

The Roles of Language and Communication in Transforming and Sustaining National Development in Nigeria

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Abstract

The objective of this paper is to assess the roles of language and communication in transforming and sustaining national development in Nigeria. There is the need to educate the people on how to use language and communication skills to achieve peace. An attempt is also made to highlight the objectives of language and communication skills, the processes involved and the channels to use in communicating. The paper finally suggests ways forward. The issue of education and development cannot be discussed successfully without the language which serves as the medium of instruction. Any literate Nigerian must, of necessity not only be able to read and write in English language but also communicate effectively with it. Most of the school subjects provide the learner with information and experience of things and the world around him that promote his intellectual and mental development. Without a proper vocabulary to convey the thoughts, this will not be feasible. A look at the Nigerian society will show that a large percentage Nigerians occupying important positions of authority are literate. Appointments into government services, political positions and in recently traditional positions consider literacy as a prerequisite. Added to this is the realization that promotions and the ability to advance your career through national and international interaction and communication is tied to your education and in particular your ability to express yourself in good English.

Keywords: Sustainability National Development, communication, language, transformation, mental development,

INTRODUCTION

The tremendous success recorded by the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) scheme introduced in 1973 by the Federal Government cannot be ignored. The success of the scheme is largely due to the use of English as a language of national communication, cooperation and understanding. At the NYSC camp in each state, youths from different linguistic background congregate yearly to undergo a one-year national service. Without the English language performing the role of communication - bridge, the achievement of the scheme would have been a mirage. In a nation like Nigeria, where more than 500 languages are spoken, having a common language is crucial for promoting communication and understanding between individuals from all ethnic backgrounds. In addition to being a language for communication, English also represents national cohesion, fostering friendship and cross-cultural understanding. Proficiency in a single language guarantees harmonic collaboration among participants, promoting national progress and constructing a more robust and unified Nigeria.

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IMPORTANCE OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE IN NIGERIA'S DEVELOPMENT

Olusoji (2012) defined national development as the least amount of socio-political and economic development necessary to establish a sense of national identity [1]. A nation's growth is

determined by its capacity to enhance the social welfare of its citizens through the provision of social amenities such as clean water, decent roads, high-quality education, and easy access to medical facilities. The foundation of all development is education. Without the language used to convey ideas, education cannot be discussed. Nigeria uses English as its primary medium of education, which has significantly accelerated the nation's development. There is no denying that Nigeria has profited much from the usage of the English language to further national development.

Based on current data regarding human development throughout all domains, technical progress, social amenities offered, etc., Nigeria can undoubtedly claim more success in relation to her adoption of English as a second language.

Social Development

Nigeria has advanced from the era of town criers to the newest global communication devices. Information technology contributes to social progress by ensuring easy access to the global community and enhancing human comfort. This beneficial aspect provided by the influence of science and technology is encapsulated in the statement made by Matluck et al. (1998) that "there is real communication of massive databases we can be, in principle anywhere in the world and connect to databases that are traditionally preserved in Paris or in Oxford or Washington; there is easy knowledge transfer now in qualities and speeds unimaginable in the past "[2].

These days, information spreads quickly through a variety of outlets, including the internet, television, radio, compact disc, phone, and print media. You can sit in your room and connect with everyone on the planet. Despite their high cost, these communication devices have made the world a smaller village. These days, large crowds don't need to congregate in one spot to see a major event. All you have to do is take a seat in your room and watch events unfold live throughout the globe. The understanding of the common language, English, facilitates the use of such a device.

Political Development

If English had not been used as a medium of communication, Nigerian politics would have operated in a different manner. In Nigeria, door-to-door and open-rally campaigns are among the political activities. Without English language it would have been quite difficult if not totally impossible to address political audience at different rallies. The language made it possible and easy for the Head of State to address the people of the country once. This alone has contributed a lot to the existing unity in the country. The houses of assembly, representatives, the senate, judiciary and all other bodies in the nation find it easy to interact and communicate in English language.

Economic Development

One of Nigeria's primary revenue streams is oil production. English is the primary language of national communication in Nigeria, where people trade and conduct other business operations. This makes Nigerian business ventures successful. Peace and togetherness will be hard to come by without English. Smooth business dealings and harmonious coexistence are facilitated by a common language.

Education is another significant area of achievement; Nigerians can pursue their education anywhere in the nation, regardless of their ethnic origin. The same goes for the teaching who could also choose to teach in any part of the country without fear of language hindrance.

Sustainable National Development

"Constant and appreciable amelioration of economic, social, technological, political, and cultural aspects of life of a people" [3,4]. Although some authors view the idea of sustainable national development as an economic one, there is a strong belief that other indicators, such as unity, education, widespread participation in government activities, and upholding law and order, equally have tangible roles to play in promoting the industrial state of the nation. It is undeniable that a country or state needs

to maintain the indices mentioned above in order to have a significant and sustainable national development, even in the face of a thriving economy. Thus, overall financial stability as well as citizen education and participation in activities that support the nation's economy constitute sustainable national development. All of these factors, both overtly and secretly, contribute to the formation of any nation.

LANGUAGE AND COMMUNICATION: THEIR INTERWOVEN ROLES IN NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Elegbe (2017) states that "communication is an interaction process between one person, group and the other". He further says that every establishment needs an efficient communication system which will enable it to interact with its employees [5]. This acquaints the employees with the happenings in the organization and affords them the opportunity to express their feelings and make contributions to the progress of the organization. Misunderstanding and conflict he says are the results of bad communication system of any establishment.

Everett (2005) asserts that one of the main traits that distinguishes humans from other animals is language. He goes on to add that language serves as a conduit for people to express their desires and emotions to one another [6]. This communication, which largely depends on the power of speech. This plays a crucial role in the daily lives of human being. He further says that it is the bedrock of all kinds of associations, interaction and relationship.

Akmajian et al. (2017) says that "language, broadly speaking, is one of the most effective means of communication without which we cannot live a civilized life". He says, further that unless we communicate with our fellow people properly, we can never be successful in society [7].

According to Rwantabagu (2015), "language is closely related to human emotions and behavior; it is associated with identity, nation, and religion" [8]. It is used for worth, worship and play by everyone". Nigeria is a multilingual country made up of more than 500 nationalities. One way to define multilingualism is the phenomenon of a single speaker of two or more languages [9]. The important functions that language plays in society are what make it an intriguing development component. Language is unique to cultures, which is one of its key characteristics, because each language has a unique arrangement for arranging signs to convey meaning to its speakers, each language differs from the others systematically. Every language serves as a useful instrument for encoding the quirks of the unique environment that each speaker speaks.

Process of Communication

The process of communication involves the following elements:

The Sender: This is the person who encoded his idea or experience into a code and then transmits the code or the information to another person whom he wants

Communicate

The Message: This is the encoded idea, the expression or information (contents) which the sender passes onto the person he/she wants to communicate with.

The Channel: Channel is the network and avenue through which the message(s) flows. If it is a telephone call, the channel will be through the air. If it is through the post office, the message goes by road or by aeroplane and if it's by ship it goes by water.

Medium: The medium of communication has to do with the way by which the message is sent. It could be either an oral or written message. It could be through the means of bulletins, letters, memo, etc. and if it is oral, it could be either through the telephone, face to face discussion, gestures signs etc.

The Receiver: The final and most crucial party in the communication process is the message's recipient. A message is believed not to have been complete until the information gets to its destination,

and it is reacted to. The receiver of the message has different perceptions over the message(s) he received due to the way such message is communicated.

Forms of Communication

Formal Communication: This is the type of communication through an already known and designed media, methods and mode whether oral or written, used by an organization formally. The formal communication system of any establishment is usually known openly and recognized by everyone in that set up. Every official communication flows downwards, upwards and horizontally and it form the basis of any official instructions and actions by the group.

Informal Communication: This kind of communication results from data created and obtained from the unofficial groups that exist inside an organization. Informal group is made up of employees of an organization with common characteristics and interest. They usually operate on gossips and secondary sources of information. Despite the fact that informal communication is not official, it is a very powerful source of information for workers or employees of an organization. If informal communication is well channeled and encouraged it could be formalized and be converted to formed communication. Workers should be encouraged to air their views and express their opinions especially on issues that affect their condition of service.

Oral/Verbal Communication: This kind of communication is a discussion between two or more people could be done by face to face or central discussion or through the use of some communication gadgets such as wireless systems that has made the world to be a global village.

Non-Verbal Communication: This type of communication shows up as body language, gestures, signs, actions, objects, positives, and clothing, among other things. It is a process whereby neither direct use of the tongue nor written message is employed in the transfer of information from one person to another.

The Importance of Communication

Communication plays important roles in a civilized society through various means thus:

- Through communication the goals, aims and objectives of an establishment are achieved.
- Managers use the information gathered through communication to plan ahead and coordinate the affairs/activities of their organization for the benefit of the entire workers.
- Motivation and supervision are better done when all the necessary data and information are available to every functionary of an organization.
- Misunderstanding, conflict and stress are reduced to a bare minimum when there is an effective communication system in an establishment.
- Communication assists in developing plans for the achievement of social goals.

WHAT IS EDUCATION?

"In the broadest sense, education is any experience or action that shapes a person's personality, intelligence, or physical abilities. Technically speaking, education is the process by which society intentionally transmits its learned knowledge, abilities, and values from one generation to the next". Seven fundamental objectives of traditional African education are outlined as:

- a. To develop the child's dormant motor skills.
- b. To develop one's character.
- c. to inculcate respect for power brokers and senior citizens.
- d. To develop mental abilities
- e. To develop a favorable attitude toward hard work and acquire specialized training in the industry.
- f. To take an active role in family and community affairs and to better integrate into society.
- g. To acknowledge, cherish, and preserve the entire cultural heritage of the community. He continues by saying that every community, no matter how sophisticated or simple, has its own

system for training and educating its youth, and that education for a happy life has always been a top concern for men.

Transform according to Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English is "to completely change the appearance, form, or character of something, someone, especially in a way that improves it". Within the context of organizations, transformation is a process of significant and drastic change that reorients an organization and elevates it to a completely new degree of effectiveness. It suggests a fundamental shift in personality and little to no similarity to the previous arrangement or framework. "Language could be conceptualized as the system of sound and words through which man gets his ideas and messages across to his neighbors and other members of the human community with whom he has to interact continuously for his personal survival and development".

It goes without saying that language must be used in order to successfully conceptualize and carry out the desired transformation of the socio-cultural, political, educational, and economic systems of the society if development entails these systems' transformation and language is seen as a repository and a tool for the expression and communication of these very socio-cultural, political, educational, and economic belief systems of the society. Considering, we can consider language to be a granary, a storehouse of the speakers' worldviews. It is each society's own cultural, political, economic, and technological feature. We do observe, in this way, that the most comprehensible and intelligent responses to novel concepts and innovations in technology are validated by the language that speakers use.

LANGUAGE AND THE STRUCTURE OF EDUCATION IN NIGERIA

The optimal language strategy, in our opinion, is one that facilitates communication between participants in the conversation at each of these levels as well as between each proximate level in a multilingual setup. In written and verbal communication, the most appropriate language must be utilized. Development communication, according to Ferguson (2009), is any form of communication between participants intended to promote long-term sociocultural change [10]. When we talk about the most appropriate language, we mean the one in which the vast majority of participants in any given discourse are fully proficient communicators.

Language is the exclusive means of communication for professionals who support the development of the country, including teachers, legislators, attorneys, and even the president and other public officials [11]. Given this, educators play a crucial role in the growth of the country. He went on to say that language needs to be used in order for a country's development to be effective. claiming that Nigerian society cannot experience the necessary progress without the assistance of language teachers. Generally speaking, teachers prepare Nigeria's labor force. They provide the fundamental instruments for communication to kids. This clarifies the claim that people who master the necessary languages as a tool to enable them to read information on their own are the product of language teachers' efforts. Given the dynamic nature of language and its significance for national development, we must be aware that language engineering, teaching, and planning require reasonable effort and take time to produce desired results. As such, political manipulation should not be allowed to influence language policy. strict about the requirement to acknowledge a true policy on language as an essential instrument for national development.

CONCLUSION

This paper discusses the roles of language and communication plays in transforming and sustaining national development in Nigeria. Nigeria's multifaceted nature has led to her sharing a fair portion of the political, economic, and social stability of the world. Because Nigerians are polyglots who speak both their home tongue and any other interethnic language as well as English as a lingua franca, it is evident that Nigerian society is truly multilingual. In general, a sizable portion of the population speaks Nigerian, which is a naturally dynamic language.

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