

INDIGENOUS LANGUAGES AND CULTURE FOR FUNCTIONAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION: A NECESSITY FOR THE ATTAINMENT OF VISION 20:2020 IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

The importance of language in entrepreneurial education cannot be overemphasised as it provides us with the opportunity to be well equipped; and the goals of wealth creation, employment generation, poverty reduction, and value re-orientation can be effectively pursued, attained, and sustained only through an efficient, relevant and functional education system. Since, not much, if any form of knowledge can be acquired without a good linguistic base, it is against this background that this study is set to explore the place of indigenous languages and culture for functional entrepreneurship education as a necessary tool for attaining the objectives of the vision 2020 of the federal government. The paper also discusses the concept of vision 2020 as it relates to present nation's economy. The paper looks at the relationship between culture and indigenous languages and marries it with the acquisition of knowledge via entrepreneurial education in Nigeria. The paper concludes, that Indigenous languages should be mounted, enriched and taught so as to be the necessary tool of acquiring the knowledge that will elevate entrepreneurship education in Nigeria if Nigeria must attain its objectives of vision 2020

Introduction

The Vision 20:2020 initiative is to ensure that Nigeria becomes one of the twenty developed economies of the world come the year 2020. Education as the vital transformational tool and formidable instrument for socio-economic empowerment of individuals and the society at large. This means, that the goals of wealth creation, employment generation, poverty reduction, and value re-orientation can be effectively pursued, attained, and sustained only through an efficient, relevant and functional education system. The study appreciate the fact that the advent of the English language led to our acquisition of western education and our bedrock for national development and exposure to the outer world. These developments that accorded English language a prestigious position in Nigeria have placed a big question mark on Nigerian's independence and nationhood. It is against this background, that this study paper calls for the use of indigenous languages for sound entrepreneurial education, if Nigeria must attain its objectives of vision 20:2020. In other words, the use of indigenous languages for our educational system becomes a necessity if Nigeria must be join the league of top 20 economy in the world.

The concept of entrepreneurship depends on the state of mind of the investor and the variables that usually come into play: and these variables are: the environment, personalities attributes, capital and labour. According to Robert (1985)cited in Okechukwu(2009), entrepreneurship is a process of creating something different by devoting the necessary time and effort, assuming financial, psychological and social risk, and receiving the resulting rewards of monetary and personal satisfaction. Entrepreneurship could also be said too be a process that is dynamic in the creation and innovation of new values through time inference that centres on financial, psychological and sociological environment.

The importance of language in entrepreneurial education cannot be overemphasised as it provides the opportunity to be well equipped. Language is a veritable tool for the acquisition of knowledge. Not much, if any form of knowledge can be acquired without a good linguistic base. Language as a socio-cultural phenomenon that has serious implications not just because of its communicative role but also more importantly because of its place as an index of group identity. From foregoing therefore, one would see that language is an integral part of culture as it cannot be expunged from the culture of its users. Thus, we cannot trifle with such possession in our national identity (Onuigbo 1997:33). Indigenous languages should be mounted, enriched and taught as the necessary tool of acquiring the knowledge that will elevate entrepreneurship education in Nigeria.

Vision 20:2020

The Vision 2020 initiative is to ensure that Nigeria becomes one of the twenty developed economies of the world come the year 2020. According to the Nigeria former Minister of Finance, Okonjo- Iweala(2007)as cited in Momoh (2009) in a lecture titled “Nigeria20:2020: From Vision To Reality.” delivered at the matriculation ceremony of the Igbinedion University, Okada. She revealed the events that have led to the Vision 2020 initiative in Nigeria. According to Okonjo- Iweala that my motivation for today’s lecture is delivered from an interesting research work which was conducted by the leading US investment Bank Goldman Sachs. Economists at this American Bank reviewed the performance of the BRIC countries, namely Brazil, Russia, India, and China. The BIRCs are very important in global economy today... The researchers then went to pose an interesting question ;which other country can join the BRICs in becoming the leading global economies by the year2020?

From their prediction, many countries emerged excluding the already developed G7 and the BRICs. It is this favourable prediction that has enthused Nigeria to strive to ‘make it.’ This is the origin of the idea of vision 2020. Thus, this country has summed up the aspiration of being among the twenty largest economies by the year 2020.

In transforming this Vision 20:2020 into an enviable reality therefore, we need to put in place a sound and functional entrepreneurial education in Nigeria, to galvanize both the government of the day and the citizens who invariably, are the two parties to the anticipated success of realizing Vision 2020.

This a road map by which in year 2020, Nigeria will become one of the 20 largest economies in the world. This means that in the next ten years, Nigeria will be among the 20 most industrialized nation in the world.

Sound Entrepreneurship Education

Entrepreneurship is the willingness and ability of an individual to seek out investment opportunities, establish and run an enterprise successfully. Entrepreneurship is also seen as the ability to organise a business undertaking and assume the risks for the sake of profit. This is to say that, it is the ability and willingness of a person to initiate, control and direct the process of production of goods and services and bear the risks thereof. This is to say, an entrepreneur is one who undertakes the task. He is a person who takes the risk of starting and managing a business. An entrepreneur is one who bears the non insurable risks in his enterprise and it is he who directs the human and material resources in the business.

Although, education as a concept has attracted many definitions from researchers and educationists. Education according to Nigeria Teachers Institute (NTI),is the process of teaching ,

training, and learning in schools and colleges for the development of knowledge and skills so as to prepare individuals to live happily with themselves and others in the society where they live. Fafunwa (1974) saw education as the aggregate of all the processes through which a child develops abilities, attitudes and other forms of behaviour which are of positive value to society. This paper is focusing on a sound entrepreneurial education through the medium of indigenous languages as the best bet if Nigeria is to attain its objectives of vision 2020.

A sound entrepreneurship education is that type of education that paves ways for the growth and development of society through skill acquisition for the youths and the less privileged in the society. It provides youths with the opportunity to participate in modern scientific and technological advancement. It prepares Nigerian youths in a way that they can compete favourably in the global economy, (Abdulsalam, 2007). Entrepreneurship education being a tremendous force that can have a big impact on growth, recovery and societal progress by fuelling innovation, employment generation, and social empowerment is needed for a viable economy.

In the course of this work, the study discovered that entrepreneurship education as a programme of human capital requires for development is embedded with some approaches for following developmental tasks which include:

- i) The motivation and reinforcement of entrepreneurial traits and creating confidence in individuals to face the future.
- ii) The educational objectives of entrepreneurship which aimed at facilitating decision making process to set up new business ventures. This requires information service, business opportunity, guidance and project planning as educational inputs.
- iii) Enterprise management- the management objective is the successful and profitable operation of business enterprise. This involves teaching managerial techniques and counselling, (Ojukwu, 1999).

In the course of this research work, the study realised that a functional and sound entrepreneurship education holds key for raising people from poverty and unemployment to gainful employment and in starting their own businesses and employing others. Sound entrepreneurship education should be taught in all schools and colleges through the medium of indigenous languages. This will help in identifying many students with entrepreneurial traits and motivate them to organise their own business enterprise. Sound and functional entrepreneurship education through the medium of indigenous language will also enable the students to acquire knowledge and self confidence which would promote the perception of opportunities that is central to entrepreneurship ventures.

Indigenous Languages and Culture: Conceptualization

As earlier mentioned language is the most important vehicle through which the soul of man can be imprisoned. Language as a socio-cultural phenomenon, has serious implications not just because of its communicative role but also more importantly, because of its place as an index of group identity. Language is a veritable tool for the acquisition of knowledge. Not much, if any form of knowledge can be acquired without a good linguistic base. According to Afolayan (1982:174) citing Spir says: "Language is the means of identifying entities, categorising objects and concepts, perceiving ideas and things, grasping the abstract, the concrete as well as the super natural, and thinking of anything in whatever form". This means that language is a powerful tool irrespective of its status as indigenous language, foreign or minor. Bello and Ige (2006:16) cited in Balagbogbo (2007: 199), observed that every language is unique and important as every language is adequate for

its culture. Thus, this paper is focusing on the use of indigenous languages and culture for sound entrepreneurial education for the attainment of vision 20:2020.

From the foregoing therefore, one would see that language is an integral part of culture, as it cannot be expunged from the culture of its users. Thus we cannot trifle with such possession in our national identity (Onuigbo, 1997:33)

Language is the carrier of culture. Culture embodies those moral ethical and aesthetic values, the set of spiritual eye-glasses, through which people come to view themselves and their place in the universe (Ngugi Wa Thiang'O 1995), (Onoge 1985). In line with this, Owomoyela (1992:86) states as follows:

that there is a link between language and culture and that language is not primarily or exclusively a means of communication. On the contrary, it is a system of representation a means of sorting and manipulating the plethora of information that deluges us throughout our waking life.

Here, Owomoyela is saying that, culture has an intimate link to a particular language; take a language away from a culture, replace it with another, and that culture and its identity will be radically altered. This is also in consonance with Ngugi Wa Thing' (1995: 290) who opined that language carries culture, and culture carries a particularly orature and literature, the entire body of value by which we come to perceive ourselves and our place in the world. Language is thus inseparable from ourselves as a community of human beings with specific history, specific relationship to the world.

Indigenous Languages and Culture for Sound Entrepreneurial Education in Nigeria

As earlier stated, language is a necessity to the development of function entrepreneurial education in Nigeria; and culture is embedded in language. They contribute a lot to individual and societal development which are fundamental to viable entrepreneurship education. This is to say that, sound and functional entrepreneurial education can not be achieved without language (indigenous) and culture. This paper therefore focuses on how the role of culture and indigenous language can enhance a planned study of entrepreneurship education. In other words, we can not talk of sound entrepreneurial education without taking into consideration the language which is the object of communication. Entrepreneurial education on the other hand cannot take place without language and culture, and that is why we have language for the deaf and dumb and also for computer, (Buffer, 1990).

It has been discovered that language and culture are the major tool for national development and entrepreneurial education is *sine qua non* to national development. For instance, a child needs language to learn about his or her environment from his or her family members which is guided by a certain laid down principles otherwise known as culture in the form of norms. At a later stage, during the acquisition of formal education, language is employed by his or her teachers. Language is equally one of the disciplines (subject) a child is exposed to in the course of acquiring formal education. Culture also plays a role of uniting people with common beliefs and attitude, or at least in tolerance for certain beliefs, actions, values and culture which is the order of life that lie beyond the pale of state intervention, (Williams, 1962). Also, according to Bussman (1996), language is a vehicle for the expression or exchange of thought, concept, knowledge and information as well as the fixing and transmission of experience. This is to say, that language most obviously serves as a role in social control by providing a medium for telling people directly what to do.

Thus, the indigenous language will be more appropriate, because a thought is well expressed in the first language than in second or foreign language, hence the need for sound and functional entrepreneurship education through the means of indigenous language and culture. Indigenous languages also give room for expansion and growth of lexicon associated with technology which in turn, foster development within a shortest possible time. Indigenous language gives its users unique identity. This means that through the use of indigenous language and culture for functional entrepreneurship education, local products produced through local languages would cultivate a sense of pride in our local technologies. Above all, with the use of indigenous languages, the new world driven by trade and commerce is boosted.

This study discovered that, proficiency is gained and many functions are performed with the indigenous languages. The study also discovered that, countries that use indigenous languages as their national or official language perform better in education and technology. Countries like Japan and China achieved great feat in technology today because native language is used in whatever that was to be taught in schools. Even foreign students in those countries must learn the language for certain period of time before allowed to commence studies in their respective fields. Supporting this notion, Carrol (1998) says ‘...bilingual children lag behind monolingual children in various aspect of language.’ The above assertion suggests that a child with one language performs better than a child with two languages. This is to say that, a child that grows to know a language at home and school will surely perform better than a child who has acquired his native language and later exposed to a foreign language in school for few hours daily. Dada (2001) also supported this assertion by affirming that it is a dangerous thing for us to be educated in a foreign language which we speak so inaccurately.

Although, the role of indigenous language is not the same in all societies, but it often includes identification or marking of social categories, the maintenance, and manipulation of individual social relationships and networks, and various means of effecting social control. The fact is that there are no primitive languages. All languages are equally complex and equally capable of expressing any idea. The vocabulary of any language can be expanded to include new words for new concepts, and above all, all languages change through time.

Conclusion

As earlier mentioned the development of functional and sound entrepreneurial education in Nigeria depends upon the use of indigenous languages as the language of education. The study is mindful of the fact that, if the people are backward and illiterate, lack technical skills, knowledge and entrepreneurial activity, the physical resources in the country will tend to remain unutilized or even misused. This is exactly the case with Nigeria for which this discourse is focussed. This, in all ramification is solely due to lack of adequate basic education on the use of the indigenous languages for sound entrepreneurial education. It becomes mandatory if Nigerian must attain its vision 20:2020 agenda to focus on the use of indigenous language and culture.

In the same vain, indigenous language is suppose to be at the centre stage in the quest for the transformation as well as the passing of the information needed for the acquisition of the knowledge for developmental purposes in Nigeria. English, being the language of education as well as the official language of this country needs to be revised. In other words, the increasing relevance of the English language in our socio-economic development makes it a necessary instrument of operation within the framework of development. This is to say indigenous languages are supposed to be considered to have personal and societal relevance for Nigeria with its peculiar socio-cultural magnitude.

The paper concludes that, the desire for the attainment of Vision 20:2020 is anchored upon the use of indigenous languages for a sound and functional entrepreneurship education.

Recommendations

If Nigeria is to attain her dream of vision 2020:20 and solve the problem of poverty, we should pay good attention to culture and indigenous languages, and see them as agents of change; such that the peoples' aspirations and objectives are channeled in the direction that can promote development through a sound entrepreneurship education.

Government should establish the Indigenous Language Education Board to fully take charge of research, training and production of teachers, books and other instructional materials for the smooth teaching and learning of indigenous languages. Fund should also be made available and accessible to researchers in indigenous languages to enhance their research programme.

Nigeria's quest to be among the top 20 economies in world by 2020 cannot be achieved without policies in entrepreneurship education in the strategies that are channelled towards the attainment of vision 20:2020

There is also the need to prepare an indigenous language based curriculum for entrepreneurship development, should vary with the language of the environment where such institution is situated. This could be done by the Federal Ministry of Education in partnership with the NUC, NBTE and Colleges of Education Commission.

Finally, the indigenous languages should be at the centre stage of development by giving it a role to play, thereby encouraging their teaching and learning for proficiency needed for nation building. This is to say that, if the Vision 20:2020 would work, every state, local government council should, in partnership with the federal government, establish and fund functional entrepreneurship education.

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