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IMPROVING SYNERGY BETWEEN INFORMAL AND FORMAL EDUCATION IN NIGERIA LANGUAGES: A PRELIMINARY STUDY OF LANGUAGE PEDAGOGY

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ABSTRACT

The impact of informal education in a person's life cannot be downplayed; sometimes it is the edge that an individual needs to succeed in a space. Learning a new complex set of knowledge and skills are both scary and exciting: Scary because you are adventuring into the unknown; exciting because the unknown holds great potential. Many people get stuck in the beginning stage. They do not understand the basics of learning or the learning process, setting themselves up to fail before they start. They waste time and energy on the new topic or skill, middling along with slow progress. Feeling frustrated and defeated by a lack of progress, they give up — with little success and learning from the time and energy. However, the paper focuses on the following; different language use in Nigeria (see Table 1), differences between formal and informal education, synergy between informal and formal education, pedagogical approaches to language and Pedagogy of Language was presented in table 2. This paper finds out that improving synergy between informal and formal education in Nigeria languages one has to apply all these methods, applications, simplifications and evaluations as it is stated in this paper below. It was also discovered that language acquisition and learning has nothing to do with mother tongue. Table 1 clarifies this argument. To achieve these aims, curriculum and government policy on education should be considered.

Keywords: Synergy, Curriculum, Pedagogical approaches, Linguistics repertoire.

Introduction

The effectiveness of using the language a learner is comfortable with, a language in which he can express his thought and translate his internal ideas into articulate sentences has been established by many scholars (Taiwo 1976, Emenanjo1996, Osborn 2007, Olanrewaju 1996, Oluwole 2008, Obanya 1992). Though some other scholars consider the use of mother tongue or Nigerian languages in modern education as one of the problems militating against

qualitative teaching and learning of the English language (Kolawole and Dele 2002). Emenanjo (1996) states, 'Formal education in Nigerian languages, Aku (Yoruba) began way back in 1831. Yet up till now; not much progress appears to have been made in education in Nigerian languages, irrespective of the 1926 Education Edict of the colonial government, and the many noble sentiments of indigenous federal and state government and valiant activities of the Linguistic Association of Nigeria.

The National Policy on Education (2004) recommends that the Nigerian primary school child should be well grounded in his or her mother tongue apart from learning English and/or any other language as the L_2 or L_3. The National Language Centre (1975) in a paper titled 'The importance of language learning on the overall development of the child in primary school: solutions to the Nigerian problem' states, 'For education to be meaningful, the child should be taught in his mother tongue which he can both read and write.' The use of mother tongue in education is a practical issue and students that are taught with an indigenous language have to struggle with the understanding of the foreign language which is being used as the language of instruction as well as the complexities of the concept that is being learnt. Taiwo (1976) states, 'There is no favourable means of rapport between the teacher and a child on his first day at school than a common language, which is the child's mother tongue. As the child progresses in his adventure of schooling, the mother tongue is a reassuring means of acquiring concepts and building them into ideas and skills.' If Nigeria as a nation is serious in her quest to raise a generation of citizens that are academically sound then we must revert to using the Nigerian languages as a medium of instruction in our schools.

Formal Education is a process by which a teacher, an expert or a specialized tutor in a specific field is hired to teach or impact knowledge to the target audience/learner. Is different from informal education which is based on self-learning and training where the learner indulges in gathering raw data/materials for his personal consumption and collecting these data for personal research to acquired education. Both are called language acquisition. Linguists have identified five basic components of language acquisition which includes: phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics, and pragmatics found across languages. Chomsky's theory of language acquisition argues that human brain structures naturally allow for the capacity to learn and use languages. Chomsky believed that rules for language acquisition are innate (inborn) and strengthen naturally as humans grow and develop. Weather personal efforts or inviting an expert to do the job, how do we acquire knowledge for individual consumption is another aspects we look at? Pedagogical approaches to language teaching and learning is a modern view of how human beings acquire knowledge and how this knowledge is used to direct behaviour, intelligence, problem-solving and decision-making, thinking and thinking skills, implications for learning and teaching in the classroom. The synergy between this formal and informal, Chomsky's theory of language acquisition and five Pedagogical approaches which includes: constructivist approach, the collaborative approach, the reflective approach, the integrative approach, and finally, the inquiry-based approach. The oral approach and situational language teaching and teaching Proficiency through Reading

and Storytelling all of these can never be left out. How can we improve in these areas such as classroom performance, human beings acquisition of language learning, linguistics approach to learning, language pedagogy for all discipline both in formal and informal activities becomes our focus target in this paper?

Below is the table 1 showing language use in Nigeria. Now, we are going to look at the following aspects in language use in language so that we can ascertain the synergy between the informal and formal education in Nigeria. Therefore, the skillful use of language in classroom performance or pedagogy exercise makes the Language as a vehicle for the storage of information and learning artifacts.

TABLE 1: Language Use in Nigeria

DIFFERENT PEOPLE (DOMAIN)	ADDRESSES	ENVIRONMENT	TOPIC(S)	LANGUAGES
Friendship	Friends	market/saloon	Planning/Restoring/ Harmonizing	Choice Language (L_1 or L_2)
Religion	Priest	Church	About Christ/faith	Choice Language (L_1 or L_2)
Education	Teachers	Primary/Secondary	Teaching English Language	Choice Language (L_1 or L_2)
Education/Qualification	Lecturers	University	Solving based on discipline	English, Igbo, Pigin, Hausa or Yoruba
Administration	Officials	Office	Improving in the capacity and knowledge	English, Igbo, Pigin, Hausa or Yoruba
Family	Parents	Home	Formulating a formulae for the way forward	Choice Language (L_1 or L_2)
Organization	Public/Civil servant and businessmen	Working place	Fuel subsidy/Palliative	English, Igbo, Pigin, Hausa or Yoruba

Source: Onwuegbuchunam, M.O, Walter C.O, Ebiem P.O (2023)

The table above reveals that the imposition of the English language on the children to be their mother tongue produces adverse effects as it brings confusion on the side of the child who has acquired and uses his indigenous language effectively in his everyday activities. The factors responsible for language choice in a bilingual/multilingual in a different domain are numerous. In the educational system of Nigeria today, both formal and informal system of education, three major Nigerian indigenous languages (Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba) function effectively in communication depending on his/her L_1 or L_2. Many now prefer informal education system with the under listed points:

1. It gives a large number of people access to education and personal

development so that the rural population can learn about agriculture.
2. It promotes an interactive and independent society.
3. There will be effective and meaningful communication between the teacher and learners and outside the school environment.
4. The development of nature judgment is enhanced in the students.

Synergy between Informal and Formal Education

Informal and formal educations are the most common forms of education in terms of learning and acquisition in the 21st century. Informal education undoubtedly has some similarities/synergies with formal education both in classroom performance and five basic components of linguistics approach. These include:

1. Both formal and informal educations are means of inculcating positive changes in psycholinguistics without brain impediment.
2. They impact knowledge, skills, thinking and re-thinking during the language acquisition.
3. These two types of education depend on active participation in classroom performance and language pedagogy.

Differences between Formal and Informal Education

1. **Curriculum**

Curriculum can be defined as the totality of students' experiences that occur in systematically planned forms in the educational process. It is a laid down plan that help the both the teachers and lecturers direction in driving to students goals and objectives. The curriculum or the course outlines and scheme of work as it is called in secondary school levels contribute much in informal education. This makes learning in informal education easy and understandable than formal education where learning and searching of data are narrowed and limited. In informal education, curriculum is open for different levels of learning and wide range of learning processes.

2. **Structure**

Here, we have non-formal and informal learning, both has to do with the structure and acquisition of language. In informal education, learning can take place in the church, offices, school, social gathering, family and every day activities. Meanwhile, in formal learning or processes, learning process is limited to the environment, family, uniform, institution and so on. There is no hierarchical way of schooling or orders of learning:

- Nursery stage
- Primary stage
- Secondary stage
- Tertiary stage

Learning also involves class assessment/evaluation, test in different disciplines or subjects. At the end of each stage, certificates or degrees are awarded based on the requirement. This can never occur in formal setting.

3. **Channel Of Communication**

This is another way of learning, from sender, coding, encoding and decoding until it gets to the receiver, which is the final level of transmission. Therefore, the feedback matters a lot for the responses. There are number of different types of communication channels existed, such as-Face-to-face conversations, videoconferencing, audio-conferencing, emails, written letters and memos, chats and messaging, blogs and formal written

documents. A communication channel is the medium, mean, manner or method through which a message is sent to its intended receiver. The basic channels are written (hard copy print or digital formats), oral or spoken, and electronic and multimedia. Nowadays, informal learning is more accessible owing to media and technology devices available for self-learning. Therefore, other synergies are;

- Informal education is not goal oriented, while formal education is focused on requirements to achieve specific set goal.
- Informal education does not require payment of school fees before learning commerce.
- Informal learning is time efficient, whereas, formal education/learning takes time.
- Informal learning makes room for broader and better learning experiences as it exposes us to various concepts throughout our lives.
- It is an excellent form of natural learning as you can anywhere and anytime.
- Both work hand in hand to impact knowledge to every individual at every point in time.

4. **Oral Presentation**

In literature, oral presentation matters a lot because it is used to teach in moonlight discussion. Oral presentations are a form of assessment that calls on students to use the spoken word to express their knowledge and understanding of a topic. It allows capture of not only the research that the students have done but also a range of cognitive and transferable skills. A Presentation of Learning (POL) requires students to present their learning to an audience, in order to prove that they are ready to progress. Effective POLs include both academic content and the student's reflection on their social and personal growth. There are various steps in preparing an effective Oral Presentation. They are; determine the purpose of your presentation and identify your own objectives, know your audience and what it knows, define your topic, arrange your material in a way that makes sense for your objectives, compose your presentation and create visual aids etc.

Pedagogical Approaches to Language

Pedagogical approaches which includes: constructivist approach, the collaborative approach, the reflective approach, the integrative approach, and finally, the inquiry-based approach. The oral approach and situational language teaching and teaching proficiency through reading and storytelling all of these can never be left out. Language pedagogy also involves the approach, design and procedure. According to wikipedia.org/wiki/Language pedagogy, they describe **Language pedagogy** as the discipline concerned with the theories and techniques of teaching language. It has been described as a type of teaching wherein the teacher draws from their own prior knowledge and actual experience in teaching language. The approach is distinguished from research-based methodologies. There are several methods in language pedagogy but they can be classified into three: structural, functional, and interactive. Each of these encompasses a number of methods that can be utilized in order to teach and learn languages. Below are formal ways you can use to impact knowledge in a classroom:

1. **Constructive Approach**

After teaching in a classroom by an expert, depending the discipline, an evaluation method or approach is used to ascertain the extent by which the learner have learnt what he/she was taught. Therefore, learners construct knowledge rather than just passively take in information. They are allowed to come with new innovative based on the subject taught. This method is used to promote learning in a formal education setting both internally and externally learning. Whereby giving chance to cognitive constructivism, social constructivism and radical constructivism.

2. **The collaborative Approach**

It is also called team work or cooperative approach. This method of teaching is where you allow all the students to showcase his/her talents especially in formal education. It is pertinent to know the significance of this team work such as self-trust, development of higher-level thinking, oral communication, self-management, and leadership skills, promotion of student-faculty interaction, existence of mutual understanding with the teachers, increase in student retention, self-esteem, and responsibility, cooperation and harmony among themselves.

3. **The reflective Approach**



Using the above diagram, reflective method simply means to recall an event, teaching, learning or an analysis and action, using them in a specific way maybe for evaluation or conclusion. This method is best used during the examination/test periods.

4. **The integrative approach**

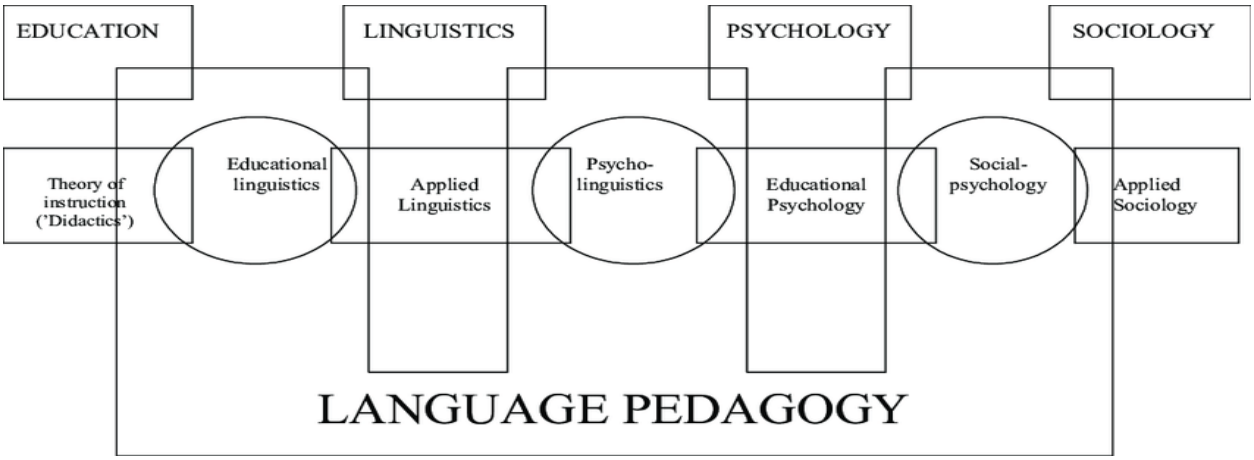
Integrative approach to learning in which different subject areas are integrated, intertwining, and permeating each other. This is system where the learner applies a previous knowledge to current one in order to achieve a specific aims. One of the good advantages of this is that a teacher can encourage students to identify a problem in their community, such as an environmental issue

or traffic problems that is important to the students.

5. **The inquiry-based Approach**

This is stage where students are allowed to ask questions, observe, investigate and discover by solving by themselves.

TABLE 2: Pedagogy of Language



Source: researchgate.net

In table 2 above, this shows different levels discipline in education functioning differently. Teaching and learning occurs in each level and it is refers as theory of instruction. The synergy between them is not much in as much applied linguistics is concerned with practical applications of language studies, for example language teaching/pedagogy, translation in different forms, and speech therapy. The primary aim of applied linguistics is to analyze and solve language problems in the real world. Since psycho-linguistics deals with brain impediment/acquisition such as language comprehension, language production, and first and second language acquisition especially in a classroom usage. The major aspects of psycho-linguistics are; spoken word recognition, sentence comprehension, sentence production, message construction, cross-linguistic comparisons, and neuro-linguistics. While psychology deals with mind and human behavior towards a particular situation or events, sociology have to do with society, human behavior and their interaction.

Conclusion

There are ways to progress through the beginning stage of the new topic or skill and move into the intermediate stage: Understand the basics of learning, Create a solid foundation of basic (mental) models for concepts — knowledge and skills and acknowledge and deal with challenges in the learning process. Language plays an important role in teaching and learning situations, not only as a subject taught in school but also, as the vehicle through which

information is shared between the learner and the teacher.

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