



## LANGUAGE EDUCATION: A PANACEA FOR CORRUPT PRACTICES IN NIGERIA

**USMAN GURAMA; AND JONATHAN SABO TURYA**

*Department of General Studies Education School of Education, Federal  
College of Education (Technical), Gombe*

### ***Abstract***

*This paper examines language education as a panacea for corrupt practices in Nigeria. Language education is crucial if the current trend of corruption in the country is to be curbed. The paper discusses corruption in Nigeria, effects of corruption in Nigeria, language education as a panacea for corrupt practices in Nigeria, mother tongue teaching, the teaching of indigenous language and teaching language in classrooms. The paper discovers that the level of corruption in Nigeria is high. At the end it offered recommendations, one of the recommendations suggests that there is the need for Nigeria to adopt a national language for mutual integration.*

***Keywords:*** *Language, Education, Panacea, Corrupt, Practices.*

### **INTRODUCTION**

Language interacts with every aspect of human life in society, and it can be understood only if it is considered in relation to society. Each language is both a working system of communication in the period and in the community wherein it is used and also the product of its history and the source of its future development, any account of language must consider it from both these points of view. Robins (2021). Human life in its present form would be impossible and inconceivable without the use of language. People have long recognized the force and significance of language. Naming—applying a word to pick out and refer to a fellow human being, an animal, an object, or a class of such beings or objects—is only one part of the use of language, but it is an essential and prominent part. Language learning is an active process that begins at birth and continues throughout life. Students learn language as they use it to communicate their thoughts, feelings, and experiences, establish relationships

with family members and friends, and strive to make sense and order of their world. They may come to school speaking more than one language, or learn another language in school. It is important to respect and build upon each student's first language. Experience in one language will benefit the learning of other languages. In their early years, children develop language informally. Long before they understand explicit language rules and conventions, they reproduce and use language to construct and convey new meaning in unique ways. Later, language learning occurs in specific contexts for specific purposes, such as learning about a particular topic, participating in the community, and pursuing Moeller (2015). National language has many unique properties among which are that it places dual role in most known formal educational system. Thus it features, on the one hand, as a subject on the school curriculum, and accordingly permits one to take language education in much the same way that one would talk of Physics Education, Science Education, economic Education etc. On the other hand and completely unlike any of the subject on the curriculum, it also serves all over the world the medium of instruction in all subjects, including itself. This later role of it is fully captured under the title of language in education. Thus, language education and language in education refer to the two distinct roles that natural language plays in education.

### **Corruption in Nigeria**

Corruption is the biggest among the challenges in Nigeria. It is clear to every citizen of Nigeria that the level of corruption in the country is high. Corruption in the country is found in all the entire sector, there is every possibility of observing corrupt practices when critically examined. Corruption is dishonest or fraudulent conduct by those in power typically involving bribery. Corruption is illegitimate use of power to benefit a private interest (Morris, 1991). Corruption is the giving of bribe by a person to an official so that the truth will not be told. It involves the embezzlement of public fund for personal use. Corruption is involving in any act which is considered to be criminal act according to the law of the particular society. Nigeria, which is the most populated country in Africa, has been ranked high in corruption by transparency international index and other notable organizations that checkmate the level of corrupt practices in any country. It does not tell well of Nigeria at all. This high corruption ranking has been affecting almost all Nigerians that migrated to

foreign countries as foreigners have the perception that since the country is marked corrupt, almost all of them share in the practice.

In the year 2000 Transparency International carried out a survey on the corruption level in some countries. The survey was carried out in ninety (90) countries including Kenya, Cameroun, Angola, Nigeria, Cote D'Ivoire, Zimbabwe, Ethiopia, Ghana, Senegal, Zambia, India, Venezuela, Moldova, and others. At the end of the ranking, Nigeria was seen as the most corrupt in that ranking because the country occupied the 90<sup>th</sup> position in terms of transparency. That is to say that Nigeria was the most corrupt country in the year 2000.

In the year 2001, Nigeria was ranked 2<sup>nd</sup> most corrupt nation in the world after Bangladesh. The countries that were surveyed that year by Transparency International were 91 in number. This shows that corruption in Nigeria improved by one step when compared with that of 2000. Still from the same source, in the year 2002, Nigeria was also ranked the 2<sup>nd</sup> most corrupt country in the world, after the organization surveyed 102 counties, Nigeria was seen at the bottom occupying the 101 position in terms of confidence interval (C1).

In the year 2003, Nigeria occupied the position of 2<sup>nd</sup> most corrupt country in the world. What it implies is that the country did not make any effort in improving its corrupt state. Bangladesh in the year still relaxed as the most corrupt in that year as it occupied the bottom of the table after 133 countries were surveyed.

The year 2004 ranking showed a little improvement when compared with that of the past four years. Nigeria in 2004 was the 3<sup>rd</sup> most corrupt country in the world performing better than Bangladesh and Haiti in that year, Haiti was the world most corrupt nation followed by Bangladesh after 145 nations were surveyed.

The record on corruption in Nigeria really improved in the year 2005. The number of countries surveyed by Transparency International in 2006 of countries that were surveyed in that year was 163 in number. The result showed that the government of the country and the citizens became interested on the level of corruption in Nigeria. In 2006, Nigeria was ranked the 18<sup>th</sup> corrupt country in the world. It is important to know that Haiti was the world most corrupt nation in the year 2006.

There was another publication on the level of corruption in Nigeria using corruption perception index (CPI) by Transparency International. Among the

180 countries surveyed by the body in the year 2007, Nigeria ranked 148. From the result, shows that Nigeria was 32<sup>nd</sup> most corrupt country in the world in that year. According to the perception index of Transparency International, Nigeria was ranked 144<sup>th</sup> out of the 146 countries, beating Bangladesh and Haiti to last position. Analyst of the anti-graft/anti-corruption laws in Nigeria shows that corruption will continue in spite of the laws because the perpetrators do not fear any consequences (Oyinola 2011). In 2012, Transparency International deemed Nigeria one of the most corrupt nations in the world (Uzochukwu 2013). In that year, the country ranked 139<sup>th</sup> out of the 176 surveyed countries and it shows that the level of corruption in the country is high. Subtracting 139 from 176 gives 37 and the result showed that the Federal Republic of Nigeria was 37<sup>th</sup> most corrupt nation in the year 2012.

### **Effects of Corruption in Nigeria**

The negative effects or consequences of corruption in Nigeria are many among these are:

**Poor investment:** Unemployment in Nigeria would have been eradicated to some extent if only investors are attracted to the country. Companies that would have invested in Nigeria are afraid because they do not know if the corrupt practice will ruin their production industries with time. Because of this, they refuse to invest in the country.

**Rise in Poverty:** When the heads in public service are busy laundering the money that are supposed to be used to create employment for the masses and reduce poverty level of the country. Just as the rise in poverty as statistically given in that of 2004 and 2008, and since the government is selfish and does not want to help the poor, poverty continues to rise in Nigeria.

**Poor National Development:** Any country with high corruption level is likely to experience developmental bankruptcy. A situation where some Chief Executive Officers of companies indulge in corrupt practices to make their money means that the country will suffer from development, be it economic development or otherwise. When Nigerians keep on shifting (laundering) the country's money to foreign countries, what it implies is that there will be less economic development in Nigeria while the economy of the country receives the money is being promoted.

**National Crisis:** So many crises in Nigeria today are as a result of corruption in the country. The insecurity in Nigeria brought about by Boko Haram is a consequence/effect of corruption in the country. Corrupt politicians are fighting the government of President Goodluck Jonathan using Boko Haram as their agent of national crisis because they do not want him to succeed. The attack by Boko Haram has caused national disorderliness in Nigeria and seriously affected the economy of the country.

### **The concept of Language**

Robins (2021) refers to language as it interacts with every aspect of human life in society, and it can be understood only if it is considered in relation to society. It is a means of communication within speech community which helps to sustain relationship with other people. It is a vehicle for sharing ideas, thoughts, feelings experiences, using speech, sounds and symbols. Language and communication are inseparable. This is because language is the principal means for communication. A good mastery of language makes communication easy. Language could be non-verbal, verbal or written, and must convey exactly what the speaker or writer has in mind to convey to the listener or reader for communication to take place.

### **Language Education**

Language education is the teaching and learning of a foreign or second language. It has to do with language policy and planning. Language education is acquisition of specialized knowledge, skills and other capabilities in language in a formal educational institution. It refers to the study of art of language which, in effect involves the understanding of the nature and importance of language as a vehicle for communication and insight into the processes of language development. It further includes the techniques of developing the four language skills (Ugoji and Stella, 2010).

Language education is a branch of applied linguistics that is more commonly used with regard to second language learning of a foreign language. The study of language education is based on the general importance of language as an instrument for human activities on earth (Haddy, 2011). Given the fact that language is the sole means of inculcating knowledge, skills and competencies, there is the need for teachers of all subjects who employ the use of language in

raising other educationists for other fields of knowledge to have some specialized knowledge and understanding of the mechanics of the language in order to provide their learners with some deeper understanding of the science of the language and equip them with skills for better proficiency in manipulating the language art. By so doing, the pace of learning is accelerated and the younger generation develops high level of scientific, political, socio economic and technological advancement which is the hallmark of sustainable peace in Nigeria. Language education and learning are so closely related that it is very rare to discourse one process without discussing the other. It is the bridge that one crosses to communicate and share ideas with people of different cultures and learn in school. According to Makiluwa (2001).

Language education has two dimensions vis-à-vis language in education and language of education. The former refers to language taught or learn in an educational system as a school subject, while the later has to do with language used as medium of instruction.

### **Mother Tongue Teaching**

The country is believed to have about 400 distinct languages. As each of the languages is by definition a mother tongue, in the theory they all qualify to be taught as school subject and the NPE policy on language education in Primary and Junior Secondary school. However, because most of them each have such small numbers of speakers, it will not appear at all practical to actually teach them as school subject. For precisely this reason, according to Alhassan H.O.et al (2015), the former national language center, now transferred into the Current Language Development Centre (LDC) and placed under the Nigeria Educational Research and Development Council (NERDC), in 1976 suggested that, in addition to the three major languages, viz: Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba only the following nine of the remaining 387 or so indigenous languages in the country should be allowed to feature in the country's formal school system: Edo, Fulfulde, Ibibio, Idoma, Ijaw, Kanuri, Igala, Nupe and Tiv.

Technically very sound as that suggestion may actually be, it overlooks or completely ignores the degree of loyalty sense of the so called minority groups feel towards their representative languages. As a result of which they appear ready to go to any length to ensure that these languages are formally taught to their children in school. One such group is formed by the Urhobos of delta State,

for whose language commercially printed primers and readers have existed for about ten years now.

### **Teaching of indigenous languages as second language**

The teaching of the three major indigenous languages as second languages is faced with both logistic and conceptual problems. To take the later first, the national policy on education requires each school child at the Junior Secondary School level to study one of those three languages in addition to his mother tongue. However, for practical reasons, many school children cannot actually study their mother tongues but must study an indigenous language of wider communication instead in primary school as well as the Junior Secondary School. This being the case, suppose the language of wider communication that some such children have to study as their mother tongue or first language (L1) is one of the three major indigenous languages as could well be the case for children in Bauchi, Plateau and Kaduna States, for example, where Hausa will appear to serve as a language of wider communication and in parts of Ondo, Edo and Kogi States, while Yoruba similarly serve as a language of wider communication. In that event, should such children be required to study yet another major indigenous language as their second language (L2)? This is an important policy question to which different answers have been given by different observers of the scene in the country. Thus, Alhassan et al (2015), for example, feels that such children, by having indigenous language as their L1 will have satisfied both the letter and the spirit of section 1, Paragraph 8 of NPE, which says: In addition of appreciating the importance of language in the educational process, and as a means of preserving the peoples' culture, the government consider it to be in the interest of national unity that each child should be encouraged to learn one the three major languages other than his own mother tongue. In this connection, government considers the three major languages in Nigeria to be Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba.

### **Teaching foreign language in classrooms**

Language education may take place as a general school subject or in a specialized language school. There are many methods of teaching languages. Some have fallen into relative obscurity and others are widely used; still others

have a small following, but offer useful insights. While sometimes confused, the terms “approach”, “method” and “techniques” are hierarchical concepts. An approach is a set of assumptions about the nature of language and language learning, but does not involve procedure or provide any details about how such assumptions should be implemented into the classroom setting. Such can be related to second language acquisition theory.

***There are three principal approaches:***

1. The structural view treats languages as a system of structurally related elements to code meaning (e.g grammar).
2. The functional view sees language as a vehicle to express or accomplish a certain function, such as requesting something.
3. The interactive view sees language as a vehicle for the creation and maintenance of social relations, focusing on patterns of moves, acts, negotiations and interaction found in conversation exchanges. This approach has been fairly dominant since the 1980s.

A method is a plan for presenting the language the language material to be learned and should be based upon a selected approach. In order for an approach to be translated into a method, an instructional system must be designed considering the objectives of the teaching/learning, how the content is to be selected and organized, the types of tasks to be performed, the roles of students, and the roles of teachers.

A technique (or strategy) is a very specific concrete stratagem or trick designed to accomplish an immediate objective. Such are derived from the controlling method.

**Conclusion**

Language Education serves as one of the panacea for corrupt practices in Nigeria. Language is a powerful weapon human beings use to communicate with one another. Corruption can be eradicated when language education is high priority in the country.

**Recommendations**

*The following recommendations are suggested:*



1. There is need for Nigeria to adopt a national language for mutual integration.
2. Nigeria should adopt a second official language.
3. Credence should be given to the learning of foreign language.
4. The use of mother tongue should be employed as medium of deliberation in the House of Assembly.

## **Reference**

- Alhassan, H. O, and Kadiri, A.A. {2015} International Journal of Education, Learning and Development. UK : European Centre for Research Training and Development. Vol 3, No4, pp. 29- 38.
- Alhassan, H. O, and Kadiri, A.A. {2015}, International Journal of Education, Learning and Development.UK : European Centre for Research Training and Development. Vol 3, No4, pp. 29- 38. In Bangbose, A.(ed.) language in education in Nigeria. Vol. i, Lagos, Nigeria. The National Language Centre, Federal Ministry of Education PP. 20-25.
- Alhassan, H. O, and Kadiri, A.A. {2015},International Journal of Education, Learning and Development. UK : European Centre for Research Training and Development
- Alhassan, H.O. (2015) Language planning for Education in Nigeria: some demographic linguistics and areal Factors, in Bangbose, A. (ed.) Language in Education in Nigeria, vol. 1. Lagos, Nigeria. The National language centre,, Federal Ministry of Education, PP.47-61.
- Fafunwa, A. B (1974) History of Education in Nigeria, London: George Allen Sunwin.
- Federal Republic of Nigeria, (1989) National Policy on Education, Revised. Lagos, Nigeria: NERDC press.
- Federal Republic of Nigeria, (1989) the constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, Ilorin, Nigeria: Waye Printers and Publishers.
- Gaoxuesong (Andy.(2010) Strategic language Learning. Multilingual Matters: UK : Library of congress cataloging in publication data.
- Haddy, Y. Y. (2011). Language Education: A Vehicle for Nigeria’s National Development under vision 20:2020,In Belt Journal of Education in Nigeria. Jos: Chuks Dee Production Company.
- Kirkpatrick, A and Zchang, x.(2002), Chinese Pragmatic Norms and China English”, World English, <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1111/1467-971X.00247>, Retrieved December, 2021.
- Kubota, K (1998) Ideologies of English in Japan” World English, <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1111/1467-971X.00105>. Retrieved December, 2021.
- Moeller and Theresa Catalano,(2015)Foreign Language Teaching and Learning <https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/33144931.pdf>. Retrieved December 2021.
- Morris, S.D. (1991) Corruption and Politics in con temporary Mexico. University of Alabama Press, Tuscaloosa
- Oyinda, O.A (2011) Corruption Eradication in Nigeria: An Appraisal library, Philosophy and Practice.<https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1573&context=libph> ilprac. Retrieved December, 2021.

- Perez-Milans, M. (2013), urban schools and English language Education in late modern China: Critical Sociolinguistics Ethnography. New York and London: Rutledge.
- Robins, R. H.(2021) Language. <https://www.britannica.com/topic/language>, Retrieved December, 2021.
- Uzochukwu, M.O (2013) Challenges in Nigeria and Solutions on how to resolve them. <https://soapboxie.com/world-politics/challenges-in-Nigeria-and-solutions>.Retrieved December, 2021