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LANGUAGE AND EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

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ABSTRACT

This paper discusses the proper use of English language in relation to education which will be a good option for making people conscious of themselves with skills, competencies, moral values , and reasoned judgment to effectively live, interact, interretate and contribute positively to the development of the nation, in order to pursue the comMon goals of selfactualization for better citizenry in achieving national development. In order to achieve this, the knowledge of English language should be acquired by every individual for national development. There should be more focus on English language development and teaching through research activities at tertiary institutions. Finally, education should be given high priority in the country throughfunding.

KEYWORDS: Language, Education, National development

INTRODUCTION

English language is a pipe through which vital information about nation building, knowledge, values and progress are transmitted and communicated. Language is essentially inseparable from a nation's developmental destiny. Great nations that have excelled in frelds of human endeavour are built not merely by technological prowess, but by the combination of right values, attitudes and the commitment of the people to the promotion of national interest (Auwalu, 2018). Thus, a nation that desires genuine development requires active, informed and responsible ci'=_:'uy

who are willing to take responsibility for themselves and contribute meaningfully to developmental processes. Education is the vehicle that systematically inculcates the ingredients that form the spring board to national development. And at the heart of any sustainable development are virtues like patriotism, integrity, social solidarity, discipline, respect for constituted authority. For the citizens to appreciate and understand, practicalize or demonstrate these virtues, a clear and unambiguous language must be employed as a medium ofinculcating them (Onyemenam, 2015). Therefore, this paper attempts to establish the relationship between English language and education and how they can enhance national development.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Language and Education

English language is seen from different perspectives by different scholars but for the purpose of this paper, only a few that are related to the topic will be defined. Kofa (2006) defined language as a fundamental process of expressing, transmitting and communicating ideas, values, or skills from one person to another. This definition goes hand in hand with the one conceptualized by Encyclopedia Britannica (1987) which sees language as a system of conventional spoken or written symbol by means of which human beings are members of a social group and participate in its culture. Therefore, culture and by extension language, is what distinguishes man from other animals because the content of culture cannot be generally transmitted without a linguistic medium. In Nigeria, English language is taught as a subject as well as used in transmitting knowledge which begets change through the education of citizens. Brumfit (2004) pointed out that English language is no longer the exclusive property

of speakers of English as a mother tongue or first language; English language has become a global language.

Afolabi and Loto (2012) state that a developed or educated country is one that has enough manpower and each person occupies his or her rightful positibn to enhance the growth of the society. To support this, Ajayi and Afolabi (2009) femarked that education is perceived in Nigeria as an indispensable tool which will not only assist in meeting the nation's social, political, moral, cultural and economic aspirations but will also inculcate in the individual knowledge, skills, character and desirable values that will foster national development. From the definition of education given, it is clear that education trains an individual to be useful in the society and to meet the need ofthe society for national development.

Orji and Job (2013) looked at education largely as knowledge, skills, and values given to an individual or group of learners with a view to making them functional and responsible individuals, capable of contributing to the socio-economic, political and

cultural development of the state. They also view that education is the process of imparting knowledge, virtues, norms, values, attitudes and acceptable manner of conduct and behaviour to the citizens of a state or nation aimed at national development.

National Aspirations and Goal of Education

Education is the process of learning and training; instruction as imparted in schools, colleges and universities; a course of instruction; the theory and practice of teaching. The philosophy of education is derived from the National Policy on Education based on the general aspirations of Nigeria as contained in Section 1, Paragraph 1 of the National Policy on Education (2004), thus:

A free and democratic society,
Ajust and egalitarian society,
Aunited, strong and self-reliant nation,
A great and dynamic economy,
A land of bright and full of opportunities for all citizens.

The goals of education are in turn derived from these statements:

Respect for the worth and dignity ofthe individual,
Faith in man's ability to make national decisions,
Moral and spiritual values in interpersonal and human relations
Respect for the dignity of labour and promotion of the emotional, physical and psychological health of all children,
Shared responsibility for the common good of society
The inculcation ofnational consciousness and national unity.
The inculcation of the right type of values and attitudes for the survival of the individual and the Nigerian society.
Training of mind in the understanding of the world around and the acquisition of appropriate skills, abilities and competencies both mental and physical as equipment for the individual to live in and contribute to the development of his society.

The Relationship between Language and Education in Nigeria

The role played by English language in Nigeria can be viewed from several aspects. One of these aspects is its relevance in child upbringing and the skills the child will acquire during this early age. The second relevance is in political education of Nigerians. Political education of the citizens of a country is of crucial importance in politics. In areas of human endeavour, handling politics successfully requires some skills. Handling political issues and people effectively by a politician entails possessing high level of political skills. Therefore, English language is an ii,, a,,, ,_nt

3edium through which politicians require political awareness from both books and -be speeches of more experienced personalities. Furthermore, a politician who is **R**-eII versed in English language can easily win support from his listeners through the .ray he manipulates the language (Tompkins, 2014).

English is the major language through which most of the courses of study are taught md studied in the country's educational institutions. Similarly, majority of textbooks on education are written in English.

Tbc place of language in the thinking of an individual should not be ignored when considering the role of language in studying the values, norms, politics and skills which aim at promoting responsible minded behaviour for national development. It also encourages dialogue between participants and facilitators. Thus, children learn from, and educate each other. This type of education enables people to make their own decision and also take responsibility for their own lives and that of their country. Since Nigerian citizens contribute to the overall aims of national development, they should be successful literates so as to build confidence that will empower them to make positive contributions to the development of their nation at large. Language enhances people's ability to think. It is creative power, a means through which humans do most of their thinking. Dearden (2015) emphasizes that we can scarcely think at all without using words. Even if we do not speak, we are constantly using words in our heads to help us to think.

The Role of Language in National Development

The educational system of any nation is expected to produce citizens who are equipped with proper values for participation in societal development. Language, therefore, is an indispensable tool in national development. National development in its wider conception emphasizes full realization of human potentials and maximum utilization of the nation's resources for the benefit of all citizens. It is a situation where people utilize the resources within their reach in order to achieve meaningful development. Bamgbose (1981) pointed out that national development is usually described in terms of economic growth, attainment of economic targets, growth rate, increase in gross national product (GNP), rise in per capita income, etc. In a similar view, Emmanuel (2009) sees national development as the growth of the nation in terms of education, economic well-being, mass participation in governance, among others

Both definitions rest on economic growth, educational advancement, fundamental human rights, political awareness and full participation in government. These are achieved through effective use of language for efficient communication and

development. National development thus, emphasises full realization of human potentials and maximum utilization of the nation's resources for the benefit of all i,itizens. Bamidele (1999) confirms that "language plays an important role in promoting national development; it also fosters understanding, unity and sense of
belonging among the members of the different ethnic and social groups that
constrtute a natron.

Issues Hindering the Ideals of Education in Nigeria

The first and perhaps the greatest challenge facing Nigeria and stifling good quality education that is capable of bringing about sustainable development is inadequate funding by the federal, state, and local governments to the extent that funding is now subject to conditionalities imposed by international financial institutions (Obafemi, 2018)

The conflict between the federal, state and local governments in the management of education at various levels is also one of the prominent problems of educational development in Nigeria. For example, the control of primary education is neither fully in the hand of the federal government, nor state or local government. This is a great barrier for effective educational develbpment at the basic level.

Another problem is the politicization of education. Today, many educational institutions are opened and run in many states on political grounds. Also in Nigerian schools today, admissions into tertiary institutions are sometimes guided by politicians and not academic performance. Parents too use their political offices or influences for the education of their children.

One other sensitive issue that cripples the development of education is the issue of unqualified teachers as evident in the case of Kaduna State in 2017. Most teachers proved themselves incompetent by failing the aptitude test administered to them.

One wonders how and what these teachers teach their pupils or students. Certainly, one cannot give what he or she does not have. This is also capable of affecting national growth and stunting sustainable development.

Another factor that hinders development of education today is indiscipline. This is manifested in examination malpractices, secret cult menace, corruption and so on. Crises in schools today has led to "brain-drain" as students of today are no longer interested in academic excellence but 'when would I pass out from the school'.

Poor parenting/guidance is another problem as many parents/guardians lack care9
protection and guidance. As such, there is no adequate provision of basic needs for

eea children or wards to meet the challenges of life in accordance with the laws of ae land. Many parents and guardians have brought innovations that are paving ways for examination malpractices in order to brighten the chances of their children/wards a qualifying examinations. Investigations have revealed that some examination centres exist in Nigeria where parents and guardians pay money to qualify their children and wards to pass SSCE, WAEC, NECO and JAMB.

C)kam (2002) disclosed that one of the issues confronting Nigeria as a young democracy relates to the issue of achieving a g'teater measure of national unity, peace and integration amongst the various national:groups that constitutethe society. There are barriers between groups and classeg within the Nigerian society as a result of birth, occupation, language, race and religion; there are also barriers between the schooled and the unschooled. Consequently, Nigeria is faced with the task of breaking down these barriers and increasing the opportunities for individuals and groups to benefit from social opportunities which may be available to them.

Klineberg and Zavalloni (1968) found that there prevails a low level of national identity amongst Nigerians generally. In their comparative study of political orientation amongst students in ten African countries including Nigeria, Klineberg and Zavalloni found ethnic identity, rather than national, to be highest amongst Nigerian students. They reflected in their finding that Nigerian students showed the highest frequency of tribal and regional membership as identity attributes; a very large proportion agreeing that traditional authority and tribal structure may be useful to progress, and almost a unanimous perception of inter-groub tension within Nigeria as constituting a serious problem. The reflection in the foregoing considerations is a demonstration of negative citizenship. It is very unlikely that this perspective will be conducive for producing effective Nigerian citizenship and for forging a cohesive society that will support the notion of peace and development. There is need, therefore, for value re-orientation in Nigeria in order to generate a conducive basis for sustainable socio-economic and political development in the country.

CONCLUSION

Considering the discussion in this paper, one is able to believe that language and education remain supreme tools for national development and should be given a vital place in the nation's development agenda. This is because great nations are built not merely on economic resources and technological advancement, but on the combination of the right values, the right attitudes and the commitment of the people to the promotion of the national interest which is only feasible through the medium of English language as a global language.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the preceding discussion, the following recommendations were made:

1. The knowledge of English language and education should be acquired by every individual for national development.
2. Government should evolve policies that will facilitate the pooling together of the shared and diverse resources of ethnic identities.
3. There should be more focus on English language development and teaching through research activities in tertiary institutions.
4. Education should be given high priority in the country through funding.
5. Government should recognize the rich resources of indigenous language which serves as native languages of communities in national development.
6. Adequate teacher education and training with adequate provision of resources and re-introducing of teacher colleges should be done.
7. Admission of students into schools should be based on merit not political grounds.
8. There should be proper governance of schools and implementation of schools management committees.

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