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## **LANGUAGE EDUCATION AS A PANACEA FOR GLOBAL BUSINESS AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN THIRD WORLD NATIONS**

### **Abstract:**

The constant use of Language is a major means of human interactions which is core to business and economic life as no business can be transacted effectively without the instrument of language. It stands out as one of the most valuable gifts of God that differentiates human beings from non humans. Our thoughts, feelings, ideas and experiences which are necessary for business transactions are organized through languages. Language, whether spoken or written, helps to facilitate business and economic development within and across a country's boarder. This paper discussed the motivation and significant of study, the contribution to knowledge and as well discuss language as a means of communication that identifies a group and helps them to interact. Moyosore (2005) asserts that: "language is an efficient medium of promoting understanding and harmonious living". Without "understanding" and "harmonious living", no business thrives in a nation. "Language Education", from the perspective of teaching and learning of English language in any nation, is discussed as a global tool of business and economic realization for sustainable development. According to Ojo ( 2000) " without Education, development will not occur"

### **Keywords:**

Language Education, Panacea, Global Business, Economic Development, Third World Nations

## **INTRODUCTION**

The theory of International trade which emphasizes regional specialization, needs Language to succeed as trade is transacted by human beings. If products produced in the tropical regions are to be exported to the temperate regions vis-a-vis, the language of the regions have to be learnt for the purpose of communication. Here, 'Language Education' comes in. But whereby universal languages such as: English, French, Spanish, to mention but a few, are already acquired, business interaction can take place without much problems. To bridge the physical gaps among developing countries in term of business development, communication (language) has to be improved for easy facilitation of transportation and marketing of commodities. It is obvious that business enterprises within and outside a nation, bring about exchange of ideas which is transported from one community or country to the other through business (trade) with the aid of language for improvement in technique of production and quality of goods. Most developing countries colonised by the British, benefit greatly from her through direct contact with English Language: Nigeria, Ghana, and Ivory Coast for example, are able to import machineries such as tractors, plough, industrial plant and other equipment which are used for developing their internal businesses. The strength of language education of any third world nation, determines the patronage of investors or business men. For instance, a French business man who is not fluent in English language usage or any of the indigenous languages in Nigeria or Ghana, may not succeed completely in his business venture; but on the contrary, he will blossom and be a successful employer of many people thereby contributing to the development of business in the country.

## **SIGNIFICANCE OF STUDY**

Most businessmen, local or international, seem not to be aware of the role language play in business transaction. Hence, neophytes to the field of economic business dabble into trade without much success. This paper therefore, will help to x-ray the relevance of language Education to business moguls within a nation and across boarder. Femi (2008) postulates that:

“ Education fosters the work and development of the individual to his/her own benefit and for the development of the society”

## **DEFINITION OF TERMS**

In this paper, the terms: “Third world Nation”, “Language” and “Education” are core. According to *Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English* (1995) Third World (Nations) “are the poorer countries of the world that are not Industrially developed” Leleji (2006) opines that: “ a standard definition of Language is elusive(while) 'Education' on the other hand can be described as a process by which a learner develops useful abilities, skills and attitudes that are relevant to his immediate community and the society at large”.

Dabo (2001) sees language as a means of communication within a speech community which helps to sustain relationship with other people (and) a vehicle for steering ideas, thoughts, feelings and experiences using speech sounds and symbols. This is corroborated long ago by Crystal (1971) when he says:

*it is impossible to conceive a rational being of a society*

*without implying the existence of a language. Language*

*and thinking are so closely related that any study of the former is bound to be a contribution to our understanding of human mind.*

The feelings of these great scholars show that language cannot be separated from effective communication between people in the third world nations. In business interaction, the educational status of business men in conversation determines the rate of understanding the messages communicated. According to Igborgbor (2012) “ True quality of education relates more to the extent to which the educational system assists the society to realize its social and developmental objectives” The term “quality of education” was expatiated on by Uvah (2005) cited in the collection of Igborgbor (2012) to mean a ‘degree of excellence’ while others see it as ‘ the level of value in a product (educational graduates). Therefore, to transact business effectively among developing nations, students in all levels of education must be given proper Language Education for effective communication and comprehension. Uvah (2005) asserts that the quality of university graduates could be measured by how well they have been prepared for life and services to society in various spheres of human endeavour.

### **LANGUAGE EDUCATION:**

Language Education in a sense can be described as the teaching and learning of a language. In the third world nations, languages serve as a medium of passing information from a generation to another and across the globe. Ugoji and Stella (2010) posit that language Education as a concept, refers to:

*The study of the art of language which affects and involves the understanding of the nature and importance of language development. It further includes the techniques of developing the four language skills.*

Like any other third world nation with many ethnic languages, Nigeria’s three major indigenous languages are reinforced by English language to play major roles in social, economic and political life of the people both within and across the globe. The role of the three major indigenous languages in Nigeria is captured in a section of the National Policy on Education(2004) (revised edition) That:

*In addition to appreciating the importance of language in the education process ..... The government considers it to be in the best interest of National Unity that each child Should be encouraged to learn one of the three major languages other than his own mother tongue ..... the government considers the three major languages in Nigeria to be Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba.*

Language Education is concerned with the training of users of language in the Language skills and helping them to develop these skills to the fullest in order to carry out the activities of oral and written communication. This is revealed by Obaya (1981) when he says that:

*right from the time one begins to learn to use language  
in communication, one is involved in trying to improve  
on one's performance in the same way as a basket maker  
strives each time to make more beautiful baskets, by  
improving his skill in basket making.*

### **FUNCTIONS OF A LANGUAGE**

Moyosore (2005) defines language as “an efficient medium of promoting understanding and harmonious living”. While Chijioke (2000) sees language as “the most effective way of communicating one's thought, idea, information values, knowledge and feeling” Language usage starts right from the time a baby is born. Its first language is the sound represented in the cry at delivery to express its successful arrival to the world of the living. In the third world nations, Languages are most central to carrying out all human activities in all spheres of life: education, science and technology, law, politics, commerce and industry, etcetera. Language serves as a means of understanding one another in the society and solving trade barriers among developing nations. This fact is captured by Eyisi (2007) who says that: “solutions to the world problems no matter how big or small depends largely on the appropriate use of language”. No wonder, there have been wanton destruction of lives and properties all over the developing nations as a result of misuse of language. The achievement so far attained by most developed nations like Britain, Germany, South Africa, Japan, China, America and a host of others, are attributable to the effective use of indigenous languages in educating their people.

Wallwork (1974) postulates that: “language and learning are indivisible”. Meaning, all educationists involved in the business of imparting knowledge should realize that what we impart on a learner to some extent, is the learning of language. Therefore, teachers in the developing nations desire a good knowledge of their official and local languages to enable them instil communication skills in their learners that in turn can create a healthy interactions in local or international scenes.

The mass media which can be categorised into electronics and print media assists in educating the public on products. It reaches out through international and local languages to a large audience within and across boarder in television, newspaper and radio. The mass media to a great extent assists in trade, thereby facilitating the growth of local industries across the Third World Nations. This can be insinuated from Bhalla and Ramu (2006) who believe that: ‘Globalization has reduced the modern world to an electronic village, leading to a rapid increase in cross-boarder economic, ---- relations.’

### **THE PLACE OF LANGUAGE IN COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY.**

The developing nations of the world embark on trade ranging from raw materials to finished products. The basic means of transaction is through

languages. This then points to the fact that languages of other nations should be taught and mastered for international trade. The developed nations of the world, have achieved locally and globally in the areas of commerce and industry because their local languages have been developed to enhance understanding and resolution of problems among people in the society. Eyisi (2007) says:

*There is no doubt that language appears to be the most important endowment of mankind; as a means of understanding ourselves in the society and resolving problems and tensions from human interactions and national reconstruction.*

There are differences in the languages of the nations of the world. The overseas traders should be very careful in preparing the publicity materials in the languages of the trading company. Communication problem can still exist even when the language is the same. A sentence in English can convey a different meaning to different people in English-speaking countries. For instance, in the sentence: “I will **buzz** my customers to educate them about my recent products for sale” Americans will be comfortable with the usage of the word ‘buzz’ (to call someone on the telephone), but people from other English-speaking countries are likely to frown at the usage of the word. Similar taste of language words in developing nations is capable of truncating business strategy and boom. Maduabum and gayya (2004) suggest four ways of enhancing peaceful co-existence to include speaking, listening, reading and writing. The major concern of language Education therefore, is to instil the four basic language skills of listening and speaking (known as audio-oral skills), reading and writing (also referred to as skills of literacy) in the learner for sound communication through any form of language. These skills needed to be acquired perfectly before one can speak and the other will understand. In Nigeria, where English language has been adopted for communication with the outside world and among the over 500 ethnic groups, these four language basic skills as a matter of necessity have to be mastered, else, there will be a misunderstanding of what one really wants to communicate. Chinua Achebe in Eyisi (2007) seems to align himself with the view that:

*We can believe in the value of English to the survival of the Nigerian nation without feeling like deserters. We can use energies constructively in the important task of extending the frontiers of English to cover the whole area of our Nigeria’s consciousness.*

Nickels et al (2008) see a multinational corporation as an organization that manufactures and markets products in many different countries and has multinational stock ownership and multinational management. It is obvious that this body gives her personnel language education to perfectly market products globally.

Also, Maduabum and Gayya (2004) believe that in a country like Nigeria where there are diverse languages, to promote understanding that will facilitate trade and the acquisition of the four skills of language are sine-qua-non. Language Education connotatively means language learning. The terms 'Education' and 'learning' in this context are closely related and interwoven that a business man has to acquire both to communicate and share opinions with people within and outside his culture. This is captured by Makiliuwa (2001) when he asserts;

*Language Education has two dimensions vis-a-vis language of education. The former refers to language taught or learnt in an educational system as a school subject while the later has to do with language used as medium of instruction or language of instruction.*

Formerly, language acquisition was believed to be limited to mother tongue which the child gets as his first language while language leaning was seen as getting the second language through formal classroom situation in school. This enormous views had been debunked by Williams (2004) who opines that the idea of language acquisition is no situation alone. It has extended to second language learning as in the case of English language in Nigeria.

Furthermore, he defines language learning as a process that is brought about in settings where subject matter is selected and graded and activities are organised to promote use of language.

William's view adumbrates the fact that the first language (L1) in Nigeria has to be acquired perfectly well for inter-peace and co-existence and for effective communication with the outside world, respectively.

### ***Importance of studying International Business***

The International Business standards focuses on the following:

- raising awareness of the interrelatedness of one country's political policies and economic practices on another;
- learning to improve international business relations through appropriate communication strategies;
- understanding the global business environment—that is, the interconnectedness of cultural, political, legal, economic, and ethical systems;
- exploring basic concepts underlying international finance, management, marketing, and trade relations.

## **CONTRIBUTION TO KNOWLEDGE**

This paper is geared up for:

- Promoting interest among international businessmen to learn other languages outside their mother tongue thereby fostering unity and co-operation.
- Importation of factual information and a means of settling conflict(s) arising from language related problems.
- The proper information that when the language of a people ( indigenous or foreign) is properly used as a medium of business instruction, such instruction is better understood because a thought is best expressed using the first language (L1) acquired.
- The effective use of language by government in communicate with her people and other nations in terms of trade and commerce; as advices on products are carried out in the media through languages.
- Advices to governments on the fact that since business and economic development in any nation is sacrosanct, every local language and at least two foreign languages should be emphasised in their education curriculum and properly learned. No language should be marginalised. According to Ogunsiji (2001) “.... no ethnic group would want its language to be stigmatized or dragged along the path of extinction”

## **CONCLUSION:**

The need to strengthen language education is of paramount importance to developing nations in all ramification. The Nigerian National Policy on Education for example , recommends that mother tongue should be a medium of teaching and learning in primaries one to three and English language as from primary four to tertiary level. This encourages learning and language skills.

In order to boost trade in developing nations, the issue of language Education must be tackled headlong. And considering the significance of language Education in international relationship, the government of every developing nation should commit herself to the development of local and foreign languages for sustainable economic, social, political and religious benefits. Perhaps, Dicks and Ellis (2006) have this view in mind when they opine that:

*“.... organization that wish to operate from  
a global platform have to learn how business  
is conducted (with languages) in different parts  
of the world”*

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