Language and Socialization in Multilingual Nigeria – A Conceptual Study

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Abstract

Language and socialization are two sides of the same coin given the crisscross relationship that exists between them. In furtherance, language acquisition and learning occur during socialization. Similarly, socialization happens through the medium of a language. The reason being language learning and socialization do not occur in isolation. The present study intends to examine the role of language as a medium of socialization and as an agent in the socialization process. It identifies the language as not just as a tool for socialization, but as an agent of socialization. The need to meet socio-linguistic aspects of language users over time accounts for the changes, which reflect in various stages of evolution of the English language. The present-day English is identified as Contemporary English is a function of the phenomenal changes that occur in the process of language development. Having found its way into Nigeria, the English language has become not only a medium of socialization but also an agent in the socialization process. This study adopts descriptive methodology and proposes its conceptual framework on theory of language socialization, which encourages learning and development through active participation. Also, it reveals that a proper understanding of learning and development of a language is only through socialization process.

Introduction

English language is the second most commonly used language after Chinese Mandarin, wherein about 350 million people speaking it as a first language and more than 430 million speaking it as a second language. Besides being a second / foreign language, a national language and lingua franca in Nigeria, it is also a global language, identified as World English, an international lingua franca (Davies, 2005). Moreover, English language has metamorphosed into what is today known as the contemporary English language and enjoys a wide coverage. It has a rich vocabulary; wherein new words are readily accepted.

Neologisms, slangs, dialectal and regional words find their ways into wider and acceptable English usage. The development of English language to accommodate the needs of users, which accounts for the emergence of different stages of the language. Having started as a Western Germanic language, emanating from the tribes of Angles, Saxon, and Jutes; known and identified as Anglo-Saxon, the English language replaced the Celtic language of England following its invasion in the 5th century. The period of Anglo-Saxon also known as Old English, which lasted until the 12th century, paved way for Middle English, which was used until 15th century before the emergence of Modern English. The 15th century brought enormous changes in the grammar, vocabulary, spelling, and pronunciation of English so much so that even "Shakespeare would have found Chaucer almost difficult to read" (Crystal, 2004). However, most of the changes observed in Present Day English are limited when compared with their counterparts. There exists an interrelationship between language and socialization, as linguistic practices do not occur in a vacuum in much the same way that society and culture are not independent elements, but rather function as co-ordinates (Bourdieu, 1991). The essence of this study is to examine the role of language as a medium of socialization and an agent in the socialization process as it affects Present Day English in Nigeria. The researchers adopt the theory of language socialization as its framework, which would enable an understanding of how language and culture are developed daily through interactions in various speech or language communities.

Literature Review

This study reviewed literature from conceptual, empirical, and theoretical viewpoints. In examining the conceptual framework, various concepts are discussed where views of linguists and scholars are brought to bear on the study. Language is the major means through which acceptable societal behaviour is understood and acquired. Individuals acquire sociocultural knowledge when they are exposed to and participate in verbal interactions. Language is a dynamic social practice (Duff & Talmy, 2011). It is a human activity, which is principally used for communication and cannot be equated with communication; given that communication can be very effective even without a language. It is a heterogeneous phenomenon considering its variability; and functions as a means of socialization through which an individual's personality is patterned. As a means of social intercourse and cultural transmission, language is the most potent tool for the transformation of human behaviour. This transformation or change occurs during the process of learning, which brings about a change in the behaviour of the learner. Members of a society are socialized using language and on how to use language basically

through interactions. This underscores behaviours, values, norms, and social skills of individuals who occupy specific roles in society. It is not a biological / genetic phenomenon but an interactive process through which learning occurs. Moreover, this place an individual in the position of interactionist who as an active participant is involved in the construction of world views; an ideology shared by Jean Piaget in his theory of cognitive development. During socialization, individuals learn and acquire behavioural patterns, which enable self-development.

As a process of enculturation, socialization helps in the formation of an individual's personality. Thus, any impression made on an individual goes a long way to affect his or her personality. This accounts for the existence of different personality types. Similarly, socialization is the process through which a child or other novice acquires the knowledge, orientations and practices that enable him or her to participate effectively and appropriately in the social life of a particular community (Garrett & Baquedano-Lopez, 2002). Going by this definition, socialization is not synonymous to individuality, which refers to the phenomenon of societal deviance but is rather a two-way movement that includes the learner and teacher, both of whom are involved in the teaching-learning process. Furthermore, learning a second language is a socialization process through which learners are involved in the culture of language. The socialization process transforms man into a societal being through a number of factors, which include imitation, suggestion, identification and language. An individual acquires and learns behavioural patterns in society through imitation. Language is one of such behaviours that is learnt through imitation and further serves as the tool of social intercourse as well as cultural transmission. The motive behind the standardization of language in this context, is to create the uniformity in English language. The standardization of English using the contemporary English form is a norm that must be internalized by individual members of a given society where English is a second/foreign language and lingua franca.

Multilingualism is an act of using more than one language either in speech or writing. It is a linguistic situation whereby a speech or language community speaks more than two languages. Multilingualism is a result of language contact. It is the term given to the linguistic situation where two or more languages co-exist within the bounds of one society or are kept in constant contact by politically and economically determined interest (Elugbe, 1990). Apart from being a socio-linguistic and socio-cultural phenomenon, multilingualism is a global phenomenon as is demonstrated in the linguistic maps of Africa, Asia, or Southern America (Braun, 2006). Interestingly, the statistics drawn from "Multicultural America: A Multimedia Encyclopedia" states that more than half of the world's population is either bilingual or multilingual, with 56 percent of Europeans being bilingual, 38 percent of Great Britain, 35 percent in Canada and 17 percent in the United States. With the world's estimated 570 million people, about 235 million are bilingual in English and some other language (Crystal, 1997). With these, it is glaring that linguistic homogeneity might just be a concept as it is difficult to find a speech community where people do not have any other language (Otagburuagu et al., 2021).

The theory of language socialization was propounded by Ochs and Schieffelin in the early 1980s (Ochs & Schieffelin, 1983). This theory was originally formulated to examine the socialization of children. It argues that language and culture are learnt simultaneously (Schieffelin & Ochs, 1986). The implication is that in learning a language, an individual concurrently learns the culture of his / her linguistic community. Language Socialization (LS) is the process by which individuals acquire, reproduce, and transform the knowledge and

competence that enable them to participate appropriately within specific communities of language users (Lee & Bucholtz, 2015). The process studies socialization to use language and socialization through language (Schieffelin & Ochs, 1986). This explains the role of language in the socialization process and as a medium of socialization. The implication is that members of a society constantly conform and inform one another through language (McDermott et al., 1978).

Furthermore, LS is a process by which non-native speakers of a language, or people returning to a language they may have once understood or spoken but have since lost proficiency in, seek competence in the language and typically, membership and the ability to participate in the practices of communities in which that language is spoken (Duff, 2007). Also, LS is an essential ingredient in social life as members participate in the activities of LS at one time or the other. LS is equally important in the processes of teaching and learning of language and culture as it identifies the biological and psychological features in different and varying culture in order to understand more closely how socialization occurs during learning (Poole, 1992). LS stresses the constant occurrence of linguistic behaviour which is made possible through interactions. This aligns with the notion that defines language socialization as the process by which children and other novices become fluent communicators and competent members of communities (Ochs & Schieffelin, 2011). According to them, this goes beyond acquiring linguistic and cultural competence to include "an accommodation of members' ideologies about communicative resources …and how they can be used to acquire and display knowledge, express emotions, perform actions, constitute persons and establish and maintain relationships". In addition to this, LS occurs during interaction with language in context (Gumperz, 1983). Also, this was corroborated by a research study, which stated language socialization occurs when linguistic and cultural novices repeatedly observe and engage in socially organized language practices with people who are linguistically and culturally adept (Hymes, 1972). LS is a lifelong process during which individuals accept or rebuff roles assigned by other members of society. This helps to put into shape the language and cultural hybridity of an individual. Meanwhile, LS studies how learning and development take place in individuals, as novices and members of a speech community (Garrett & Baquedano-Lopez, 2002).

Need & Relevance

Language and socialization influence the Present Day English in so many ways. Learning English in Nigeria, a multilingual nation is a process of socialization, which does not happen in a vacuum, but through the language medium. The inextricability of linguistic and cultural competence, which is the core of theory of language socialization emphasizes the influence of language and socialization on the Present Day English. The dynamic nature of language accounts for the evolution in time, of modern English to contemporary English, which necessitated the publication of the dictionary of Contemporary English Usage. The changes that have taken place over the years are pertinent as they occur in response to the needs of language users without whom the concept of language would be delusionary considering its relevance in the existence of humans. Also, it is noteworthy to understand that the dynamic nature of language facilitates changes and introduces innovations, one of which is the introduction of rules that govern the use of language. These rules are formulated to meet the socio-linguistic needs of the users. This research focuses on symbiotic relationships that exist between language and socialization. Furthermore, it reveals that language learning and

development occurs during the socialization process, which involves active interaction and participation by both teachers and learners of the language.

Objective

To examine the role of language as a medium of socialization and agent in the socialization process

Methodology

This entire study is based on secondary data sources and adopted descriptive research design to explain the roles and functions of language in socialization. Also, this methodology enhances the realization through a precise and accurate description of the theoretical framework, which has been discussed accordingly.

Observation & Discussion

Over the years, there have been changes in the language which metamorphosed to the current trend. These changes, which include lexical, grammatical, and phonological account for the currency in the use of English language in contemporary times. Many linguists have attempted the definition of Contemporary English. Consequently, there are many and varied definitions of the concept, which mark it out as exhibiting distinct linguistic properties from the modern English forms. Contemporary English conforms to the communication requirements of the speakers and is the result of changes, which accumulated over time in the use of English as a tool for communication in contemporary times. The features of contemporary English are not present in the Modern forms of English, but rather have features, which are relevant to the socio-linguistic requirements of the speakers. This form of English is beyond archaism and incorporates both the old and new forms, in addition to its lexical and structural borrowings from sister languages such as French and Latin. It is in fact, a newer version of Modern English though not without slight differences as are seen in dictionaries of modern English and those of contemporary English. Some of the reasons adduced for the evolution of contemporary English are as follows:

i. Articulatory Simplification: Users of the language certain complexities in sound articulation and opt for more simplified sounds which are easier to pronounce. A typical example is the French word / camera / changing into early French as / camra / and subsequently to / cambra / as a result of the difficulty in pronouncing /m/ and /r/ serially.

ii. Socio-cultural Identity: This is a natural phenomenon that affects the grammatical, lexical and pronunciation patterns of a language. It considers the idea that humans differ in their linguistic representations and when this occurs consistently among groups in a linguistic community, wittingly or unwittingly, it becomes a signal for identity. Examples abound in the use of register of the internet, which hitherto have been used among computer scientists, but today have filtered into the regular English words used by anyone who desires to be technology savvy. Such words include among others, bug, net, crash, e-mail, etc.

iii. Changes at the various linguistic levels: This encompasses all the changes that occurred diachronically at the various linguistic levels. They include:

a. Morphological Changes: Here, changes have occurred in word forms with borrowings from other languages such as French and Latin. These borrowings have resulted in sound mutations where words assume morphological compositions which are not original. Examples are found in the uses of certain words 'where' -er are removed from nouns to form new verbs as 'letch' from 'lecher'.

b. Lexical Changes: This is the inclusion of new words into the vocabulary of the language. Some of the words borrowed from the French language, which have enriched the linguistic repertoire of the English language are text, army, navy, enemy, prince, prayer, judge, etc.

c. Verb Changes: In contemporary English, there are distinctions between main verbs and auxiliary verbs which are reflected in negative sentences where the auxiliary verb takes the contraction 'n't' as in 'you can't travel'; interrogative sentences where the auxiliary is fronted as in 'can you go?' and tag questions where only the auxiliary can appear in tag as in 'you can go, can't you?' It's worthy to note that prior to the period of contemporary English, such distinctions between main and auxiliary verbs were not considered.

d. Syntactic Changes: This accounts for the change in the morpho-syntactic rule of adjective agreement where adjectives were required to have endings that agree with the head noun in case, number, and gender.

e. Semantic Changes: These are changes associated with the meaning of words. There is evidence that meaning changes from age to age. There are four patterns of semantic change which are as follows:

   i. Some words change meaning by expansion. This means that their present meaning is longer than previous meaning. Some books refer to expansion as broadening. For example, the word "Salary" was used during the world war as money given for salt – buying the government workers has become "Regular Wage" received at end of the month.

   ii. Narrowing of meaning: This means that some words which were broad in manner or have broad meaning, now have narrow meaning. For example, the word "meat" originally meant any kind of food. Today, "meat" means a particular land of food got from animal flesh.

   iii. Amelioration: This means that some words have had their meaning bettered. This simply means improvement of meaning. Formerly, their meaning was unacceptable but now it is acceptable. For example, the word "Knight", which originally meant slave, servant, and knave or errand boy. This is now changed to a title of honour or respect in the church.

   iv. Pejoration: This could be seen as the opposite of amelioration. Some words have their meanings reduced to unacceptability. Formerly, such words had their meaning highly stated, but now the case is opposite for example the word "Propaganda" which was used by the pope who built a university in Rome known as the College of Propaganda, which was established to teach good news. Today the meaning is distorted or bad news. Also, the word "Silly" used to mean "Holy" and "Innocent", but today has turned to mean "Stupid" or "Foolish" identity.

Linguistic Resources for Socialization

Linguistic resources are vehicles used for the construction of social knowledge. They are used by individuals to construct and interpret social actions. Language, either spoken or written, involves a multimodal process given that information can be obtained, and knowledge acquired by audio and visual means. This means that both spoken and written texts are not only truth in themselves but also convey social meanings. Thus, every society has a language feature with which an individual can be socially identified. Such features could be extralinguistic or para-linguistic in approach. Terminologies such as paralanguage, paralinguistics and extralinguistic were formulated, originally by (Trager, 1958). This is further explained by the research studies of Crystal (Crystal, 1974; Crystal, 1975). The concept of paralinguistic can be traced from a Greek preposition which literally translates to 'alongside linguistics'. Its origin dates back to the middle of 20th century and has since been defined as well as explained by linguists in different quarters. Paralinguistics refers to vocal factors involved in paralanguage (Abercrombie, 1968) and includes everything related to speech or verbal communication. Although some of the activities involved in verbal communication are not linguistic matters, they are as a matter of necessity encapsulated linguistically. These phenomena which include but are not limited to coughing, laughing, gasping, yawning, etc. find their ways in the speech chain and represent, among other things, mood, attitude, feeling, condition, and speaker mannerism. Meanwhile, paralinguistics goes beyond phonology, morphology, syntax, and semantics to include the functions encoded in speech. The investigation of socially effective but non-distinctive patterns in speech, an investigation scarcely begun, concerns itself, accordingly to a large extent with pitch. (Bloomfield, 1933). In another development, other features of intonation would most probably change given an individual's physiological disposition, such as anger, happiness, excitement, age, sex, and so on (Pike, 1969). Capturing these phenomena in linguistic contexts serves as resources for socialization as they serve as pointers used to identify people and understand how they feel. Existing along linguistic lines, paralinguistic features are notable linguistic resources employed, consciously or unconsciously in the socialization process. Fundamentally, these are important resources in the socialization process as they enhance the understanding of individual speaker idiosyncrasies.

Historically, three phrases can be identified with the adoption of the English Language in Nigeria. The first is the era of pre-colonialism. This is the period when Nigeria came into contact with western culture. The coming of English language to Nigeria could be linked with when the Portuguese first came to Nigeria. Trade was their original attraction. As a result of the need for civilization, western industry and trade needed human and material resources in order to flourish. Therefore, they went far into Africa in search of raw materials and labour and because they needed a language to communicate with the natives, what emerged was the corruption of English language; that is trade language or pidginization in some areas.

It is important to state that people can become bilingual through contact with another culture, trade, and commerce as well as religion. Christianity has been another force that enshrined English language in Nigeria. The West during their evangelical mission propagated Christianity with literature written in English such as the Holy Bible and tracts. This is because the missionaries needed a language of instruction in order to spread the Gospel of Christ. There was the urgent need to educate the "natives" so that they do not only become converts but also as evangelists that will assist the whites in making sure that the heathen "natives" are saved lest they draft into the abyss of hell fire.

Catechisms were established and the natives were encouraged to read the Holy Bible in English language especially when there were no translations into vernacular. Gradually, the Holy Bible was supported by Pistol because of the sudden realization that Christians should not only be triumphant but also militant. Natives were trained to use the English Language for the purposes of preaching the gospel and spreading Christianity. Various lexical and structural items were imbibed by Nigerians this time, especially religious terms such as Bible, Saviour, Miracle, Salvation, Baptism, Sin, Confession, etc. The introduction of English language through trade and religion is succinctly highlighted in the below poem "Vultures" (Sartre, 1948).

In those days

When civilization kicked us on the face
And holy water slapped our dinging browns
The vultures built in the shadows of their tallions
The blood- stained movement of the tutelage
In those days;
There was painful laughter on the metallic hell of the road
And the monotonous rhythm of the paternoster drowned the howling's
In the plantations O bitter memories of extorted kisses
Promises written at the point of gun
Of foreigners who did not seem human
Who knew all the books but did not know love………
Culled from Poems of Black Africa

The second period was when Nigerians were politically dominated by the British Colonialists. This colonial era experienced the final entrenchment of the English language in Nigeria. Psychologically, the English language became the language of Government, Education, law, commerce. This situation made parents send their children to school to imbibe the white man's magic. At this point, it became obvious that the English Language ranked higher than other languages in Nigeria, being the language of the colonial masters. This period could be said to be the period in *'Arrow of God'* when Ezeulu sent his son to the white man to be his eye there so that if things work out well, he will enjoy through his son. This period was also associated with the agitation for independence which prompted the establishment of more schools where the English language was the language of instruction. From the foregoing, it is clear that before the whites left, they entrenched the English language in Nigeria. No known efforts were made by the whites to promote any of the indigenous Nigerian languages.

During the post-colonial stage, it was agreed at the Federal House that English language would be the language of instruction in schools until such a time any of the indigenous languages would be developed enough to replace it. More schools were established, and the government expanded in scope and magnitude and at all levels the language of instruction. During this period also various utterances were made regarding the position of the English language in Nigeria. Today, English language has become the language of Education, Government, Communication, Science and Technology, Administration, etc.

Having discussed the coming of the English language to Nigeria, it is also pertinent to identify the roles of English language in Nigeria. The English language plays the roles of Nigeria's official and National language. It is on record that there are over four hundred languages,

spoken in Nigeria (Bamgbose, 1973). However, this number staggers between three hundred and four hundred (Adetugbo, 1974, Adekunle, 1974 & Banjo, 1970). This situation has made it difficult for any of the tribes to understand any of the tongues. On this note, the English language has remained Nigeria's Official and National language used for national assignments. It is the language of Education, Administration, the Judiciary and even used for deliberations at the National Assembly.

Since there is an understanding that the English language is Nigeria's official and National language, there is political stability in Nigeria. This is because no tribe's language is used as Nigeria's Lingua Franca which reduces lack of trust among Nigerians. Another important role of the English language to Nigerian is that it is the language of Science and Technology. Everything about Science and Technology is discussed in the English language for easy understanding. Again, the English language is used for international functions. The language of deliberations at the Organization of African Unity (OAU), United Nations Organization (UNO) and other international Organizations is the English language. It is therefore an advantage to Nigerians to effectively fit into the discussions that take place at such Organizations. Another important role of the English language to Nigerians is that it serves as Nigeria's language of Communication. This gap is covered because Nigeria's indigenous languages are not yet fit and ripe to usurp the position of the English language and function as Nigeria's lingua franca. This is why Nigeria is in search of a lingua franca and proposal of WAZOBIA is yet to be approved and implemented. Abstracting from roles of the English language in Nigeria, it is clear that Nigeria's indigenous languages have little or no roles with regard to discussion on the roles of English language (Upton & Lee-Thompson, 2001). Let us also understand that there are also other languages spoken in Nigeria presently. Some of these languages are Pidgin English and French. Examine the table below:

Roles & Functions of Languages

Language Categories	Cultural Identity	Intra-ethnic Communication	Science & Technology	Official Transaction & Mass Media	Education, Literature & Art	National Identity	International Communication
English	*	**	**	**	**	*	***
Indigenous Language	***	**	*	**	**	*	*
Pidgin English	*	***	*	*	*	*	*
French	*	*	*	*	*	*	**
Arabic	*	*	*	*	*	*	*

***Very High – Frequency Use; **High – Frequency Use; *Not – So Frequency Use

Analysis

It is very much evident from the table that English language has no cultural identity. This means that speaking the English language does not indicate any culture as being associated

with the language. The English language is spoken by people of different cultures because it is an international language. The English language is highly used for inter-ethnic communication especially in Nigeria, wherein hundreds of indigenous languages are spoken. It is also of high-frequency use in issues of science and Technology. Most technical diction in science and technology are in the English language. Again, the English language is of very high frequent use in official transaction and mass media. The language of mass media is the English language. The English language is also very–high frequently used in most countries as language of education, literature, and art. Again, it is to be noted that one cannot be identified as a citizen of a particular country when he speaks the English language because it is spoken by many countries. Also, the English language is very–high frequently used as the language of international communication.

Indigenous Languages

Drawing from the table above, indigenous languages very–highly show cultural identity. This is because language is part of culture. A Nigeria's ethnic group could easily be identified by his indigenous language. Also, to a high extent indigenous language helps inter-ethnic communication but have nothing to offer in communication towards area of science and technology. Indigenous languages have high-frequent use in official transaction and mass media. For instance, some mass media render their news in indigenous languages. Some indigenous languages are highly used as language of education, literature, and art for example the Nigerian policy on Education states that the language of instruction for early primary school pupils must be the Nigerian indigenous languages. Indigenous language does not portray national identity. Finally, indigenous languages are not–so–frequently used for international communication. As earlier stated, in the case of Nigeria as enshrined in Nigeria's 1977. National Language Policy, Section II, Paragraph II, to achieve the set objective of the policy government ensures that the medium of instruction will be principally the mother – tongue or the language of the immediate community.

Pidgin English

Pidgin English does not show the cultural identity of speakers, wherein it is of very high frequent use in a situation of inter-ethnic communication. This is because pidgin is a meaningful language, which arises to fulfil certain communication needs among people that have not common language. It is a language adopted to bridge some gap in communication between people. Pidgin is not used in science and technology and does not show any national identity. It is not so frequently used in official transactions and mass media because it is regarded as the language of traders, touts and artisans, and other people of low class. Irrespective of its official status, available literature shows that Pidgin is used in Education, Literature, and the Arts. A typical example is the book 'I wan bi President' (Ohaeto, 1988). However, it is not so frequently used in education and international communication.

French

French language does not make for cultural identity and inter-ethnic communication. It does not exhibit national identity and is used for science and technology respectively. French is not – so frequently used for official transactions, in the Mass Media, Education, Literature and Arts. It is highly frequently used for international communication. This is because French

language is not a special language, but the type of language that is spoken or taught for the purposes of solving a peculiar linguistic problem.

Arabic

Arabic is a Semitic language that first emerged in the first to fourth centuries. It is the lingua franca of the Arab world and liturgical language of Islam. Arabic does not exhibit cultural identity because it is a religious language. It does not function in science and technology and is also not used for national identity. Arabic partly plays a role in inter – ethnic communication and therefore is not so frequently used in official transactions, Mass Media, International communication, Education, Literature, and the Arts because it is only used in Islamic education. Also, many of the research communities in the world have devoted good time to the history, roles, and functions of the English language. It is also necessary to point out that in spite of these roles, there are cases against the use of English language in Nigeria. One of the problems of using the English language in Nigeria is its relegation of indigenous culture to the background as culture and language go hand in glove. The adoption of English language as Nigeria's official language has made many Nigerians to adopt English culture. Nature shaped our speech organs in our language, and one cannot think in another language. This is depicted in one of Bernard Dadie's poem titled "I give you thanks my God".

Nevertheless, there is prejudice in the use of the English language in Nigeria. Nigeria is a black country inhabited by people. Yet the language that is used as the national language denigrates the very colour for example black sheep (a good – for nothing person), black magic (witchcraft); blacklist (a list of dangerous people), black Maria (a van for carrying offenders), black market (unlawful buying and selling of goods), etc. Nigerian's speaking the language see it as an insult on them. Moreover, the continuous use of English language in Nigeria encourages language imperialism. The fact is that Nigerian's are being controlled economically and linguistically as long as English language remains the language of science and technology, trade and commerce, Nigerian's are indirectly told to take the language seriously, otherwise they would have no or little access to modern science and technology, trade and commerce, etc. This has eroded the culture as Nigerian and now the native people think in other people's culture and thought pattern. This language imperialism has made the British council primarily interested in the English language and literature and does not fund serious research on the use of African languages. Again, why is there much serious research on the teaching of English as a second language than teaching of any of Nigeria's local active languages?

The English Language has colonized our local languages and has disastrous consequence on the growth of our local languages. These languages are not developing rapidly like Nigeria because we cannot enrich our local languages' orthography since the English language assumes the roles that our local language would play. Furthermore, the continuous use of language has relegated indigenous culture to the background so much so that Nigerian seems to be on the verge of losing her cultural heritage. This is evidenced in the dress, music, values, food, etc. Also, the use of English Language blocks communication channel as one must communicate in English for there to be transfer of information in a situation, wherein one has diverse indigenous languages. The implication is that no communication takes place when one cannot get a person who can speak the English language. Let us know that for the fact that we still use the English language as the official language in Nigeria, there must continue to be

infighting among ethnic groups because each tribe would continue to be hopeful that their indigenous language may be used as Nigeria's lingua franca. This infighting may even lead to violence among the tribes of Nigeria.

Suggestions

The argument on the role of language in the socialization process is non-exhaustive. The research covered the areas of Contemporary English by examining its role both as an agent of socialization and as a medium of socialization. English being a second language occupies an enviable position in the linguistic ecology of Nigeria both in status and domain respectively. Despite the denigrating comments on imperialistic tendencies of the English language, its neutrality role is all-encompassing. However, much work still needs to be carried out on the role of other languages, which will help in understanding the development of language through the process of socialization. Future studies would therefore find the present study pertinent in terms of literature to conduct comprehensive research.

Conclusion

This study revealed the importance of language, which is an indispensable tool for socialization and does not happen in isolation. Language serves not only as a medium of socialization but also as an agent of socialization. The active participation and interaction between the novices (learners) and professionals (teachers) facilitate the acquisition of knowledge of Contemporary English language in Nigeria, which is a multilingual nation. This active participation enables a proper understanding of the learning and development of Contemporary English. Moreover, to be linguistically and culturally adept, second language learners should actively participate in verbal interactions with experts / professionals who are more knowledgeable in the language. However, this might pose a problem in multilingual contexts where learners seldom use the second language outside the classroom and especially among members of same speech community. The nature of the classroom today poses lots of challenges to the teacher whose role is culture bound. However, the challenges can be circumvented through constant practice. This means that a lot of work needs to be done by the second language learner given the need for communicative and linguistic competence, which is the hub of language socialization.

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