

TRANSFORMING IGBO LANGUAGE TEACHING IN NIGERIA COLLEGES OF EDUCATION THROUGH THE USE OF INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS

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Abstract

Instructional materials refer to materials traditionally known as teaching aids as well as highly technological materials that are used to facilitate teaching-learning in the formal educational setting. The success of any teaching and learning depends solely on the teaching materials available. It was observed that nowadays the use of instructional materials is almost forgotten by most language teachers especially the Igbo language teachers. This is no small way affects the effective teaching and learning of language. This paper aims at investigating how the use of instructional materials could help to transform the standard of Igbo language educations at Colleges of Education in Nigeria. This paper explains the meaning of instructional materials, traces its origin and highlights their significance. It also gives some examples of instructional materials used in teaching Igbo language. Discussions on how to utilize the instructional materials were made. In conclusion, the paper recommends that these materials should be strictly used to facilitate teaching-learning process that cannot easily be done by the teacher. By so doing the student teacher learns from his lecturer on how to make appropriate use of instructional materials in their teaching practice exercise. This will also help to raise the standard of Igbo language teaching and learning in Nigerian Colleges of Education.

Language is one of the greatest attributes and behaviours that characterize human beings. It is a means by which man controls, creates and preserves his culture. Man cannot do without language. All activities of man such as social, political, educational and religious have language at its nucleons. According to Hornby (2000:472) language is a human and non instinctive method of communicating ideas, feelings and desires by the means of a system of sounds and sound symbols. Language is very important to man. It is a way of interaction and communication with one another either in spoken or written form.

Pristine

Nigeria is a multilingual country with about 515 languages (Grimes in Urua 2007). Out of these languages three were recognized as major Nigerian languages. They are Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba. Recognizing the importance of language in education the Federal Government imbibed in Educational National Policy introduced in 1977 and revised in 2004 that the medium of instruction in primary/pre-primary school be mother tongue or language of the immediate environment. Today these three major languages are taught in all levels of education in schools in Nigeria. The teaching of these three major languages in schools will make people have knowledge of other people's culture and respect each other's ideas, values, and beliefs. It will also inculcate spirit of oneness, unity among the nation.

In view of innumerable advantages of language especially the indigenous language there is a great need to teach them very well in schools. Language teaching requires the use of appropriate instructional materials. Instructional materials simply refers to various kinds of teaching equipments, instruments, teaching aids etc used for the proper education of the child at school. Instructional materials perform significant roles in teaching/learning process. According Akusoba (1985) science and technology emphasize that children should be given the bread of living experience rather than the stones of abstract theory. The value of instructional materials is centered on this. They make learning more concrete and meaningful. They are very essential at all levels of education and unavoidable tools for language education.

It is surprising that today most teachers especially the Igbo language teachers have almost forgotten how to use instructional materials in teaching. This type of behavior has adverse effect on the students studying the language in colleges of education in the country. Some courses in Igbo language are not well taught due to teachers' inability to make use of instructional materials in their teaching. It also makes some of the students to become less interested in the study of Igbo language. Some of them do not perform well in their semester exams. Most student teachers of Igbo language when they go out for teaching practice exercise do not perform well in the class due to their inability to make appropriate use of instructional materials. Some do not make use of them at all. This attitude makes their lesson less lively and difficult for the students or pupils to learn fast. This paper therefore, aims at proffering suggestions on how to bring transformation in teaching and learning of Igbo language in colleges of education in Nigeria through the use of instructional materials.

Stella Ogonna Okafor

Definition of Operational Terms

Transformation: Transformation simply means a complete change from one situation to another, a total departure from the old order to a new one. According to Hornby (1998:1270) it is the action or instance of changing something or somebody. Actually, transformation does not come accidentally, but requires deliberate efforts. Transformation calls for practice action and go beyond mere or verbal expression. It requires a number of tasks to be performed. One of such tasks as it concerns this study is appropriate utilization of instructional materials in teaching Igbo language in Nigeria colleges of education.

Language: Language is a system of communication by written or spoken word which is used by people of a particular country or area (Gadsby 2001:789). Ebe (2003: 74) sees language as an expression of ideas, concepts, emotions etc conveyed through the use of words.

From the above definitions, therefore, language could be taken to mean a system of communication of ideas, feelings and desires among human beings by means of spoken or written words. Igbo language is among the three recognized Nigeria languages. Other two are Hausa and Yoruba. It is a language spoken mainly in the eastern part of Nigeria by the group of people or tribe referred to as Igbo people.

Teaching: Teaching is summarily a systematic presentation of facts, ideas, skills and techniques about a particular language to students, Alinpelu in Okeniyi (2004:82) defined teaching as “deliberate effort by a mature or experienced person to import information, knowledge skill and so on to immature or less experienced person through a process that is normally pedagogically accepted.

Instructional materials: Instructional materials which could be called teaching or instructional aides are those items of different varieties or types that are used in teaching/learning process in formal and non formal settings. The teacher requires them to illustrate his/her lesson and students require them to aid and facilitate their understanding of what is being taught.

Origin of Instructional Materials

Ambimbade in Ojo (2010:194) traced the origin of instructional materials to the development of writing surface, which dating from the 15th B.C was the small rectangular piece of stone found in Thera and was described as the first example of the present day slate used by school children. By the 15th B.C main instructional materials used were the chalkboard, chalk and writing materials.

Pristine

Following the industrial revolution in Europe there was invention of better writing and drawing materials like boards, books, maps, models, chalks, globe etc. There was emphasis on visual instruction that stresses the pictorial contacts as opposed to the verbal emphasis of lecture and books in education by the 19th century. Some courses such as curriculum and instruction in General education and methodology courses as prescribed by the NCCE minimum standard are offered by the students to equip or prepare them adequately for the act of teaching, especially in the use of instructional technology materials.

Types of Instructional Materials

Instructional materials and devices according to Eya (1999:219) fall roughly into three categories.

1. Graphic or non projected materials
2. Projected materials
3. Audio materials and equipments

Graphic or non projected materials include illustrative materials such as charts, maps, graphs, globes, flat pictures, objects, specimens, models, mock-lips, chalk board, bulletin boards, channel graphs and such activities as fieldtrips, exhibits and demonstrations.

Projected materials and equipment includes slides, film strips, overhead projectors, transparencies, projected opaque pictures, motion pictures and related projection equipment.

Audio materials include radio, records and players tape and tape recorders and public address system.

Inyang Abia in Eya (1999:219) recognizes two classes of print and none print, others group then into non projected and projected, hardware and software and little media and big media. Ojo (2010:196) classified them into two groups; olden days instructional technological materials, modern and machine types while Olapade in Ojo (2010) classified them into visual materials, audio usual materials and aural materials.

The above classifications of instructional materials indicate that there are various types of instructional technological materials used to enhance teaching and learning by teachers in the classroom. It is the duty of the teacher to know the major advantages and limitations of each types and be disposed like any craftsman, to select from the whole array of tools and device or combination devices which best serves

Stella Ogonna Okafor

immediate teaching purpose. He should have the ability to select and evaluate audio visual for use. For the instructional materials to make their fullest contribution in teaching and learning process, they should be selected with a particular step of the learning sequence in mind by the teacher.

Characteristic of Instructional Materials

Irrespective of the form in which they appear instructional materials properly developed have three common characteristics as stated in Eya (1999:240);

1. They are designed to achieve specific objectives. The objectives describe what persons will learn as a result of using the product.
2. They are designed to offer replicable instruction. The products provide instruction in the same way at different times.
3. They are demonstrably effective. The products have been tried out with representative samples of the learner's population.

The Importance of Instructional Materials

Instructional materials help the teachers and learners in teaching and learning in various ways. They attract attentions, ensure cooperation, stimulate imagination save teaching time, promote retention and memory and provide meaningful source of information. Instructional materials show inaccessible processes materials, events, things, and change in time speed and space which are helpful in understanding scientific concepts. Eya (1999:220) listed the contributions of instructional models to learning as follows;

1. They promote greater acquisition and higher retention of factual knowledge.
2. Instructional materials are valuable to the teacher in accurate communication of ideas, concepts etc.
3. They provide increase interest in learning and stimulate voluntary study.
4. Instructional materials can provide instruction in a more scientific base through the provision of a frame work for systematic instructional planning.
5. They allow all members of the group the opportunity to share a joint experience.
6. They provide for a direct interaction of and social environment.

Pristine

7. Instructional materials contribute to the development of attitudes and behavior changes.
8. They provide integrated experiences which vary from concrete to abstract. Thus extend the normal limits of communication.
9. The materials help-the learner to develop their innate abilities by working at their own pace. They recall and retain what they learn longer and better. According to Agun (1976:25), the teacher for instance uses instructional material to guide and introduce the transfer of learning. On the other hand, Ojo (2010:197) notes that, professionally trained teachers should be expected to use instructional materials to make their lesson delivery lively and learner friendly.

Instructional Materials used in Teaching and Learning Languages

The study of language or languages could in a way be likened to the study of history or geography or science whose contents is a set of concepts of varying degrees of abstraction. This is the way a linguist studies a language so that he can analyze and describe it. This requires skills. Lots of academic linguists are capable of giving excellent description of a language but displays a certain degree of limitation in their performance. This is because according to Corder in Zango (2010:123) the skills of performance and those of descriptive study of a language do not necessarily lead to an ability to communicate in or understand that language. Instructional materials are so important in teaching and learning of languages. They are inseparable in the sense they give variety and vividness to learning. Materials such as pictures, flash cards, maps, stimulate the learners intellectually. Other materials used in language teaching are record, tape recorders, films, filmstrips language laboratory, overhead projectors, phonograph, demonstrations, panel, role-play socio-drama, debates, dramatization, resources, quest, experts, fieldtrips, research projects, community survey and interviews, chalkboard, library, text books etc.

The importance of Instructional materials in education cannot be overemphasized. The advantages of using materials revealed a lot about its importance as discussed earlier.

Instructional Materials for Teaching Igbo Language

Like any other subject, the teaching of Igbo language requires the availability of instructional materials or teaching aids. This is necessitated by the fact that the teaching of any language requires what is known as real life situation aids. Therefore, there is

Stella Ogonna Okafor

need for adequate teaching materials. Materials for Igbo language teaching are those materials that can be used in the teaching of every language. Some examples are:

Language Laboratory: This is really one of the newer media that is making a lot of impact in Nigeria educational scene. Unwin in Ofoefuna (1999: 129) sees it as usually a full laboratory or in today's terminology and audio active comparative laboratory. In using this teaching medium, the language teacher is linked to each tape recorder used by the students in the booths by means of his control panel. Through this he can monitor or listen to the performance of any student to diagnose faults and give the necessary corrections. In teaching a concept for example the present tense, the teacher starts his lesson by making the students to listen and master tape in their respective booths. The master tape contains examples all through. The students run through their tapes after rewinding. At this point, the teacher listens to the student as they respond to the spoken part of the lesson. He gives them individual attention correcting them when the need arises.. Language laboratory is extensively used in tertiary institutions in Nigeria to teach both foreign and indigenous language like Igbo. It is used for language drills. Here each student is provided with a pair of head phones and a microphone. This arrangement allows the student to listen and respond, replay or repeat if necessary. Language laboratory has a lot of advantages. One of such advantages is that language groups of students are permitted by structural arrangement of booths linked to a central control to share the teaching skills of one language teacher, in a manner most economical of time and effort. Each student is able to enjoy most of the benefits of individual teaching. All students are able to work all the time. The teacher is relieved of the necessity to supervise irksome repetitive drills and is released for real teaching purpose of diagnosis and correction. The novelty of the medium is itself motivating to the students. It captivates the student's interest and attention and eliminates distractions. There is immediate knowledge of result etc.

Chalkboard: Chalkboard is commonly known as the black board. Today there are many types of educational boards which are not necessarily black. Now there are different types of chalkboards some are wood, hardboard, or black board and require an easel. Some are expensive, being specially manufactured of slate, plastic or glass. Some are simply a specially prepared areas of wall painted with a flat paint to provide a chalkboard surface etc. Chalkboard is the teacher's oldest companion. It identifies itself with any place that has anything to do with serious systematic instruction. It is seen at all levels of educational system ranging from pre-primary to tertiary. It can be adapted for small or large group instruction. It can be used to teach all subjects at all levels of educational system. It has the added advantage of being relatively cheap and easy to

Pristine

use and easily available. It can be used to teach any topic in Igbo. It fosters students' participation and provides a good medium of students practices.

Textbooks: Textbooks are printed work which's serves as the basic manual for classroom use. Good Igbo textbooks can be said to be within the reach of the students these days. Many literature books are available for teaching literature courses. Likewise there are books on Igbo culture for teaching culture and books on Igbo grammar for teaching grammar. All these books should be integrated into Igbo studies.

The Radio and Tape Record: These media can be used to teach Igbo lessons. Tape materials, can be played in the classroom, to enhance Igbo studies especially in Igbo literature and teaching of phonetics and pronunciation. The radio should be properly timed to correspond with radio programmes.

Library: The use of library is very essential in teaching and learning of Igbo language. The library houses books of different types in both Igbo and other subjects taught in schools. Library gives the Igbo language teacher the opportunity to train the students in the art of findings things out for themselves. It affords them opportunity to practice reading and carry out some research work on their own.

Fieldtrips: Classroom and the school contain only a fraction of the learning resources needed by each student for an understudy. Fieldtrips are therefore very necessary. It is an indispensable element of the formal education process where students go for exercises to places outside the school for purpose of learning.

Environmental Resources: Brown in Anozie (2008:39) calls it community resources. There are limitless opportunities for students to learn the Igbo language in the communities surrounding the school. These include knowledge from field trips and information from resources persons. He may be a native of a particular town or village and can speak with conviction of the native customs, traditions and problems.

The projectors include film strips, the slide, the opaque projection, micro projection and pictures can be used in teaching Igbo language for example literature.

Models and Specimen: Models are reproduction of objects or situations being studied while specimens are the representative examples of some reality of the world which could be organic or inorganic. They are called real objects. When subject matters of study are difficult to reach, models or representations are used to convey the messages,

Stella Ogonna Okafor

receive, understand, retain and apply experience gained to reach overall educational goals.

Charts: These are combination of such pictorial graphic, numerical or verbal materials which, together, are most likely to present clear usual summaries of important process or relationships. Specific charts can be designed for special purposes, for instance, a reading readiness chart to assist reader to associate words with pictures or symbols of recallable experiences or a word reading chart to motivate group practice in reading and assist in developing fixation movement skill. The use of charts include to show relationships by means of pictures, symbols, facts, figures, statistics, to summarize information, to show continuity in process, to present abstract ideas in visual form.

Museum and Culture Room: These are places where artifacts and other cultural facilities are kept. They are use in teaching culture.

Utilization of Instructional Materials

The instructional materials should be used in a unit of instruction only when they will contribute to the desired outcomes, the teacher who uses them should have a definite purpose in mind. The materials should be integral part of the unit in many ways. Utilization demands to a large degree on the ingenuity and imagination of the individual teacher. According Eya (1999:23) the materials may be used;

- a. To introduce and stimulate interest in a subject.
- b. To give an overview of some particular field.
- c. To develop in the students appreciation and understanding.
- d. To demonstrate specific skills and techniques.
- e. To explain processes.
- f. To enrich the experimental background of students of students.
- g. To give factual information.
- h. To encourage development of desirable habits and attitudes.
- i. To summarize and review a unit of instruction.

Problems Militating Against the Effective Teaching and Learning of Igbo Language in Nigeria Colleges of Education.

Series of problems militating against the effective teaching and learning of Igbo language in Nigeria colleges of Education are observed at the course of this study. Among them are:

1. Generally language teachers and learners do not use language instructional teaching materials in teaching. They prefer lecture method or talk and chalk method. This type of attitude has a great negative effect in effective teaching and learning of

Pristine

languages particularly Igbo language in colleges of education in the country. Teachers' inabilities to use the materials affect the student teachers they teach. Students normally learn fast from examples but teachers who were supposed to be mentors are not doing it the right way. These students were not properly taught in the use of instructional materials during their microteaching class. Evidence is derived from their behaviour in the classroom during teaching practice exercise. Some of them were lazy and exhibit some nonchalant attitudes towards the preparation and use of instructional materials. Here are some excuses student teachers normally give whenever they are confronted by their supervisors of which the researcher is one; Sir/Ma, I didn't know you will come, I forgot it at home. This topic does not require instructional material. I don't know the type of instructional materials required for this particular topic and so on. These responses expose the student teachers' ignorance of what instructional materials are and their importance in teaching and learning process.

Lack of Finance: Teachers are usually reluctant to spend their money in preparation of instructional materials. Government too, does not encourage the teachers to prepare teaching materials by providing funds for them. Many language laboratories in Nigeria higher institutions were not properly equipped. Some lack maintenance and some of the equipment in these laboratories are not functional.

Lack of Enough Language Text Books in Most Libraries in Colleges of Educations in the Country

Most libraries in Nigeria tertiary institutions do not have enough language text books for both the teacher and the students. This problem is more serious in state and private colleges of education.

Lack of Improvisation of Instructional Materials

Language teachers generally do not know how to improvise instructional materials. Some of them are not creative.

There is problem of teachers' inability to study the community and its resources.

Lack of Fieldtrips and Excursions for Students in some Colleges of Education in Nigeria

In Igbo language teaching in colleges of education using federal college of education Eha-Amufu as an example, there is nothing like field trip or excursion for the students and teachers. Though it is there in NCCE minimum standard as part of the courses to be studied which is IGB 123 (Ndu Ndi Igbo Gbasatara Omenaala Ha,

Stella Ogonna Okafor

Ewumewu Ndi Igbo na Njem Mmuta) Njem Mmuta which means fieldtrip has never been practiced by teachers and students of Igbo department in this institution. This problem contributes to ineffective teaching of some cultural courses in Igbo language. There are community resources like health centres, cultural centres, social institutions which could be used to improve the teaching performance of the teacher but because the teacher is ineffective in his teaching it remains a problem to teaching and learning of Igbo Language.

Conclusion

Having discussed the relevance of instructional materials in teaching and learning of languages especially the Igbo language and having exposed some of the problems militating against teachers proper utilization of these materials in teaching, it is hope that if some or all of the above suggestions are adhered to, only then can there be transformation in Igbo language teaching in Nigeria Colleges of Education.

Suggestions

1. There should be effective supervision of language teachers by the language experts
2. Orientations, seminars and workshops should be organized from time to time by the government and school authorities for teachers in order to obtain more knowledge on how to use instructional materials. Teachers need to be conversant with the type of materials needed for a particular lesson or topic and when materials should be employed.
3. Microteaching classes should be well organized for student teachers and emphasis should be more on how to use instructional materials. Both teachers and students should be up to date and current with the use of instructional materials. They should be able to handle it well and appropriately.
4. The government should supply the recent and necessary types of instructional materials for the teaching and learning process in schools. This should go in hand with the upgrading of the outdated ones.
5. Special allowance, prompt payment of salaries to teachers should be encouraged and they should be sponsored to go for further studies by the government.
6. Language laboratories in Nigerian tertiary institutions should be well equipped and there should be proper maintenance of these materials or equipment. The outdated ones should be upgraded.

Pristine

7. Language teachers should be trained on how to use the language lab and these teachers are encouraged to make use of the available ones in their schools. As it is in federal college of education, Eha-Amafu today, the language laboratories there are not being well utilized by the language teachers and students. The teachers should desist from teaching some language courses like, phonetics, pronunciations in abstract.
8. Instructional materials such as tape recorders, film strips and video recording should be used to teach learners of all language. These materials if effectively used will enable the learners see and hear the actual speech production as produced by the native speakers. In teaching a course like syntax the teacher should use action and demonstrations. The use of tape recording cassette will add more colour to the teaching to make it effective.
9. Libraries in Nigeria tertiary institutions should be well equipped with enough necessary textbooks on every subject and other important material like computers, table chairs etc.
10. Improvisation is very necessary for the language teacher NTI (1990) sees improvisation as a techniques of originating a totally new tool, instrument, material device or modifying an existing one for a particular purpose. Teachers should learn how to be creative. They should be able to use local resources available to improve necessary instructional materials.
11. Contact with home will naturally lead the teacher to study it, the community life, its people, institutions and its resources. Igbo language teachers are therefore encouraged to put into practice the study of the community resources with a view to utilizing most of them in the school teaching and learning environment. Fieldtrips and excursion can be arranged by the language teachers to present learning experiences in the true life situations to students who can then integrate what they learnt to their lives at home.
12. Government and school authority should sponsor this type of trip.

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Stella Ogonna Okafor

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