

EFFECTIVE USE OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE IN SCHOOLS FOR RE-ENGINEERING EDUCATION FOR EMPLOYMENT AND SELF PRODUCTIVITY IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

Understanding the language of instruction in schools is the path to success in schools in particular and life at large. If the language of instruction is misunderstood by the pupils/students or if the teacher does not know how to communicate in the language of instruction, the end result will be a disaster. Therefore, it is mandatory for teachers in Nigerian schools to understand the rudiments of English language so as to produce positive effect and achieve the aims and objectives of being literate. This paper proffers solutions and offers recommendations towards effective teaching of English Language in schools.

Language is man's esteemed gift. It is language that distinguishes man from other creatures. It is the root of all creative thoughts. English language is Nigeria's *lingua franca* and as such, this language is the bedrock of all the educational results which need to be strongly recognized so as to build a strong and healthy society. In the editorial note of Aflacom Digest (2010) it says "... understanding the nature of language and how it works helps in knowing how to use it well just like the person with some knowledge of the working of a car is more likely to know how to use it better". From these words one can understand that language is an instrument of human development; it is through language that people become enlightened, civilized. Kida (2009) has this to say about language.

"When one speaks a particular language and a wrong meaning is received, it means the communication is not done properly. Many students do not understand their subject or discipline due to inability to understand the language of instruction, which is the language of communication".

That is why this paper tries to portray the importance of language in school setting in order to promote education for employment and self productivity because uneducated person cannot fill in the quota of the government's most essential sectors. In other words, high level of illiteracy will give raise to high level of unemployment and non-productivity. As Nigeria is a diverse country with multiple languages and traditions, English language is accepted as our *lingua franca* so as to unite people with the use of one common language to teach students from various cultural groups in one language.

Concept of Re-Engineering and Self Productivity

Re-engineering is re-focusing of an issue to serve the propose for which it is planned. It can be re-planning and inducing innovation. In education, re-engineering simply refers to putting education on a sound track to meet the emerging needs. It is a complete over hauling of the education process. Re-engineering is the reconstruction of the educational sector to meet up educational demands. It entails assessing and appraising the educational process in order to introduce reform.

Self productivity on the other hand, is a situation whereby an individual is trained to be functional to himself and to the society in general. In other words, it is an effort to make an individual to be self reliant and economically buoyant, so that he/she assists in moving the economy of a nation forward. It is an avenue for creating self employment and influencing the employment of other individuals. It is the participation of the individual in the economic activities of his society with the aim of utilizing the factors of production for national development.

Employment as a Concept

Anyale (1990) defined employment as a situation where people who fall within the ages of the working population, are capable and willing to work and obtain benefit for the work done.

Significance of Language Education in Teaching and Learning Process

Language in education is a very vital means towards advancement and empowerment ever envisioned in any society. According to Isma'il (1981) in Isa (2003) language is a tool for public mobilization for sustainable socio-political and economic development. It is language that aids the process of imparting knowledge, acquisition of skills, competence, transfer of values and attitudes. This is why there can be no teaching and learning without the use of language.

As mentioned earlier, in Nigeria, English language is the language of instructions in schools. If English language is used effectively it will help students to perceive correctly and start to create or put various ideas into practice that will lead to developing their vast capacities more effectively using potentials with which they were born. In other words, they will be qualified for various employment or become independent or self employed. Any one of the above mentioned is an agent of producing decent and healthy society. In the other words, without effective use of language of instruction in Nigeria, employment and self productivity will be a mirage in this country.

Kida (2009) has this to say about language and education:

“...Language is used as the instrument to bring the desired knowledge since it is the means of communication with which knowledge of any field can be imparted.” Knowledge of appropriate language in every field is necessary before any individual can succeed in undertaking any assignment. Education which is designed for fostering national unity as well as the basic rock for the development of a nation’s social life,

human resources, political awareness and economic empowerment can be possible through the use of language.

Concept of English Language Education

The curriculum of language education entails all those elements that are highly interrelated towards the attainment of those useful skills that promise effective communication, comprehension and every aspect that support sound language education.

Language education must take cognizance of the major domains of education that is cognitive, psychomotor and affective. All other areas of knowledge can not be properly discovered, analyzed, learnt without effective use of English. Character training which is the major concern of the educational structure can not be successful too without effective language. English Language therefore, is the major tool of the education industry in Nigeria. If a mechanic does not know the functions of the various tools, how can he repair an engine? So also if a pupil or student does not know English Language and its rules, how can he write and communicate? In other words, teachers in Nigeria should try as much as possible to teach in good and clear English language so as to make communication effective in the classroom. This will later on, help us produce well educated generation that will fit in every slot of employment.

Doka (2007) has this to say about English Language “indeed, English language in Nigeria education in just like a key to a house without which one finds it difficult to get access into its inner part.” This is to say no English language, no effective teaching and learning at all levels of educational standards in the country today as it is the medium of instruction.

Problems of Teaching English as a Second Language

- Mother tongue interference is a teaching problem towards teaching of English Language. Teachers should try as much as possible to see to it that their native languages do not interfere with English language because this can cause confusion to his pupils/students.
- Unavailability of text books, instructional materials, this also help to cause failure in the teaching/learning process.
- Other problems facing the teaching of language are: constant change in the type of textbooks being used in the schools, failure to organize in-house local workshops for English teachers in school, poverty among the majority of Nigerians.

Currently a report from UNESCO (1998) stated that about one hundred and ten out of one hundred and fifty Nigerians are living below one dollar per day. This makes it impossible for parents to buy adequate English materials for learning English.

Problems and Solutions of Teaching English Language

As it has been known, English Language is a foreign language picked by the government of Nigeria to be the national language. Most Nigerians learn English in

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schools. It is the language of instructions in schools. Therefore, adequate measures are needed in order to learn this language. Qualitative and competent English teachers are highly needed to handle English curriculum for primary schools, so that the learners will be offered with solid foundation. This foundation will assist them to have a better understanding of various courses that are taught in both post-primary and tertiary institutions.

Parents and all stakeholders in education should come to aid the teaching of English Language by financing certain projects such as building well equipped libraries with relevant at up-to-date textbooks, this will encourage reading culture among students.

In addition, no programme can succeed without finance, therefore, the aim of any educational programme can only be achieved when there is adequate fund.

The population of pupils/students should not exceed thirty in a class, because with this number a teacher can understand each pupil's/student's area of difficulty and will not find it difficult to come to aid the pupils/students individually.

To cap it all, a teacher should always know that he is a model to be emulated by his pupils/students therefore, he should try as much as possible to speak in simple and clear English Language. A teacher should try and see that he is a source of inspiration and an assistant to the learners.

Conclusion

Human beings rely 100 percent on the language of expression for success and learning. This language of expression is only possible through effective teaching. For Nigeria to attain greater height, highly qualified, motivated and committed teachers are needed. This can be achieved through constant and consistent training through well organized workshops, seminars and conferences. Teachers should see their job as an epitome of excellence and remain zealous towards its development.

Recommendations

In order to reengineer English Language for self productivity and employment the following recommendations should be considered.

Knowing that no educational system can rise above the quality of its teachers it should be mandatory that English Language teachers should regularly attend training, seminars, workshop so as to be up to date or to be current and well conversant with English Language. This will help greatly in producing well educated individuals that will be a great help to the society.

Adequate funds for the management and good keeping of schools will improve teaching of English Language.

Provision of enough qualitative manpower to handle the lesson of English Language throughout the country is highly needed. A skillful language teacher who is versatile in the language and its procedures in lesson delivery is the only one to guarantee good performance in the subject and as result should be provided. These categories of teachers should not only be provided, but should be adequate in all schools in the country.

The local, state and federal government should give incentives to English Language teachers. This will serve as reinforcement on the side of the teachers to teach effectively in the classroom and even outside the classroom.

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