why a language learner cannot be a perfect bilingual unless he or she were immersed in the natural or cultural milieu of the target language and that literature is a representation of life, a mirror of the cultural existence of a people which could be true or fictional. This explains why language and literature cannot be separated without some distortion to one or the other. Language do doubt influences the four components of culture (Oderinde, 2005:6).

Language being an instrument for expressing feeling and thought (Vigotsky cited in Oderinde(2005:6) has implications for the premium a society places on the linguistic development of children as regards bringing them up in the mother-tongue or in an unfamiliar foreign language.

Role Expectations of the Language Teacher

Based on the different concepts of teaching as well as the importance of language towards achieving sustainable human capacity development for vision 20:2020, language education programs at the tertiary level (College of Education and Universities) are expected to prepare teachers for the following roles:

- a) The language teacher should be able to serve as role models and mentors to his students in the use of language. His industry as a teacher could be emulated by his students to inspire desires in them to attain high proficiency level in the target language.

- b) Language teachers should be able to provide conducive environment for their students to facilitate language learning. This no doubt would requires initiative on the part of the teachers in organizing learning and materials methodically to enhance teaching-learning process. -
- c) Demonstrating unquestionable competence in language use for effective classroom communication is a role expected of the teacher.
- d) A professional language teacher must be innovative and creative in his teaching. Having good mastery of the subject matter, he or she should be able to add new things and ideas to all he had learnt. He must be current with contemporary techniques and strategies of presenting language learning experiences to learners.

Characteristics of Contemporary Societies

This 21st century has been characterized by rapid and overwhelming changes in every aspect of human endeavors especially in the field of education. The educational system has been described as technology driven (Rufai, 2010:24).

Some of the related problems according to Ezeokoli (1999:219) include:

Knowledge explosion, rapid changes in technology, information storage and dissemination, decline in proficiency in English language students at all levels of education, emergence of large classes and rising incidence of examination malpractices.

Other problems identifiable include: marginalization of the teachers by students and society at large, crisis of confidence among teachers, students and the society on matters relating to education, teachers' low morale and lack of commitments, excessive crave for wealth on the part of the society and the consequent erosion of humane and aesthetic values. Not only that, there is the problem of growing incompetence of language teachers and the ambivalent attitudes of the society towards English and indigenous languages as well as mass failure in public examination like the SSCE and UME. Added to these is inadequacy of the existing curricula in the different languages to cope with the challenges of this present century.

Steps towards Language Teacher Preparation for Attaining the Vision 20:2020

Many scholars have expressed their views on teachers' quality and training question in Nigeria. Their views as examined here are also applicable to the language teachers. According to Yolo (2004) Nigeria is capable of achieving great feats in technology if the right attitude is shown to education. He further stressed that, right education policy must be formulated for the sake of our technological take off. Okolo (2010) also notes that education is an instrument for national development, and to achieve the objective, emphasis must be placed on quality of educational programs as well as the quality of the teachers who implement them as "a quality teacher begets qualitative education which in turn leads to rapid national development"(p.24)

In furtherance, Okolo (2010) notes that as no nation could rise above the quality of its teachers, the focus on policy makers and the implementation of such policies should be institutionalized to guarantee qualitative educational programs that will produce quality teachers. This according to him is imperative if Nigeria is to achieve the vision 20:2020, the Education for All (EFA) and the Universal Basic Education (UBE) goals.

Onuoha (2010) presents a list of generally held perspective of good teachers which are:

- a) sufficient knowledge of subject matter to be able to teach with confidence;
- b) knowledge and skills in a range of appropriate varied teaching methodologies.
- c) fluency in the language of instruction;
- d) knowledge of, sensitivity to, and interest in young learners;
- e) ability to reflect on teaching practice and students' responses;
- f) ability to modify teaching/learning approaches as a result of reflection;
- g) ability to create and sustain an effective learning environment;
- h) understanding of the curriculum and its purpose, particularly when reform programs are introduced;
- i) general professionalism;
- j) good morale;
- k) dedication to the goals of teaching;
- l) ability to communicate effectively;
- m) interest in students as individuals;
- n) sense of caring and responsibility of helping them learn and become good people;
- o) sense of compassion, good character as well as having a sense of ethics and personal discipline;
- p) ability to work with others and build good relationship (Chesterfield and Rubio, 1997 cited in Onuoha, 2010).

He noted further that preparing quality teachers has become a global concern as all nations strive for excellence at all levels.

The following are therefore suggested as steps towards preparing language teachers for the attainment of vision 20:2020.

1. Communicative Competence on the Part of the Teachers

Communicative competence is carried with the knowledge and ability which speakers need to possess in order to use language appropriately in communicative situations. Language teachers must be groomed adequately to acquire communicative competence in his or her language of specialization. Communicative competence has four major components:

- a) linguistic competence (embrace knowledge of lexicon, grammar, and usage);
- b) socio-linguistic competence (relates to what is socially acceptable in language use, when to speak, when to be silent, which socio-linguistic option to select and on what occasion;
- c) discourse competence (adopted when speakers face a problem to reach a communicative goal e.g. code switching and code-mixing to express social meaning as politeness, solidarity etc, in oral and written forms, making formal and informal discourse context) (Canale, 1983 cited in Alo, 2003:117-121).

Language teacher must be well prepared to demonstrate competence in all these for the benefits of his or her students.

2. *Repackaging of languages Curricular*

Curricular in the different languages should be repackaged in order to make them really skill-oriented. Language teachers and learners should be good speakers and writers; they should be good readers too to the extent that apart from teaching, they should be creative enough to be employers of labor rather than being job seekers.

3. *Computer Literacy*

Language teachers in training should be well equipped through computer literacy for dissemination and retrieval of or accession of information using modern technology of the computer and the internet facilities. Practicing teachers should be re-skilled and up-skilled in the use of modern technology in order to meet the needs of learners of today.

4. *Retraining of Language Teachers through Workshops and Conference*

Language teachers should be encouraged to attend workshops and conferences organized by language associations at the local and international levels. These workshops and conferences would serve as retraining grounds for such teachers and this is part of the human capacity building or development initiatives expected of the government.

5. *Provision of Language Laboratory*

Not many Faculties of Education can boast of having functional language laboratories. Where these exist in Secondary Schools, not all graduates of different languages can boast of familiarity with language laboratories.

6. *Re-emphasizing Possession of Educational Qualifications for Teaching.*

The minimum qualification for teaching in all levels of education should be re-emphasized. The National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE) and the National Universities Commission (NUC) should make pronouncements on this from time to time and equally ensure that institutions comply with this. Deadline should be given to teachers at the tertiary levels to procure Postgraduate Diploma (Certificate) in Education (PGDE). Procurement of educational qualifications should be made one of the criteria for appointment to heads educational institutions in Nigeria.

7. *Motivating Teachers through Remunerations*

Nigerian teachers at all levels must be adequately paid and remunerated. Leaders in public offices do not reject salary and allowances packaged at the federal level. Teachers working in state-owned institutions should not be discriminated against if their morale will not be dampened.

8. *Language Teachers' Award*

Government should introduce the language teachers' award at the primary, post-primary and tertiary levels to reward industrious language teachers. This will encourage all to put in their best. Selection should be by special observation of the Inspectorate Arm of the Ministries of Education and Reports from Schools and Faculties of Education in the case of tertiary institutions.

9. *Classroom Language Communication Course*

Apart from the General Course on the use of English, a course titled Classroom Language Communication should be introduced to education students – running through the entire levels (100 – 400). This will help in tackling communicative deficiencies among intakes into the tertiary training programs.

10. *Teachers' Registration Procedure*

The procedure for registration of teachers should be made easier to enable everyone that is qualified to register. For instance, at the venues of academic gatherings in Nigeria, Teachers' Registration Council should have a table where participants who are professionally qualified could register. Payment of annual dues (if any) could equally be made by registered members.

11. *Greater Attention to Language Issues*

Language is the cornerstone of any academic success. While attention should be paid towards ensuring the effective teaching of English and French (Nigeria's official languages) greater attention should be paid towards promoting the local languages. The government should be interested in the proper education of the Nigerian child. Teaching an individual to speak, write and think in an unfamiliar language amounts to killing his initiative, creativity, capability and indeed, would only lead to stunted academic growth. Language based development is a series of ongoing planned actions that the language of a society will continue to serve their changing social, cultural, political economic, and spiritual needs and goals. (UNESCO-Bangkok and SIL, 2009). If India, a more polarized nation than Nigeria, having 14 major languages of instruction (11 of which are regional, 2 non-regional and 1 foreign), and having 8 of her languages in use as media of instruction in her universities, now is the time for Nigeria to rise up to the situation. The use of mother-tongues as media of instruction should not be limited to monolingual communities as it is being recommended in the Harmonized National Policy on Education (2007). Children in the urban schools should be privileged to receive basic education in their mother tongues. Special schools based on the major languages could be

established in urban centres. No investment is too much to give the right education to the Nigerian child.

Curricula at all levels of education should include mastery of a Nigerian language. If Master Degree Students in the United States of America are encouraged to study an African Language (among which we have Igbo, Hausa, and Yoruba) along with their course(s) of interest, what stops us from ensuring that Nigerians, no matter their courses of interest are made to be proficient in their mother tongues or a language of wider communication (LWC).

To tackle the problem of de-accreditation of courses in Nigerian Universities is to tackle the problem of producing half-baked graduates which has been caused by inadequate human and material resources. According to Okebukola (1997) and (1998), we could meet the challenge of facility handicap by being more resourceful making effort to produce locally made equipment, improvising materials, and getting the assistance of Parents, Teachers Association for basic materials needed in schools.

Conclusion

Rescuing the educational system from total collapse is a task for all stakeholders in the educational industry. Our citadel of intellectualism should not be allowed to decay, rather, it should be experiencing improvement regularly (Yoloye, 2004). The role of language as a critical instrument in teaching – learning activities is no longer in doubt. It is therefore expedient that language teachers are effectively prepared in order to ensure effective language teaching and learning in all our schools. For Nigeria to adequately achieve the much desired vision of being one of the first twenty (20) industrialized nations by the year 2020, particular attention should be given to the issue of teacher-preparation as well as a more viable language in education policy.

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