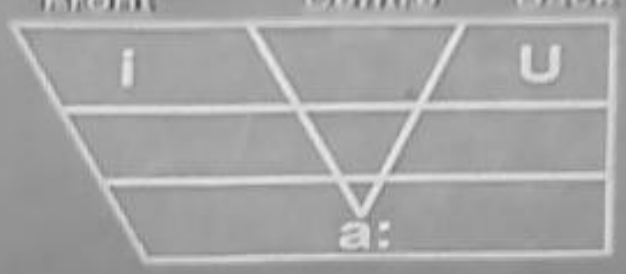
ISSN 1596-0226

KONJOLLS

KONTAGORA JOURNAL OF LANGUAGES AND LITERATURES



Vol. 2 No 1 September, 2006

KONTAGORA JOURNAL OF LANGUAGES AND LITERATURES (KONJOLLS)

ISSN: 1596 - 0226

Published by:

SCHOOL OF LANGUAGES
FEDERAL COLLEGE OF EDUCATION
P. M. B. 39, KONTAGORA

Volume 2 No. 1 September, 2006

Printed by
AMAKA ENTERPRISES, P. O. BOX 131,
KONTAGORA, NIGER STATE

LIST OF CONTRIBUTORS

1. Prof. Adebayo Lawal, University of Ilorin, Ilorin, Nigeria
2. Dr. Anthony Ayodele Olaoye, NCCE Mgt. - ABUJA
3. Shehu Aliyu Rimintsiwa, F. C. E. Kontagora
4. A. B. Akuh, F. C. E. Okene Kogi State
5. Kayode Sangotoro, F. C. E. Katsina
6. Ako, Peter Atem, F. C. E. Obudu Cross River State
7. Ahmed Danmaigoro, Senior Lecturer, Hausa Department, F. C. E. Katsina
8. Bello Yusuf Wamba, Department of Hausa F. C. E. Kontagora
9. Chika Egbule Nwoko, Dept. of Eng. Language COBAS Yauri
10. Isah Bala Masuga, F. C. E. Kontagora
11. Ladan Chado, Hausa Department, F. C. E. Obudu
12. Dr. Ango Abdullahi Ladan, Psychology Dept. F. C. E. Zaria
13. Undelikwo Ashituabe John, FUT, Minna
14. Maimuna M. Ahmed (Mrs) F. C. E. Kontagora
15. Madueke, H. O. (Mrs) F. C. E. Kontagora
16. Situ, Alice A. (Mrs), F. C. E., Kontagora
17. Obianyo, Josephine Ego (Mrs), F. C. E., Kontagora
18. Tafida, Amina Gogo, FUT, Minna
19. Adeyemo, Timothy Olusegun, Senior Lecturer, F.C.E. Kontagora
20. Baba Isah Sidi, FUT, Minna
21. Dr. Shittu, Kelani Okunade, FUT, Minna
22. Mr. J. S. Olasehinde, Department of Yoruba, F. C. E. Kontagora
23. Muhammad S. I. H., Department of English, F. C. E. Kontagora
24. Akuegbu Jacqueline, Primary Education Dept. F.C.E. Kontagora
25. Salaam O. W., F. C. E. (Special) Oyo, Oyo State
26. Binta, Muhammed Nashayya, FCT College of Education, Zaria
27. O. O. Shada, Federal College of Education (SP) Oyo, Oyo State

THE ROLE OF MOTHER TONGUE IN NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

By

Tafida, Amina Gogo

Abstract

Language is a universal phenomenon that must exist in every human society. There is no society which does not carry out its activities through language. Language, therefore be it foreign or indigenous is very important to its speakers because it is the only vehicle through which a society operates. The mother tongue is the first language of an individual. It is the language to which a child is born, bred, trained and nurtured. It is therefore important in the development of a nation. This paper focuses on the importance of the child's first language to the development of a nation. It takes a look at the various areas such as educational, social, political, economic and religious which a person engages in as he grows and lives in a society. These are areas of development if well utilized, to not only an individual but the nation as a whole.

Introduction

Language is a system of communication, which is available to all normal humans. Language in the broadest sense is the ability to understand and use symbols particularly verbal ones in thinking as a form of communication. Awonyi (1980) sees it as the most momentous and mysterious product of human mind. In language, there is free accomplished use of symbolism, the record of articulate conceptual thinking and without language there can be nothing like explicit thought. Language then is a perfect means of expression and communication among every known people.

Gochar (1994) and Boadi (1968) believe language is systematic. According to them, the language of every society is highly systematic with its rules, functions and the extent to which it can be flexible. Thus every language has a system of rules and a fixed pattern of behaviour though it can to some extent be bent to suit certain specific needs temporarily, and that every language is communicative i.e. it must be used to communicate ideas, feelings, desires, wishes etc. Also that in social context speech is the primary concern of every human language. Any language that does not have the speech form is not a normal human language even though it may be communicative and systematic.

disregard because the development of mother tongues [illegible] impacts favourably on the nation itself. Therefore, even if [illegible] foreign language as a lingua franca or official language [illegible] with Nigeria, the mother tongues should not be relegated to [illegible] position or considered as inferior hence every language has [illegible] of speakers who are human beings brought together by [illegible] functions to the well being of the society. Nigeria recognizes [illegible] and that is why the National Policy on Education (1997) stipulates [illegible] child should be taught in the mother tongue or language [illegible] community in the first three years of primary education [illegible] government has even gone further by including some Nigerian [illegible] languages in the curriculum of secondary and tertiary institutions. [illegible] is a welcome idea and should be extended to several other mother [illegible] tongues in Nigeria. For there is no doubt that any education system [illegible] which makes the child ashamed of his own languages must [illegible] lack what Armstrong (1974) in Ubiahakwe (1979) described as the [illegible] minimum of self-respect which is necessary for the healthy functioning of a society".

Role of Mother tongue in Education

The use of children's mother tongue for instruction in primary education has received strong support in the educational and linguistic circles in Nigeria. Reading becomes more effective and meaningful to the child when primary education is given initially in the child's mother tongue (Oyetunde, 2004). Also, findings from earlier researches by Fafunwa and Bliss (1967), Bamgbose (1976) and Afolayan (1976) also stress that education initially in the mother tongue becomes more meaningful to the child if a child is taught in the language of his experience it will be easy to harness his full potentials for sustainable development. The mother tongue according to Bamgbose (1976), Chumbow (1990), and Tswanya (2006), is the most useful language to a bilingual child in the formative stage of life. In fact, it has become argued that the continues poor performance in various subjects is due to the fact that the language of instruction (the English language) impedes their understanding of such subjects. Tswanya (2006).

scored much lower than children who were taught partly in English
partly in English. Similar results were obtained with Italian
children (Klein, 1994). The results of these studies have demonstrated
that language and thought are inextricably interwoven and that
cognitive development all children need a language (initially a mother
tongue) on which to pin and develop their thoughts. (Cummings, 1979)

Role of mother tongue in language teaching and learning

Oyetunde (2004) believes that to facilitate literacy in the second
language, children should first be taught to read in their mother tongue.
Goodman (1977) also reiterates that learning to read in a second
language is easier for someone who is already literate in another
regardless of how similar or dissimilar it is. This is because children
(1979) explains that students who have learnt to read in an alphabetic
language do not have to "relearn" the principle of the alphabet. It is
assumed that since the reading process is the same for first and second
languages, a child who has learned to read in his first language does
not have to relearn the process. (Verhoeven, 1990 in Oyetunde, 2004).
He only needs to transfer the reading habits in his first language to the
second. The mother tongue provides the child with the linguistic means
to express himself freely, respond to, and participate in the activities of
life and growth. It provides the conceptual substance on which the child
builds new thoughts.

Moreover, it is a well known fact that literacy education in Africa
often suffers from serious communication problems between teachers
and pupils. (Klein, 1994, Chumbore, 1990). In classes with a foreign
medium of instruction, teachers often face language difficulties
themselves and pupils do not have the language competence to
understand what the teacher says. Due to this, active learning rarely
takes place. As a result, education curricula needs to integrate locally
relevant literacy practices in the language to which learners are
exposed in their environment and which they can use throughout.
Moreover, education based on locally relevant curricula allows for local
production of reading materials. It was also believed that the production
of these teaching materials in mother tongues is a valuable resource for
the development of contextually appropriate teaching material for
foreign language teaching (Prah, 2001).

which the learner knows and reads his or her own text and ideas about his/her own experience as well as those of others, thus allowing people to recognize their own mother tongue as a language of identity, thought and instruction. Such an approach according to (Prah, 2006) offers an alternative to some common barriers that block cultural and linguistic continuity and that increasingly push minorities into a separate artificial existence.

Moreover, there should be encouragement and development of their production, through proper publishing, printing and other facilities, for the benefits of both pupils, teachers and learners, particularly in mother tongue education.

The government should deal with several vital aspects of the role of mother tongue in at least the primary school level. The participation of mother tongue should be backed up with financial support, on the role of mother tongue should be backed up with financial support, textbook and adequate literature in different mother tongues in the country.

Conclusion

This paper has taken a look at the role of language in the development of an individual and especially the mother tongue in the development of an individual and the nation in general. The paper also emphasizes the fact that every language is a mother tongue to some people and that the evaluation of language is a mother tongue to some people and that the evaluation of language is accorded by the general society is dependent on its speakers and the roles people assigned to it and not because of its inherent and the roles people assigned to it and not because of its inherent level of exclusive and that every language is logically and linguistically equal.

Therefore, every language is important and the development of a nation is directly or indirectly built on language. Sapir (1929) believes that the real world is to a large extent unconsciously built on the language habits of a group. The relationships between language and development according to Tadanja (2004) are further emphasized by the interconnection between language and reality, educational and intellectual achievement and democratic participation. It is therefore the prayer of this paper that the recommendations given would be taken into consideration so that our different mother tongues would be given the chance to flourish in view of their importance in national development.

References

Akinyemi, A. (1975). Teaching and Examining Yoruba: West African Journal of Education, 4(12), 141-144.

Awonusi, S.A. (1985). The teaching of African languages. Ibadan: University Press.

[illegible]

[illegible] Ibadan: Ibadan University Press.

[illegible] (1976). Nigerian Languages. Ibadan: [illegible]

[illegible] (1977). Mother Tongue Education. The West African [illegible]

[illegible] (1978). Kiswahili Sanifu. [illegible]

[illegible] (1979). Nigeria Educational Research Council [illegible]

[illegible] (1980). The place of Mother Tongue in the National [illegible]

[illegible] (1981). Multilingualism [illegible]

[illegible] (1982). Multilingualism, Literacy and Nigeria [illegible]

[illegible] (1983). Reading Performance and [illegible] Secondary School students [illegible]

[illegible] (1985). Introducing Pashto Linguistics. Hazeb Vidasoh [illegible]

[illegible] (1987). Cognitive Psychology. Language proficiency [illegible]

[illegible] (1988). Home Secondary school pupils see the [illegible]

[illegible] (1989). The effect of bilingualism on abstract [illegible]

[illegible] (1990). National Policy on Education [illegible]

[illegible] (1992). Learning about psycholinguistic process by [illegible]

[illegible] (1994). The Need to maintain Mother Tongues. In Die Suid [illegible]