

Language, Culture and Character Training

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Abstract

The focus of this paper is to (further) stress how to use language to teach culture in order to attain unity and development. The importance of language to modify our cultural identity. Cannot be over- emphasized. In Nigeria, each language always caters for her cultural and traditional entities, despite the existence of many languages. We cannot teach culture without socialization. Consequently, findings revealed that culture is the way of life especially in respect of the general customs and beliefs of a particular group of people at a particular time. The paper, therefore, recommends that any language should be able to inculcate culture into the student's life in order for the purpose of better living.

Introduction

Language is a system of symbols used conventionally by members of a speech community for the purpose of interaction with one another. It is a socio- cultural phenomenon which serves a dual purpose of communication and community identity. (Roger, 1981). Advanced Learner's Dictionary (2006) described language as a distinctive feature of human nature.

Culture comprises the arts and customs of a nation or group. Advanced Learner's Dictionary (2005) define culture as the way of life especially the general customs and beliefs of particular group of people at a particular time.

Teacher training can be explained as the act of undergoing some series of learning a skill. This shows that we can use our language to teach people's customs using some techniques to guide the students, and for the students also, they used language as an instrument of assimilation.

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Crystal (1971:243) defines language as the used of words in an agreed way as a method of human communication. Therefore, language is a tool of communication culture....Education: Everybody learns daily. The more you learn the more you know that you know little.

One can only satisfy this educational need through language through the use of language. People are educated about their duties, obligations, dressing and how to behave to neighbours through language. It can be affirmed that in order for a society to operate effectively, language must be properly used to correct some norms and values in the society.

It may be noted when we use indigenous languages to communicate in the teaching and – learning situation, it will empower the individual that make up a nation to foster unity. Thus ensuring they contribute positively towards the political, cultural and educational advancement of their society.

Importance of Language in Teaching

Language as one of the most cherished activities of human center of culture and man's development. As a means of and a tool for social interaction and mobilization, it integrates the various organs of the society for the achievements of societal goals.

Language is a very vital to every arm of social institution: in politics it is a tool for government and administration, and for political campaigns it is an instrument of instruction. It is used in the dispensation of justice in the court. To crown it all language is a vehicle for the people's culture.

Language makes possible effective interaction and socialization among various segments and group of society. As they interact and socialize through trade and other social relationships, they tend to understand and appreciate the views, opinions, beliefs and culture of another.

Language is a vehicle for cross fertilization of ideas. A (community of language users members of a society a sense of belongings. Even a small child stops crying if the mother per her with her local oriki, thus:

“Anike opo
Opo roso opo dun gbaja
Opo Kan dudu dudu
Labe aso,
O ba je b oropoo mi
Aso ara mi ledidi
Eniyan.....”

“Anike opo
Staff that tie wrapper and hair tie
under a black dress.
Let me see my staff
my own dress is the
Beauty of my body

Language remove suspicious and mistrusts especially from learners. If there is mutual understanding, they will understand themselves better.

Culture and society: The culture of a society is the way of life of its members, the collections of ideas and habits which they hear, share and transmit from generation to generation. Culture is a “design of living” held by members of a particular society. Human’s behavior is based on guide lines which they learn. In order for a society to operate effectively, the culture must be observed and honored. Culture, therefore, has two essential qualities. Firstly, it is learnt and secondly, it must be observed. Without it, there will be no human society that would operate in the expected harmony desirous of better social order.

Olatunji (2006:67) asserts that “culture or civilization, taken in its wide ethnographic sense is that complex whole which include knowledge, belief, morals, law, culture and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society”. Culture relates to the beliefs and the values people have about the societies, social change and the ideal society they seek. In conclusion, one can say culture is something which overarches, reflects and untimely has its own effects on the social.

Culture and Human Behaviour

The National policy on Education (section / paragraph 8) states. “In addition to appreciating the importance of languages in the educational processes, and as a means of preserving the people’s culture, the government considers it to be in the interest of national unity that each child should be encouraged to learn out of the three major languages other than his own mother tongue. In this connection, the government considers the three major languages in Nigeria to be Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba.

This is the more reason why “iwa omoluabi” (concept of good repute) must be taken as a subject in Nigeria languages. The teacher must use the language that we motivate the learners in learning their mother tongue, apart from the fact that the language is rich in culture, it will correct some foreign imitation that are gradually sleeping in the culture of Nigerians.

Iwa Omoluabi (Concept of good repute) is infact to train how to respect elders in greetings. Females usually kneel down while male prostrate and say “E kaaro”... Oriki usually follows this respect acting such as:

“Okare, omoekun	Good of you
Omoowa, omoekun	You the child of lion
Omo pewo isuko sowo otuu	The child of isuko, that cannot the
O pa tewura sowo osi....”	Money realize from cotton wool apart from yam.

This particular chant shows that the person involved is from a rich farmer’s family. Learners that greet without kneeling down or prostrating is are regarded as coming from a bad family lineage. Iwaomoluabi (Concept of good repute) teaches Yoruba dressing as a unique and acceptable form of presenting oneself in public. The way one dresses gives a more responsible look and shows maturity. It is not in Yoruba culture for a female to put on male dress neither for a male to put on female decorations such as boys putting on ear-rings or blowing their hair. In addition, it is not Yoruba custom to have extra finger-nails. It is part of teaching as “imototo”, that one should cut the finger- nails at least every week because of germs. This is recited in the poem, (ewi):

“Imototo lo le segun arun gbogbo	-Cleanness is remedy for good health
Imototo ile,	-Cleanness in the house
Imototo ara	-Cleanness in the body
Imototo lo le segun arun gbogbo	-Cleanness is remedy for good health

Anybody remembering this poem will abide to the rules of better living as signaled in the use of appropriate words in the Yoruba Language this proves that language helps culture to grow.

Problems Facing Indigenous Language.

We have neglected our cultural heritage, our value system, our custom and traditions as expressed by our indigenous language. There could hardly, be any meaningful civilization among the people who attempt to abandon their language for that of others. Instead they prefer foreign languages and foreign culture, foreign cloth foreign food and if possible, they prefer to changing to foreigners.

Consequently, it is believed the Yoruba language has the potentials of reforming people’s culture and beliefs over and above that of the foreign languages.

Conclusion

This paper has attempted to stress the important of imbibing the culture values and norms of the Yoruba language through various linguistic means highlighted in the body of the paper.

As agreed by a vast number of authorities, the teaching and learning of the Yoruba language would foster a better cultural habit in learners despite the fact that foreign play foreign languages play vitalroles in the Nigeria context, it is suggested, and very strongly too, that the cultural traits of our linguistic heritage should not be overshadowed by those of foreign languages.

Recommendation

A subject on our cultural heritage, customs, folktales and others should be introduced in all the schools especially in Teacher Training Institutions.

Government should encourage uses of indigenous language as a vital catalyst in the promotion of culture.

Before effective change can take place, our culture must be embraced.

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