
VALUE RE-ORIENTATION IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE IN NIGERIAN SCHOOLS

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Abstract

The importance of English language in a multilingual society cannot be over emphasized as the case may be in Nigeria. This is because it is our Lingua Franca, likewise our second language. English is done as a subject and it is also used as a medium of instruction. English language has for well over a century now continued to enjoy the pride of place in the Nation's educational system. The language enjoys a profusion of pedagogical materials; the strength of any society depends to a large extent on its curriculum. This paper discusses on English language education, roles of English language, its importance, problems faced by teachers of English and recommendations were offered at the end of the paper.

Keyword: English Language Education, Role of English, Socio-economic development, Value reorientation, Problems.

Introduction

Language and man can never be separated; it is the most outstanding characteristics which distinguishes man from non-thinking animals. It is basically the means of communication used by human beings. Language is a system of arbitrary of symbols combined according to the rules of grammar for the purpose of communication. The general assumption of education symbols is to impact of knowledge and it is the bedrock of development in any society, yet it largely depends on language. It is only through the use of effective language that knowledge can be imparted. For this good reason, the education really intensified the study and use of language for national development.

Various terms have been used, particularly in Nigeria for language variants. For example, we have official language, mother tongue, first language: Nigeria is blessed with over 400 different languages; within the indigenous language three are chosen to be the major language, Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba. The Lingua franca or official language in Nigeria is English language used as a means of instruction and communication. English language education will be our main focus in this paper due to the fact that it is a notable legacy of our colonial experiences and it also functions as Nigerian official language and the predominant language of power of rising high of mass media, of officialdom and most importance of education.

Education begins with language, therefore, there is a symbolic relationship between language and education and for any language to be meaningful, it should be perceived within the context of formal and informal education.

The Role of English Language in Nigeria

English has assumed a superior role in Nigeria. It is not only spoken by the elite (Ikara 2014) but it has become so entrenched that its use permeates every fabric of our national life. (Fafunwa 2006) cited in Suleiman and Bamgbose (2009) says that English language in the country has made it a pivotal factor in national awareness. It is the language of administration, education and the mass media. “English language has a dominant position in all, official transactions, higher education, science and technology – the media, the legislative and the judiciary” Bamgbose (2009).

The use of English has become a tool for measuring standard in education. This shows that a good command of English should be the main concern of our educational system. Ikara (2014) believed that a high level of proficiency in the language will result in corresponding mastery and high level of performance in other subject

Objectives of English Language Teaching

The objectives of English language teaching as stated in the National Policy on Education (2004) include:-

- a) Ability to speak fluent and acceptable English.
- b) Ability to understand simple conversational spoken English at normal speed.
- c) Ability to comprehend contemporary writing at a level of attainment.
- d) Ability to write clear acceptable English on prescribed topics.

All these have gone to prove that the objectives of teaching English language in Nigeria as encompassed in the National Policy on Education (2004) are anything but realized. The feasibility of realizing the objectives lies in reappraising and implementing them.

However, lack of appropriate English Language Policy and the failure of its subsequent implementation, are among some problems the English language teacher faces which causes failure of learners in their education. There is a great necessity, and desirability for the review and the redefinition of the language, policy with a view to keeping it in touch with reality (Uche, 2004).

The English Language plays prominent role in Nigeria. It points out the differences in “tribe and tongue” (Adebayo, 2003). Ethnic dimensions in Nigeria are often along linguistic lines is assumed that the existence of many languages means the existence of many nationalities trying to form nation. (Adebayo 2003). The teaching of English in Nigeria is not done unjustifiably; the recent desire for the acquisition of this metropolitan language by every Nigerian is ignited by the fact that the language had occupied an enviable and prominent position in the nation’s colonial heritage (Adebayo, 2003).

The Concept of Socio Economic Development

Socio economic development is a compound word with three different important words. These include; society, economy and development. It is relevant to define what socio-economic development connotes but before this is done it is important to define what economic development denotes. According to Sen (2004), economic development is a policy intervention endowed without economic growth is a phenomenon of market productivity and vice in GDP.

Uju and Joy (2014) define socio-economic development as the process of identifying both the social and economic needs within a community and seek to create strategies that will address various issues and needs in ways that would affect the society over a long period of time. Sen (2009) maintained that socioeconomic development is the process of social and economic development in a society, any programme that creates sustainable access to the economy for its beneficiaries. Uju and Joy (2014) concluded that the definition given that contributors should concentrate on providing sustainable benefits for her citizens within her ambits.

Education has been rightly viewed by many scholars such as Amaele (2005) as an engine of national development. This could be seen from how education has successfully increased productivity in Brazil, Korea, Malaysia, Thailand and in South East Asia (World Bank 1990). Initially, these nations were among the poorest nations in the World, but today education changed their history for good. For instance, Nigerians citizens are presently on the run to Malaysia for individual educational development and this among others are seriously boosting their national economy, also USA, UK among others which are referred to as the frontline nations technologically today were able to climb this mantle of universal recognized development not in the absence of education.

The English language is not indigenous to Nigeria. Its presence in Nigeria has a long history. It is a legacy left behind by British colonialists. A Nigerian therefore, learning English is not for its own sake but for some specific functional purposes in their daily lives. It is the language of administration, commerce, law and even religion for some people. Ikara (2014), the use of English language in Nigeria has helped greatly in National development especially as Nigeria is a multilingual society.

Why did English become Important?

It is easy to see just how important English is around the world. Many international businesses conduct meetings in English. Universities teach courses in English and around the World, tourists and travelers use English as a common language:

The main reason why English became so important, it all goes back to the British Empire, which at its peak covered 25% of the earth's surface. During colonial times, British rulers often speak English rather than their native language, although the origins of English as a global language has a complicated past, the language has left an important mark on media, trade and business. If you are still not sure about whether to learn the language, then check out the reasons below:-

- ⇒ English is a global language. It is the most commonly spoken language in the World. One out of five people can speak or at least understand English.
- ⇒ Studying English can help you get a job. It is the language of science, aviation, computers, diplomacy, and tourism. Knowing English increases your chances of getting a good job in a multinational company within your home country or of finding work abroad.

⇒ English is the official language of 53 countries and it is used as a lingua franca. (a mutually known language) by people from all round the world. This means that whether you are working in Beijing or travelling in Brazil, studying English help you have a conversation with people from all over the world.

Moreover, in the last century, the number of scientific papers written in English has started to outweigh language of the researcher. In the Netherlands, for example, the ratio is a surprising 40 to 1. For this reason, having knowledge of English is incredibly important to those working in the scientific field.

English is the language of the media industry. This is because of the prominence of Hollywood in global media, an enormous amount of films, TV shows and popular songs are written in English. If you speak English, you won't need to rely on translations and subtitles anymore to enjoy your favourite books, songs, film and TV shows.

It is also the language of the internet. It is a particularly important language online with more than half the content on the internet written in English. As well as this, some of the World's largest tech companies are based in English speaking countries.

In another development, English is one of the most important languages for business. Whether you are a business owner, student or employee, English is incredibly important in the business World. It is considered to be one of the being the de facto language of the United States and the official language of the UK, Canada, India and South Africa.

Since English is spoken in so many different countries there are thousands of schools and universities around the World that offer programmes in English. If you speak good academic English, there're lots of opportunities for you to find an appropriate school and course to suit your needs, find out about going to university in an English speaking country.

In conclusion; English gives access to multiple cultures. Good knowledge of English will allow you to access films, music and Literature from hundreds of countries around the globe. Not to mention the fact that numerous books from across the world are translated into English. Few experiences will make you grow as a person more than learning the values, habits and way of life in a culture that is different from yours.

English Language and Values Reorientation

It is essential to note that the language through which education is acquired, is also of utmost importance. It is the language education in Nigeria. Every form of education is expressed and acquired through language. It is through English language that formal education is acquired in Nigeria. In other words, it is through English language that the skills and knowledge needed for human development is acquired. Therefore, by extension English language is primarily instrument for human development in Nigeria. The benefits of education (acquired via English language) are enormous, they include improved social relations.

- Better jobs opportunities
- Higher family income
- Higher productivity
- Access to better health facility
- Improved standard of living
- Ability to participate in the life of the community.

Besides these benefit English language has conferred on Nigeria. Other privileges that bear on human development as well as National development, both on the home front and on the global scene. On the home front, English language is essentially regarded as a unifying factor. It has allowed Nigerians to co-exist peacefully even in their diversity. It is thus peaceful co-existence that engenders development either on individual or National basis considering the multilingual nature of the country, the communication crisis that would have occurred among people from different linguistic background is bridged by the use of English. It is possible, for Nigeria irrespective of their ethnic background, to study or work in any part of the country. The same goes for teachers who could also choose to teach in any part of the country without fear of language barriers (Bamgbose, 2009).

English language has advanced Nigerians economically, locally, people engage in trading and other business in activities to increase their economic power and improve their standard of living (Uche, 2004).

Globally, people engage in international business facilitated by the use of English. Again, the status of English as a second language in Nigeria has attracted foreign investment. Examples of such foreign investors are Mobil, shell, Oil and gas sector. Other sectors that are boosting the nation's economy are Information Technology (IT) services, banking and telecommunications. English language provides a link to the communication in the global world it

offers the people of this nation the benefit of participating in global affairs. Access to adequate informations is gained on a global level.

English language has also assigned technologies development in Nigeria. It is the window to the word of science and technology. It is the language used in space science and computing technology. There is easy knowledge transfer now, in quantities and at speed unimaginable in the past. There is digital communication of massive data bases via the internet, smart phones, television, fax machines, print media and so on. One can easily connect to data bases anywhere in the world from the comfort of our rooms. Although some innovations to technology have negative effects, their advantages far outweigh the disadvantages. Most organizations industries and parastatals have gone digital. It makes administration easy and provides easier method for stating and retrieving information. Nigerians are active participants in this digital world because of their knowledge of English language (Sen, 2009).

The import of positive value orientation for any nation's development cannot be over emphasized. For instance, one internationally accepted indicator of value orientation is corruption, because of its profound implication for education standard, terrorism and development. Transparency international the global coalition fighting against corruption describes corruption as "a crime against society, and therefore undertakes annual survey of corruption perception levels across nations of the world (Fodah, 1990).

Problems faced by teachers in Teaching English Language

⇒ Limited Teaching Resources

Teaching anything especially English language depends on the resources. Mostly the teacher faced this kind of problems the resources which are essential for delivering the lectures of the English language to the students for effective learning are not provided to them (Jegade, 2006).

It becomes very difficult for the teachers to teach without the resources for essential for the teaching. The resources include speakers, mike, projectors, computer systems and other kind of digital device. It makes the overall lecture and environment interesting and effective for the students and helps them in learning the English language.

⇒ A large number of students in the classroom:

A large number of students in the classroom produce a lot of disturbance and stress for the teachers because teaching a large number of students the teachers have to do more effort and hardworking.

⇒ **Disturbed environment of the class:**

Environment matters most in learning and teaching the English language. Mostly the English teachers faced environmental problems in teaching the English language. The disturbing environment of the classroom distracts the teachers and affects the teaching of the English language.

A suitable and comfortable environment is the basic need of teaching the English language. If the environment is not suitable and comfortable for the teachers then it ruins all the teaching and learning process of the English language.

A positive and comfortable learning environment is very essential for teaching the English language (Johnson, 2006).

⇒ **Wrong syllabus to be teach:**

A syllabus is a kind of content that the teacher follows to teach to the students. The syllabus plays a very important role in teaching the English language and also in other subjects: The syllabus helps the teachers to prepare the important factors of the course and organized the overall course to teach to the students step by step.

Mostly the teachers faced these problems in teaching the English languages. The wrong syllabus is given to them to teach the students the English language (Ikara, 2014).

The teachers teach the wrong syllabus will make negative impressions on the students, and by this, the students cannot learn and speak the English language.

⇒ **Limited time for lecturer to teach.** Time is the most important thing in learning the English language. It takes time for the teachers to observe their students and teach them at their level. The time of the class is very little for the teachers to teach the English language. It is not possible for the teachers to complete the topics of their lectures in less time, which is not enough (Ikara, 2014).

⇒ **Student depends on a teacher.** Another noticeable problem faced by the teachers is the students completely depend on the teacher. They didn't try to learn and speak themselves. Those students every time look to the teachers for helping them in learning and giving them the correct answers. They didn't try to make words and correct sentences in

- speaking the English language. By this problem, the students didn't learn the technical terms and conditions of how to use different kinds of tenses and words of the English language in speaking.
- ⇒ **Using other languages in the classroom:** Speaking other languages or speaking in the native language is the most noticeable issues faced by English teachers. For the students, it is very easy to speak in their native language or other languages which they can speak easily instead of the English language. It is very frustration for the students trying to speak the language and think the words and sentences to speak which they didn't know(Ikara, 2014).
 - ⇒ **It's very easy for them to communicate in their native language or the language they already have experience with.** This is the most common and big problem faced by the English teachers in teaching the English language to the students in which the English language is not their native language.
 - ⇒ **Lack of Reading habits.** The extensive reading culture does no longer exist in our schools. People no longer have time to inculcate a reading culture to the younger ones just because of the many pursuits of life. For any student to go through and survive his/her academic life, more time is to be spent or devoted to reading which one of the four skills of any language is. Egenegbe (2006) believed that a child, who does not learn to read, sees the wrath of the educational system descend on his or her head. Any excellent performance and academic achievement depends much on the ability of the learners to read extensively(Egenegbe, 2006).

Conclusion

The significance of teaching and learning English in Nigeria's was acknowledge in the study area. By extension, therefore, this study concludes that English is aninstrumental to the overall development of Nigeria ifstudents, teachers, school authorities and government play their roles effectively for the development of Nigeria. English language plays a vital communicative role in Nigerian society.

Recommendations

- All teachers must be equipped with a license to teach, as required by the recently introduced teachers' registration council, this allows proper handling and making of skills to his object. As there are quack doctors there are also quack teachers and the latter need licensing.
- There is the need for a reform in English education in Nigeria given its multifarious roles. The English language is not only an official language but also the language of education, especially in colleges, polytechnics and universities in Nigeria.
- Teachers training schools, colleges of education are faculty of education in our universities are urged to improve more on area of methodology and exposure of their students to the use of technical education or material resources, particularly the use of language laboratory.
- Special attention should be given to the re-training of teachers through refresher courses. This would enable them to update their knowledge of teaching skills and enhance the medium of instruction.
- Workshops and seminars in language should be attended by all content teachers and not only the English language teacher. This would keep them abreast in the ever changing world where old methods are replaced with new ones.
- Government as a matter of urgency should make concerted efforts to improve and upgrade the existing facilities in our schools, particularly library, teaching and learning materials among others.
- Enough time should be allotted to the teaching and learning of English language in order to give them time for enough practice. As "practice makes perfect".
- Debate and other activities that will enhance English language in our schools should be encouraged.

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Value Re-Orientation in English Language in Nigerian Schools

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