

TEACHER EDUCATION IN NIGERIA: A CONCERN FOR EFFECTIVE HAUSA LANGUAGE PEDAGOGY IN THE 21ST CENTURY

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Abstract

Nigeria is a multilingual nation blessed with over four hundred languages, major and non-major. Based on this, the country's vision in the teaching of three major languages is that, in future, one will emerge as Nigeria's official national language. Based on this, the Federal Government, through trilingual approach, encourages the growth and development of three languages without overt imposition of any of them. It is in this light that this paper opens by conceptualizing the Hausa language. The paper also looks at the objectives of teaching indigenous languages. It further analyzes the place of indigenous languages at the basic and tertiary levels. The paper also delves into modern versus tradition methods of instruction in teaching indigenous languages. In addition, it looks at the relevance and development of indigenous languages. The paper also highlights the problems militating against the teaching of indigenous languages. It concludes that, the long term objective of teaching Hausa as a national language to Nigerian children will be realized. Based on this, the paper recommends among others that, Federal Government should set the necessary machinery in motion with a view to developing a language policy which will subsequently lead to the emergence of an indigenous language as the national language.

Key words: Effective, Hausa Language, Pedagogy

Introduction

Language is seen as a vehicle of communication and expression of ideas, desires and feelings used in all human interactions. These interactions occur in political, commerce, social, educational and cultural contexts for the purpose of communication within a given community. Language, taken in this sense, sees the Hausa language as a language spoken by the Hausa people as mark of their social identity. If anyone cannot communicate within his environment, particularly to educate, inform, socialize, request and entertain, life will sadly be incomplete, seriously burning and totally meaningless (Sagotoro, 1997). Thus, Hausa language is used by its speakers/learners (native and non-native) as a tool that breaks ethnic and tribal barriers, jealousy, suspicion and ignorance. It is in this light that Hausa language is used to educate students within and outside the school environment.

Language issue in education is inevitable since it is through language that knowledge is transmitted (Bamgbose, 1991). Language is as a consequence seen as a highly

valued societal resource because of its communicative and identification functions (Zango, 2016).

Nigeria as a nation is blessed with abundant human and material resources with different people speaking about 450 languages. These record numbers of languages are referred to as indigenous languages which are classified as into first, major languages (Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba) and second, non-major languages (Nupe, Kanuri, Igala, Efik, Ibibio and so on). These indigenous languages are recognized and entrenched in the National Policy on Education because of the important role they play.

Nigeria as a country has no official language policy, however, the National Educational Policy says one or two things about languages. Nigeria lacks the proper and comprehensive guidelines to help establish the why, when and how of the teaching of indigenous languages. Based on these, the teaching of indigenous languages is generally lagging behind its international counterparts. Thus, this paper calls for the

identification of objectives, planning, research and the evolution of an indigenous language education policy. This when done will lead to the selection of an indigenous language as the official language in Nigeria.

Conceptualizing Hausa Language

Hausa language belongs to the Afro-Asiatic phylum and the most widely spoken within the Chadic branch of the family. It has an estimated 51million speakers and 26 million L2 speakers (2018-2021) (Eberhard, Gary and Charles, 2009). This Chadic language is spoken by Hausa people in the Northern part of Nigeria, Ghana, Cameroon, Benin and Togo and the Southern half of Niger, Chad and Sudan as well as significant minorities in Ivory Coast (Wolff, 2023). Hausa also has a national status in Niger and Nigeria and recognized minority language.

Objectives of Teaching Indigenous Languages

If you teach a Nigerian child in his/her native language, understanding is bound to be quicker. This is because such a child will focus his attention on the instruction only, that is, instead of trying to understand the language of instruction before the instruction, the learner will focus his attention solely on the instruction. Added to this, the English learn in English, Russians in Russian, Greeks in Greek, French in French, Arabs in Arabic, it follows then Nigerians should learn in indigenous Nigerian languages (Zango, 2016).

The National Policy on Education (NPE) recommends that indigenous languages are to be used and studied at the pre-primary, primary and secondary levels in Nigeria. Thus, NPE (1977) posits:

In addition to appreciating the importance of language in the educational process and as a means of preserving people's cultures, the government considers it in the interest of national unity that each child should be encouraged to learn one of the three major languages other than his mother tongue. In this connection, the government considers the three major

languages in Nigeria to be Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba.

Hausa has a literary tradition extending back to several centuries before contact with western culture. Hausa was first reduced to writing in an Arabic form known as *Ajami*. This is no longer the case, because it is now mostly written in Roman script.

Hausa has a number of geographical dialects marked by differences in pronunciation and vocabulary. These dialects are from eastern area (Kano) and areas to the south (Zaria); southeast (Bauchi); with Daura and other western dialects such as Sokoto, Gobir as well dialects northwards in Niger. It is from the eastern standard Hausa (Daidaitacciyar Hausa) is coined. It is mostly based on 'kananci', the dialect of Kano and it is there recognized as the norm for the written language used in books and newspapers and used in broadcasting (radio and television). It is thus the language of instruction in schools, Colleges, Universities including Humboldt University Berlin, Germany (Adamu, 1984).

Behind this policy, there are two main points, political and educational. There is a political ideology (national unity) that can be attained through Nigerian citizens (students especially) learning their respective languages and also any one of the three major languages. On the educational ideology, there is the enhancement of educational process and the preservation of culture of the Nigerian which can be attained through each Nigerian learning his mother tongue and one of the major languages.

At the pre-primary, primary and secondary education, the policy states "...government will ensure that the medium of instruction will be principally the mother tongue or the language of immediate community".

In primary education system, the policy posits that "Government will see to it that the mother tongue or the language of immediate environment and at a later stage English (are used)". While at the secondary school level, as discernable from the policy "In selecting two Nigerian languages, students should study the language of their own area in addition to any of the three main languages

Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba subject to availability of teachers”.

These are the three language related statements in the policy. Based on these, the government states that she will develop the orthography of many more Nigerian languages and produce textbooks on them. The reality has however shown that, from 1977 to 2023 (46years) after the policy has been promulgated the governments in Nigeria have not been able to translate this policy into reality.

Additionally, Afolayan (1977) observes that there is no known special document of Nigeria that deals with educational language policy of the country except the NPE. In the NPE, the government has enshrined the various aspects relevant to the learning of various languages within the school system. Onwidiwe and Ugochukwu (2015) as well as Emenanjo (2009) strongly support this assertion.

The point here is, having established the three major indigenous languages, there is the need to be emphatic about the existence and usability of these languages. Therefore, the multilingual nature of Nigeria should not deter her from enacting a good language policy.

Thus, Nigeria should borrow a leaf from multilingual nations (Belgium, Canada, India, South Africa, Switzerland) like herself which have adopted the expectancy of recognizing as many as possible local languages for effective education. To this end, Ogunnaike (1991) in Tijjani (2022) has also suggested that, a long-term language policy should be set in motion with a view to coming up of with one out of the short list (Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba), one language to be jointly used with English as a Nigerian official language.

There is the need to call a spade a spade, hence, our government should stop being cautious almost to a fault (Ubahakwe, 1973) and work out a definite language policy. To this paper, it is about time that the government should invest political capital and work towards the Hausa language becoming the selected language. In essence, one can claim with confidence that the language has the necessary credentials to perform this

important role alongside English language or do it without English language.

Indigenous Language at the Basic and Tertiary Levels

The place and value of indigenous languages in the Nigerian National Policy on Education (2005) can best be understood as stated in the policy and succinctly reported by Emenenjo (1991). He further showed that, the policy recommends the use of three major languages (Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba) throughout the secondary school system. He also notes that, the policy severely limits the and study of minority languages to the primary and junior secondary schools.

The National Policy on Education recognizes the importance of languages in education. It establishes that, it is through it that ideas are exchanged, beliefs shared, social interaction promoted, national cohesion fostered and cultures preserved. As teachers, we need a rich and stimulating environment to motivate us to teach effectively. To this paper, there is no better way of achieving all these more than through indigenous languages.

At the tertiary level, Hausa education, the main focus of this work, has a curriculum with two major designs: Language one (L1) and Language two (L2). The L1 is designed for native speakers or those who acquired the language. In contrast, the L2 design is meant for non-native speakers. It is worthy of note here that, this design for teaching indigenous languages as second languages is a recent phenomenon introduced through the NPE (1981).

Additionally, Hausa language enjoys wide researches at all levels and stages of language studies in Nigeria and many oversea Universities. It is studied in all primary schools in Hausa land as the fulfillment of United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (2005) condition of teaching pupils in their mother tongue in the first three years of basic education. The NPE (1990) has also made it a compulsory subject at the Senior Secondary School Certificate Examination (NECO, WAEC, NABTEB, NBAIS) along two other

Nigerian languages (Igbo and Yoruba). Thus, Hausa is a core subject therefore a compulsory one.

Modern Methods Versus Traditional Methods of Instruction

Language remains the main form of interaction within the human environment. Words preserve stories, traditions, cultures and identity. The Nigerian indigenous language represents the legacy of her grandmothers and grandfathers. Thus, scholars are duty bound to take care of the teaching and learning of these languages because if they are taught properly the knowledge of stories, legends, songs, values, myths and so on associated with them will also disappear.

With the above in mind, the United Nations declared 2019, the year of indigenous language (IY 2019), in order to raise awareness about them and their important contribution to the world's rich cultural diversity (Conde, 2019). Consequently, there are many principles and methods adopted by the teachers of indigenous languages in teaching. However, most of these methods (grammar translation method, natural or oral method, silent method, discussion and question method, dramatization method are the most usual methods in schools and colleges).

In line with the (IY 2019) UNESCO policy, the methods employed in teaching indigenous languages should be changed to match the reality of modern day lesson delivery procedure. Thus, this paper advocates for principles and approaches such as:

I. Constructivism: This theory says learners should construct knowledge rather than just passively taking in information. Thus, as (Hausa language) learners experience the world and reflect upon these experiences, they build their own representations and incorporate new information into their pre-existing knowledge (schemas) (University at Buffalo, 2023). In a nutshell, learners communicate with each other and share their understandings, feelings, knowledge and

experience so as to construct knowledge. Through these, the teacher becomes a facilitator and the learners are encouraged to interact, exchange views and experience and construct meaning and knowledge that is based on their needs.

II. Participatory Teaching Methods:

This is an approach to teaching which focuses on the learner. Put simply, it encourages learning by doing, using a small group, concrete materials, open questioning and teaching (Inter-agency Network for Education in Emergencies [INEE], 2010). This implies, that the method not only engages students' interest in theoretical lessons, encourage group discussions and critical reflections but also involves them in more practical activities, to connect academic achievement with real life issues and to understand the impact of the individual actions on the community of learners.

III. Connectivism: This is a theory introduced in 2005 by two theorists: George Siemens and Stephen Downes based on their conception of how students learn in and out of the classroom. Rather than learning from teachers and textbooks, smartphones and laptops serve as hubs of information for today's student. Based on these, twenty years or so ago, students might go to encyclopedia (Britannica or Americana) and so on for answers; now, they can ask their smartphones or type their questions into goggle (WGU, 2021).

Connectivism is a theory that suggests students should combine thoughts, theories and general information in a useful manner. Because it accepts technology as a major part of the learning process and that our regular connectedness gives students opportunities to make informed decision about their learning. Connectivism promotes group collaboration and discussion, allows for different viewpoints and perspectives when it comes to decision making, problem-solving and making sense of information. It promotes learning that happens outside of an individual such as social media, online networks, blogs, or information databases. As Downes (2004) succinctly puts it, knowledge has many authors, knowledge has

many facets. It looks different to each person and it changes from moment to moment. A piece of knowledge isn't a description of something, it is a way of relating to something.

IV. Flipped Classroom: The focus here is to look at flipped classroom methods as a way of leveraging existing materials and integrating them along with any new material into effective learning strategy. It is an instructional strategy that reverses the learning environment by delivering instructional content, often online, outside of the classroom. It moves activities, including those that are traditionally considered as homework into the classroom to increase student engagement and active learning.

Abeysekera and Dawson (2015) define the term flipped classroom as: a set of pedagogical approaches that:

- I. Move most information-transmission teaching out of class;
- II. Use class time for learning activities that are active and social; and
- III. Require students to complete pre- and/or post-class activities to fully benefit from in-class work.

The picture painted by Abeysekera and Dawson depicts the differences between traditional and the flipped model. It adopts activities before, during and after class. The focus here is to highlight a few of the most recent and useful methods and approaches that Hausa language teachers can use to improve its language and literature pedagogy.

Relevance and Development of Indigenous Languages

The United Nations' General Assembly (Resolution A/RES/74/135) proclaimed the period between 2022 and 2032 as the International Decade of Indigenous Languages (IDIL 2022-2032) so as to draw the global attention on the critical situation of many indigenous languages and to mobilize stakeholders and resources for their preservation, revitalization and promotion (UNESCO, 2021). In the estimation of this paper, there is no better way of preserving, revitalizing and promoting

indigenous languages than through education.

The proclamation of an international decade by UNESCO is a key outcome of the 2019 International Year of Indigenous languages for which UNESCO lead global efforts. The organization will continue to serve as lead, UN Agency for the implementation of the International decade, in conjunction with the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA) and other relevant UN Agencies (UNESCO, 2021).

The objective of the international decade is to ensure indigenous peoples' right to preserve, revitalize and promote their languages and mainstreaming linguistic diversity and multilingualism aspects into sustainable development efforts. This is a very good opportunity for indigenous languages as it provides opportunity for collaboration in the area of policy development especially in Nigeria. As a consequence, Nigeria can borrow from countries with well-developed multilingual policy such as India, South Africa, Canada, Belgium, Switzerland to enhance her own language policy. This can be done through dialogue with such countries to create a true spirit of multi-stakeholder engagement so as to use, preserve, revitalize and promote indigenous languages.

Based on the above, there is the need to give the National Institute of Nigerian Languages (NINLAN) and other such organizations like Nigerian Languages in Faculties of Education and Arts in Universities a new lease of life to do this all important work successfully.

Problems Militating Against the Teaching of Indigenous Languages

In Nigeria today, the standard of education is taking the downward plunge without any obvious solution in sight. The reasons for this downward trend is associated with but not restricted to the following points.

I. Overpopulation in Hausa Classrooms:

The average number of students in a classroom in USA is twenty-four (Postma, 2023). According to her, 68.1 percent of

teachers agreed that the subject they teach is negatively affected by the number of students in the class. According to Kabakawa (2018), a typical Hausa language classroom should contain about 35-40 students. Where the number is within reasonable limit, individual attention to learners is possible. Unfortunately, one finds situations where classrooms contain students ranging from 100-150 or more. This is hardly a conducive situation for the teaching of an indigenous language within the limited time allowed to it on the time-table.

II. Standard Textbooks/Instructional Materials: In order to teach Hausa orthography, a lot of human and material resources are required. The modern instructional materials are objects which assist teachers of Hausa language to transmit information to students. These materials facilitate the learning process so as to attain the stated objectives.

According ACE (1981) modern instructional materials are classified as follows: audio aid, visual advertisement and audio visual aid. These categories of materials play an important role in the teaching of indigenous languages generally and Hausa language in particular.

Despite all these, three key factors affect the use of instructional materials in teaching Hausa language. First, as the case is in many schools, the instructional materials are inadequate and the available ones are not up to the standard required. Second the teachers are not trained as such they hardly appreciate the contribution of such materials to the teaching/learning process. Finally, where the instructional materials are available the teachers lack the motivation to use them.

III. Inadequate and Unqualified Teachers: There are hardly sufficient Hausa teachers in schools and where they are sufficient, most are unqualified. Thus, teachers teach Hausa because they are native speakers of the language not because they are trained to do so. This implies that these teachers lack formal training in the use of techniques, methods and approaches necessary for the teaching/learning of Hausa as a subject.

IV. Motivation: Motivation to Carter and Shelton (2009) is any consideration, idea or object prompting an individual to act or move to do what needs to be accomplished. There are basically two types of motivation: intrinsic and extrinsic.

Intrinsic motivation is necessary for learning and is also an identified goal of learning (Houghton, 2015). This implies that, an intrinsically motivated Hausa teacher will be enthusiastic towards teaching, teach appropriately and therefore demonstrate a tremendous level of commitment. This is also known as internal motivation.

In contrast, extrinsic or external motivation is a reward-driven behavior (Meadows-Fernandez, 2018). It is the type of operant conditioning, that is, a form of behavior modification that uses rewards and punishments to increase the likelihood that a specific behavior will recur. Thus, extrinsically motivated teachers teach for teaching potentials to help them earn good salary, please administrators or parents or gain respect of the peers.

Extrinsic motivation may be more effective for some teachers than it is for others. Certain situations may also be better situated for this form of motivation. For instance, for some Hausa teachers, the benefits of external rewards are enough to motivate high quality teaching.

The bitter truth here is, both intrinsic and extrinsic forms of motivation are sadly lacking in Hausa teachers. The colonial mentality held in the society that English is better than all the indigenous languages is a proof to this assertion.

V. Classroom Management: Classroom management refers to the actions teachers (as facilitators) take to establish and sustain an environment that fosters students' academic achievement as well as their social, emotional and moral growth (Weinstein, 2016). The goal of classroom management is not order for order's sake but order for the sake of training.

Classroom management is important because it directly affects students' ability to learn as well as the ability of teachers to teach. For these reasons, it gives the teacher

an opportunity to teach in an environment free from disruptions and interruptions and in the process be effective, do what he does best and enjoy doing it too. Importantly too, a well managed classroom is the benchmark for students' success.

Due to overpopulation, lack of training and motivation, most Hausa classrooms are not properly managed. These factors will not allow teachers to establish and sustain orderly environment, promote active learning, decrease negative behavior so as increase the time learners use in learning.

Conclusion

To attain its national language goal using education as a tool, the Federal Government of Nigeria instituted a language policy that seeks to make the average Nigerian child able to speak, at the least, Hausa, Igbo, or Yoruba. Based on the national trilingual approach, it is hoped there will be growth and development of the most populous three languages without overtly enforcing them on learners.

Whether the stated objective is attained after 46years, that is, whether the languages have evolved, developed without the overt imposition of any of them on learners is still of subject of debate. The stand of this paper, particularly as it affects the Hausa language is that, it may take time, hopefully before long, the long term objective of its teaching as national language to Nigerian children for them to be able to express personal, national and international sentiments in Hausa as the Nigeria's national language.

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Recommendations

Based on the salient points raised by this paper, it wishes to recommend as follows:

- I. There is the need to establish a sequence of realizable objectives as well as ordering of priorities of the linguistic situation in Nigeria.
- II. Since Nigeria has no language policy but rather an educational policy which touches on some aspects of language, the policy is not adequate as such in the planning stage of a workable language policy should be set in motion.
- III. The government should set machinery in motion towards the evolution of a viable language policy that will eventually give birth to the sole language that can be used in communication in Nigeria. When such a time comes, the Hausa language is an excellent candidate for the job.
- IV. Government should give incentives to authors so as to encourage them to produce standard textbooks in Hausa language, culture and literature.
- V. It is also important for the government to provide sufficient instructional materials in line with modern methods of teaching.
- VI. Emphasis should be laid on training and retraining of teachers so as for them to embrace modern trends in teaching indigenous languages.
- VII. Only trained Hausa teachers should be allowed to teach it because untrained ones merely scratch the surface but leave the core of its teaching untouched.

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