

NIGERIAN LANGUAGES: (IGBO, HAUSA, YORUBA...): TOOLS FOR BETTER ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN NIGERIA

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Abstracts

The indigenous language of a child is so natural that the child thinks in it in every aspect. The knowledge acquired by the child can never be erased as long as indigenous language/mother-tongue is involved. The aim of this paper is to establish the role of indigenous languages in the effective learning of entrepreneurship in Nigeria schools/education. It looks at the types of entrepreneurship, its economic benefits and the benefits of using indigenous languages as medium of instruction in achieving the goal of an entrepreneur. The paper concludes that skills and businesses are effectively learned using the indigenous languages as medium of instruction than using the foreign languages as medium of instruction, which the learner may find difficult to understand. This will go a long way in positively affecting the growth of business education as a filed.

Keywords: *Nigerian languages, Entrepreneur, Entrepreneurship, Tools, Medium of instruction*

INTRODUCTION

A long history of close association between the language we speak and the environment within which it operates has led to a situation where every object, phenomenon or thought has more or less, got a verbal equivalence in our indigenous languages. The indigenous language which can also be seen as a mother-tongue in some cases is the language of the child immediate environment. The mother -tongue is acquired and not learned by the child. The child acquires the mother tongue from the Parents, Siblings, Uncles and Aunts. On the other hand, the child's mother-tongue (MT) can vary from that of his parents as a result of mobility factors. For instance, a child born of Hausa parents in Germany acquires German Language as his mother-tongue (MT) and not Hausa Language. This is because of environmental factor where the child sees himself. It also shows that language or culture is not hereditary according to Dom-Anyanwu (2007). In essence, the child mother-tongue (MT) can equally be his first language (NL₁) in situations where the child lives in the environment of his parents birth for a long time. By the term indigenous languages in this paper, the writer mean the mother-tongue (MT) the Nigerian learner, which include the three major Nigerian Languages; Igbo, Hausa, Yoruba and other indigenous Nigerian Languages in Nigeria. It is believed that the mother-tongue or the child's first language is very strong factor in his/her intellectual development. Entrepreneurship which is embedded in Business Education has to do with the process of setting up a business, taking it from an idea to be realization stage. It has to do with set up small business and learning of different skills to equip the learner for better living. This cannot be better achieved without or indigenous languages as medium of instruction (Oderinde, 1996). The child thinks in his first language and as such, any skill or business exposed the child to, using the child's natural language as a medium of instruction will be very easy for the child to understand and internalize, thereby making it possible for him or her to put in practice whatever he/she learned in the classroom. This is the reason why the Chinese are experts in hand-works. The children are thought using Chinese as the medium of instruction in anything they do be it business, religion or politics. No wonder all the toys used by our children are produced by Chinese children as school handworks.

Language is power. This paper is therefore of the view that if Nigerian languages are given the opportunity of being used as medium of instructions in the teaching and learning of business education as well as entrepreneurship in Nigerian schools, there will be business boom which will equally lead to the economic growth of the nation. One thing is for the learner to understand the language of instructions and another thing being thought. With the use of the indigenous languages in Nigeria as medium of instructions in business education as well as entrepreneurship, the learner will only concentrate on how to learn the target skill and not learning how to understand the language of instruction first. Let us look at this scenario as a good example.

The Concept of Entrepreneurship

Entrepreneurship is the process of setting up a business by an entrepreneur who is ready to bear the risk of the business as well as enjoy the benefits that come out of the business. The entrepreneur is the initiator of the business ideas. In order words, entrepreneurship aggregates capital and labour in order to produce goods or services for profit making. Entrepreneurship is one of the resources categorized by economists as integral to production. One thing that is clear hear is that entrepreneur combines the other resources like land, labour and capital to manufacture goods for the services of humanity and the society at large. One notable characteristic of entrepreneurship is that it involves people who are industrious and are ready to dive into things or ventures they are passionately in love with. They are not forced by anyone to take up the business or skills which they are into. And as such, they go to any length to make sure they succeed and always look forward to being a boss of their own (Udebuani, 2016). Though starting up a business is not all that easy as far as entrepreneurship is concerned. It requires a lot of time, dedication and failure. But the key is resilient. The entrepreneur must have the zeal to push on and on until the business stabilizes.

There are four types of entrepreneurship thus:

- Small business entrepreneurship
- Scabble startup entrepreneurship
- Large company entrepreneurship
- Social entrepreneurship

All these types of entrepreneurship when carried out using the indigenous language of the learners as medium of instruction, comes out successfully because people at the grassroot are involved and there is free communication which is the key to every business boom.

Entrepreneurship is also effective in the economic growth of a nation thus:

- It creates new business for starters thereby creating employments
- It adds to the national gross income. This increases high earning and the higher earners contribute to the national economy by paying their taxes.
- Entrepreneurship creates social change. They often introduce unique innovations which outshine the traditional ones. Example is, the invention of the "Smart Phone".

Due to the fact that entrepreneurship invests in community projects, it is therefore wise to teach the learners of business/entrepreneurship education in Nigerian schools with the indigenous languages as medium of instruction for better understanding and use since it is the language they think in. This will make them successful entrepreneurs.

Objectives of the Study

The main objectives of this study include:

- To call to the minds of Nigerians the benefits of using the Nigerian indigenous languages as medium of instruction in teaching the learners.
- To make the educational curriculum more meaningful to the learners and the society at large.

Method of the Study

The methods used for this study are traditional and conventional methods. The traditional method was used in the form of indigenous language to enable the researcher have access to the data used for the study while the conventional method was used to know exactly in comparison the understanding of the business skills using the indigenous languages as medium of instruction and using the foreign languages.

The Scenario

Yetunde is a small girl of Osun State. She was brought to Lagos to live with her Aunt. Her first day at school, she was placed in Primary 5 based on the placement evaluation result. At the end of the class on business studies the class teacher gave the class a take home assignment thus:

Assignment on “pot moulding”

Get some clay soil, water and shear butter mix the clay soil with a good quantity of water. Mould it into a pot with the cover pot. Allow it dry small and the dissolve the shear butter with fire and gentility rub it on the pot to make it glitter. Then place it back on the sun to dry. This assignment must be submitted in 3 weeks time as your continuous Assessment (C.A)

Yetunde copied the assignment just as her other mates did but she did not understand anything about the questions because she could not speak English well. The next morning, Yetunde refused to go to school. When her Aunt asked why she did not want to go to school, she started crying. The Aunt was angry and asked her why say anything. After much crying, she told her Aunt that she want to go back to Osun State. The Aunt was astonished because it was the girl that volunteered to come to Lagos and live with her. The Aunt calmed her down and asked her in a loving manner, what really happened. She went inside her room, opened her school bag and brought out a book where she copied the assignment and gave to the Aunt. The Aunt went through the assignment and asked her what happened and she answered with demonstrations:

..... Mr. Ogbo The Aunt giggled and asked her not to worry, that she would explain the assignment to her the way she would understand, which she did by translating the assignment into Yoruba language thus:

Ikoko mimọ

Ohun elo: amọ, omi ati ori

Fi omi si amọ ki ẹ roopọ

E mọ ikiko ati omọ rẹ

E jẹki o gbẹ ki ẹ si fi

Ori ti a ti yo pẹlu Pa ẹhin

Ikoko na ki o to maa dan.

E saa si orun ki o le gbẹ

Yetunde became happy and went to school with happiness. Immediately after school, she stated gathering the materials for the assignment. At the end of the 3 weeks, Yetunde submitted her own assignment which the class teacher said was the best because she did not only mould the pot with grid materials, but she went further to put designs on the pot which showed clearly that she understand the assignment well simply because the Aunt taught her the assignment using Yoruba language as a medium.

Potentials of using Indigenous Languages as Medium of Instruction in Business/Entrepreneurship Education

- The unique traditional technology business skills and entrepreneurship in Nigeria are yet to be tapped /harnessed through the effective use of indigenous languages as medium of instruction in our schools (Dom-Anyanwu, 2010).
- Using the indigenous language as medium of instruction in learning business and entrepreneurship education will lead to better understanding of the various skills by the learners/starters.
- It will help the learners think in their first language which they know well and that will give room for creative thoughts and visualization of images in their inner minds.
- Using indigenous languages as medium of instruction will help the learners learn the business skills within short period of time because they already understood the skills and their processes in their indigenous language. All they need to do is just to put actions to the development of the skill.
- It will help them in producing better results in their business endeavours since there will be easy communication.
- Using indigenous languages as medium of instruction in educating trainers of entrepreneurship which contribute immensely to the growth of the national economy which will lead to national development in all aspects.
- It will increase the communication of the entrepreneurs with the communities especially at the grass root. Thereby reaching out to the general public who are the final consumers of the products.

Conclusion

Teaching a child in a language he or she understands makes him feel free and connected. This is because the child will only be battling on how to learn what the teacher is teaching and not to understand the language he (the teacher) is using. In teaching the Nigerian children using English as medium of instruction, some children do not understand the language what more of understanding the subject that is being taught. In most cases, it takes them a lot of time and opportunities to understand the language of the teacher. This is because it is a foreign language to the learners who had already acquired their indigenous languages as their mother-tongue and their first language.

Using indigenous languages as medium of instruction in business and entrepreneurship education cannot only lead to effective mastery of skills but will also lead to economic boom in the nation. The child is better behaved in a language he/she understands better than the one he does not understand. Using the language of the child's immediate environment as medium of instruction in schools will bridge the gap between home and the school. Skills are better and effectively learned when the learner understands the language of the teachers. Therefore, for effective learning in business education and entrepreneurship, the indigenous Nigerian languages should be used as the medium of instruction if we want the nation's economy grow.

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