

Indigenous Language As A Way Of Communication For Technological Development In Nigeria: Yoruba Language As An Example

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Abstract

Communication in science and technology is very important in overcoming the problems' of under development in any nation. Teachers have- not interacted effectively with the learners before, the latter can internalize the content and have a change of attitude and thereby imbibe the required skills in technology, it is then there can be breakthrough in science and technological development. Communication may be verbal or non-verbal. Verbal communication is oral, while non-verbal is concerned with other means other than oral and this may be affected by laboratory equipment, apparatus and wares, instructional materials of various kinds including instructional media. Attention had been drawn to the depth of materials for non-verbal communication and the heavy reliance on verbal communication in science teaching classroom. The recommendations are-made that there should be provision of concise and comprehensive text on science and technological terms in Yoruba language to enable the learners understand the topics taught better.

Introduction

Nigerian languages can be used for the development of science and technology if people concerned can work toward this. It appears that not every language can meaningfully contribute to the on-going crusade for scientific and technological advancement. Many are yet to meet some vital criteria needed to do this, such as the ability for a language to be used for pedagogical purposes.

This paper examines the contribution of language to science and technological advancement as the ability of the language to facilitate the ways for science and technological thinking in it. Thus, it is pertinent to note that mere translation of science and technological forms and concepts into a given

language does not constitute science and technological advancement. Nigerian languages can be divided into two for the purpose of this paper. These are contributory and non-contributory languages. Contributory languages are the languages that have been reduced to writing and are fully used in schools. Among these languages are Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba. While non-contributory languages are the ones that are yet to be reduced into writing.

The whole enterprise of scientific and technological advancement resolves around the ability to think scientifically. Language as a vehicle of thought (communication) may or may not provide a medium to such scientific thinking depending on the level of the literary development of the language. Thus, it is difficult for any language that has not attained the pedagogical status to reach the level of maturity needed for scientific thinking. The sole aim of teaching any Nigerian language at any level of education is not just to ensure proficiency in all its ramification more importantly, it is to develop in the learners the ability to think in that language. A major task before Nigerian language teachers is therefore to ensure that students acquire the necessary skills in a language that will actually enable them think in that language. Furthermore, it must be pointed out that developing any one language required status of being a medium for 'science and technological - development should be joint effort of between the science teachers and indigenous language teachers. Science and technology teachers as well as those involved in pursuit of science and technology education ought to help in the translations of science and technological terms and concepts.

Concept of Language

According to Collins Dictionary Online (2019), a language is a system of communication which consists of set of sounds and written symbols which are used by the people of a particular country or region for

talking of writing.

Language is a human social phenomenon utilized by people in their everyday life. People often wrongly perceive the term in an abstract way, while much of our understanding of reality is dependent on language. Language determines our model of the world and the way in which we represent the world. Therefore, language is a medium of communication which involves one's ability to listen carefully so as to grasp the meaning and respond in turn with apt words and clarity of pronunciation (Abdulhakim, 2015).

According to Encyclopedia Britannica Online (2019), language is a system of conventional spoken, manual or written symbols by means of which human beings, as members of a social group and participants in its culture. The functions of language include the following: communication, the expression of identity, play, imaginative expression and emotional release.

Language and Technological Development

Adaku (2015) explained that a person cannot talk of national growth and technological development without language^ This is why he emphasizes that:

If you imagine today the power of language as a sole vehicle of ethnic identity, in a multi-lingual country like Nigeria, it will become obvious that language is central to national growth and technological development.. The question continues to linger as to which language to adopt in order to propel our nationhood and motivate our citizenship towards developments.

The above citation implies that there are inter-relationship between language and science and technological advancement in a country

Concepts and Importance of Indigenous Language (Yoruba)

Language one International Organization (2019) explains that, the word "indigenous" comes from Latin word "*indigene*" which means a native.

Therefore indigenous language is. a local means of communication between members of people of community. The indigenous language has some importance because of its use to the speakers of the language of the immediate community. Among the importance of the indigenous language are as follows:

- 1) Indigenous-language (Yoruba)'brought enormous advantages such as access to knowledge, creativity and entertainment of the entire western world, as well as global trade and commerce.
- 2) It enables the child to give expression to the cultural and intellectual peculiarities of the worlds.
- 3) Cognitive and affective development occurs more effectively in a language that the learner knows well.
- 4) Adequate knowledge of indigenous language improves learning in general (including second language learning).
- 5) It helps the child values its culture and heritage, which contributes to a positive self-concept.
- 6) It enhances the language proficiency which will serve as a variable for school subjects.
- 7) It strengthens the foundation for language learning in a broader sense.
- 8) It allows for better communication and a closer bond with family and friends in country of origin.

Meaning of Communication

According to Gutierrez (2019), communication is a Latin word which means "to share". It is the sharing of information between different individuals. It includes the sharing of ideas, concepts, imaginations, behaviours and written contents. Communication is simply defined as the transfer of information from one place to another. This transfer of information can be conducted in different ways. Communication constantly exchange information, meaning people

always seem to be either receiving or giving information. (Arkansas, 2019).
.Communication is a simple process yet showing complexity in some aspects.
Different ways of communication and the distances over which one ;s required to transfer the information make the process-complicated.

Also, Atolagbe (2004) defines communication as two-way' process, involving an encoder (i.e. speaker/source) and a decoder (i.e. a listener/receiver) through whom language is used to pass across some message (e.g. information, idea, expression of a need etc.) and some response elicited, whether positive or negative, such that messages are exchanged between communicants along the line, and interaction takes place.

Types of Communication

When communication occurs, it typically happens in one of the three ways: verbal, nonverbal and visual. Each of the three main types of communication is discussed as follows:

- 1) **Verbal Communication:** This seems like the most obvious of the different types of communication. It utilizes the spoken word, either face-to-face or remotely. Verbal communication is essential to most interactions, but there are other nonverbal cues that help provide additional context to the words themselves. Pairing nonverbal communication with the spoken word provides a more nuanced message.
- 2) **Non-verbal Communication:** This provides some insight into a speaker's word choice. Sarcasm, complacency, deception or genuineness; occurs within nonverbal communication. These things are-often communicated through facial expressions, hand gestures, posture and even appearance, all of which can covey something about the speaker. For instance, a disheveled speaker with wrinkled clothes and poor posture would communicate lack of confidence or expertise. A speaker with a nice suit,

who stood up straight and spoke clearly, may appear more serious or knowledgeable.

- 3) Visual Communication: This type of communication includes signs, maps or drawings as well as colour or graphic design. These typically reinforce verbal communication, and they help to make a point. Visual aids can help a speaker remember important topics, give the audience something to look at, and generally help convey the message being presented.

Yoruba language as a Medium of Science and Technological Advancement: The Journey so far

As Yoruba language making efforts to take over as medium of science and technology, scholars and government have made some tremendous attempts with much success. As far back as 1953, the then Western government set up two committees to look into grammatical and scientific technology in Yoruba (Bamgbose 1969:96 - 97) we can also mention the efforts of Delano (1956), NERDC and Bamgbose (1984) and Adamolekun (1991) among others.

Besides, there are many publications on the subject such as Afolayan's 3 volumes of a vocabulary of primary science and mathematics in nine Nigerian languages and Awobuluyi's "Guide Book for Creating Metalinguistic Term of African Languages". In addition, there are scores of research findings (completed or in progress) to produce more highly relevant materials in Modern Technology and Science Development with Yoruba as medium.

The Roles of Yoruba language in Science and Technological Development

Jegede (2010) explains that Yoruba that Yoruba language is very useful in many disciplines. These include medicine, diagnostics method, engineering, arts and crafts etc,

- (a) **Medicine:** In the generic sense, medicine is well-structured socio-political institution which comprises elaborate methods of healing and-disease management. The Ifa priest "babalawo" uses' Ifa divination in Yoruba language which utilizes herbs, incantations and rituals for curative system. It is Ifa divination in Yoruba that will be consulted to know the type of herbs to be given to the clients which serves as science and technology in Yoruba.
- (b) **Diagnostics Measures:** Diagnostic means if a person is sick, the doctor asks the patients to conduct series of tests in the laboratory to know what happens to him/her which is a part of science. The same thing occurs to Ifa priest who uses Ifa divination by contacting Orunmila in ;order to know the problems and the solution of the client. The Ifa priest will use Yoruba language to communicate with Orunmila and the client. Also, it is scientific in Yoruba when Ifa priests play a consultative role in the process of choosing a king through divination. Furthermore. Easily diagnosable diseases such as yellow fever, malaria cholera and other illnesses which are considered natural in their origins, did not require divination, since incantations, herbal preparations or ritual could be prescribed immediately, especially in cases of emergency,
- (c) **Engineering:** When we are talking about engineering as a discipline in Yoruba, it means an act of working with metals, .wires and so on to produce what can be used for human working tools and enjoyment. A typical example of an engineer is the blacksmith. A blacksmith puts a metal in the fire made with hard covers removed from the palm fronds. When the metal becomes red, he starts hammering it in order to mould it with his intentions. A blacksmith can moulds an hoe, cutlass, axe etc. All the above mentioned tools are used in farming and serve as a source of

income for the blacksmith. ..

Recommendations

In view of this paper, the following recommendations are made:

- (i) There should be provision of concise and comprehensive text on science and technological terms in Yoruba language,
- (ii) The Yoruba language teachers and research centres should join hands together to produce technical terms known to them in Yoruba language.
- (iii) The newly proposed language policy should stipulate the use of Yoruba language in teaching science subject in south-western part of Nigeria.

Conclusion

Attempts have been made in this paper to discuss the role of indigenous language in science and technology, if the above recommendations are put into consideration, there will be promotion of scientific and technological advancement in Nigeria at large. These efforts intend to mobilize all the stakeholders involved in the task to contribute towards the great task ahead.

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